



Education and Training

# Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools

Strategic Plan 2010–2013

*Disability education is everyone's business*

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# Introduction

The ACT *Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2010–2013: Everyone matters* articulates the vision for public schooling that young people in the ACT learn, thrive and are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. Central to this vision are safe and inclusive schools. *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013* (the Plan) describes how this vision will be realised for students with disabilities.

The Plan has distilled five priorities from the Department's *School Improvement in ACT Public Schools – Directions 2010–2013* and the extensive work undertaken in the *Review of Special Education in ACT Schools 2009*. The priorities describe what we need to achieve to further improve the learning outcomes of students with a disability. These priorities will be delivered through practical and measurable activities that will be further described in action plans, and reviewed annually.

The Plan also describes foundation principles on which all our work must be based to achieve improved learning outcomes for students with disabilities. These principles are Excellence, Accountability and Fairness.

Excellence means a whole school commitment to embed high quality curriculum that supports the learning needs of all students. Excellence results from a responsive system that supports professional learning and encourages meaningful regular communication with all stakeholders, particularly parents.

Accountability means taking responsibility for the learning outcomes of our students. This requires using an evidence base in the development and implementation of curriculum and assessment practices. It also means authentic reporting of student outcomes.

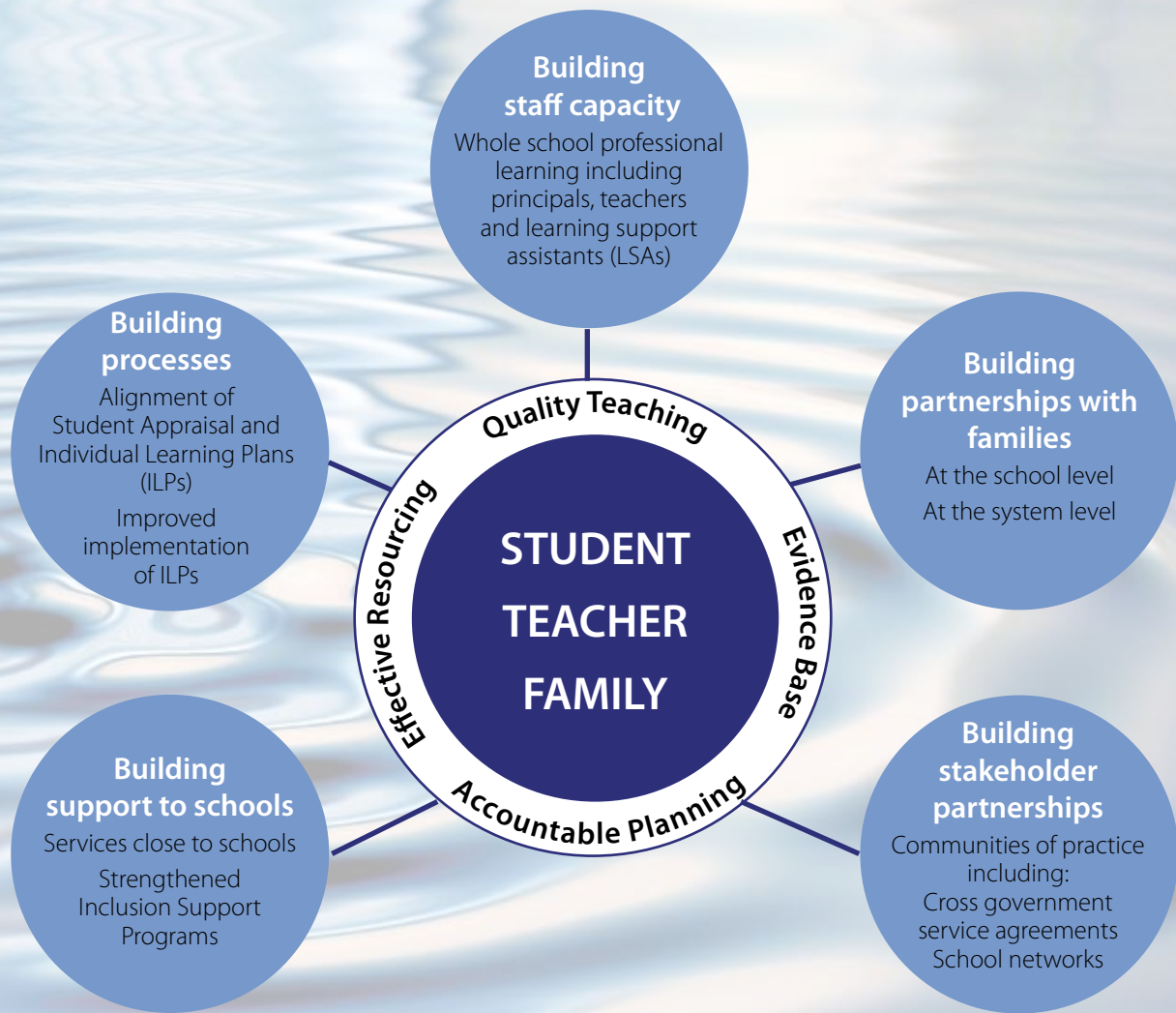
The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* are pivotal to our obligations to meet the needs of all students in a fair and non-discriminatory way. The standards require schools to provide an education to all students on the same basis as a student without a disability. In particular, schools will make reasonable adjustments in the areas of enrolment, participation, curriculum development and delivery, student support and elimination of harassment and victimisation, in order to make education and training accessible to students with a disability. We have an obligation to develop a culturally inclusive organisation in which these standards are embedded in our day-to-day practice.

We will know when these foundation principles have been embedded in our practice when there is evidence of quality teaching, evidence-based decision making, effective resourcing and accountable planning and teaching.



# Everyone matters: Excellence in Disability Education

## Strategic Priorities 2010–2013



**Excellence • Accountability • Fairness**

# The foundation principles that underpin all the work we do are:

## Excellence

We demonstrate excellence by:

- Promoting whole school change to meet the diverse needs of students through a high quality curriculum
- Enhancing teacher expertise
- Fostering positive partnerships
- Implementing effective communication strategies between participating stakeholders.

## Accountability

We demonstrate the professional responsibility to be accountable for the work we do in supporting students with a disability by:

- Ensuring that Individual Learning Plan (ILP) goals, supports and services are underpinned by evidence-based practice to maximise learning outcomes
- Providing opportunities for consultation between stakeholders
- Providing access to evidence-based professional learning.

## Fairness

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* underpin our commitment to supporting diversity by:

- Developing whole school learning environments that promote recognition of the right to education on the same basis as students without a disability
- Ensuring fair access to quality education
- Supporting staff to implement reasonable adjustments to meet the learning needs of all students.

We will know we are being successful when we have built the capacity of our staff, our schools and our system to deliver:

### **Quality teaching**

Schools are accountable to ensure that the principles of quality teaching are embedded into teaching and learning for all students by:

- Ensuring curriculum design and assessment is articulated in the ILP and reflect the current and future needs of the student
- Providing flexible and supportive learning environments
- Providing professional learning to support teachers to embed intellectual quality into teaching practices.

### **Evidence-based decision making**

Quality teaching and learning is underpinned by current research that involves:

- Consultation with families
- Reviews of literature
- Professional dialogue
- Reflective practice and action research.

## Effective resourcing

School leaders take responsibility for the education of all students, and strategically plan programs by:

- Utilising whole school resourcing
- Using an evidence base to consider how the resources provided are deployed to support the ILP
- Developing local area planning practices for the provision of services and programs.

## Accountable planning and teaching

Schools ensure that the curriculum is responsive to the student's current level of functioning within their learning environment by:

- Documenting identified needs and the educational adjustments required to support the student's learning
- Including the student and their family in the ILP process
- Regularly reviewing the progress of the ILP
- Demonstrating how additional resources provided are used to support student learning.



# Strategic Priorities

## Strategic Priority 1: Staff are trained, qualified and well supported

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeline
<p>Quality professional learning is provided that targets cooperative and collaborative team approaches to supporting students with a disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using evidence-based practices that are effective for students with a disability</li> <li>Supporting the role of principals as the key educational leaders in schools</li> <li>Implementing professional learning for Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) that builds the skills to assist them to develop autonomy in students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and range of professional learning opportunities offered</li> <li>Number of participants who have undertaken targeted and general professional learning</li> <li>Evidence from participants about the quality of professional learning</li> <li>Parent and student survey data.</li> </ul>	2010-2013
<p>Support services are improved through the reconfiguration of inclusion support programs to provide inclusive education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating and extending the capacity of services to support schools</li> <li>Reconfiguring services for students with a disability in an Inclusion Support Centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion Support Centre established</li> <li>Evidence of quality and timely support services</li> <li>Students and families report the quality of service provision</li> <li>Inclusion support framework developed for all support services.</li> </ul>	2013
<p>The roles of LSAs are clarified using the current research evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively encouraging schools to be flexible in the use of LSAs as a resource to support students</li> <li>Developing a system-wide set of guidelines on appropriate roles for LSAs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of flexible and responsive use of LSAs</li> <li>Guidelines for schools developed.</li> </ul>	2011
<p>Strategic partnerships are developed with tertiary institutions to support training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaising with local universities and Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) to discuss course content relevant to students with a disability, in the ACT context</li> <li>Collaborating with local universities on research and evaluation projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal processes established with universities and CIT</li> <li>Evidence of collaborative research projects addressing key strategic priorities.</li> </ul>	2010-2013

## Strategic Priority 2: Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) reflect high quality, inclusive adjustments, are future focussed and accountable

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeline
<p>The Student Centred Appraisal of Need and ILP processes are integrated to align resource allocation with actual adjustments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refining and integrating the Student Centred Appraisal of Need and ILP processes to put the focus on the student's curriculum needs and the resourcing necessary to support them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Student Centred Appraisal of Need and ILP processes redesigned to incorporate educational adjustments.</li> </ul>	2011-2013
<p>Accountability mechanisms are put in place for ILPs and resource usage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instituting audits of ILP quality and implementation</li> <li>Instigating audit of resource use in schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ILP audit completed</li> <li>Resource use audit completed.</li> </ul>	2011-2013
<p>All ILPs have a focus on transitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refining ILP requirements for students to ensure the inclusion of transition goals</li> <li>Refining ILP requirements for students to ensure community involvement, where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ILP guidelines include information on transition and community involvement goals</li> <li>Audit indicates all ILPs have transitions and/or community involvement goals.</li> </ul>	2011

### Strategic Priority 3: Schools and families develop strong and positive partnerships to support students

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeline
<p>Quality learning opportunities are offered to parents to support their role in the education processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing professional learning opportunities to parents about their child's ILP and Appraisal processes</li> <li>• Providing professional learning to parents related to the education system eg. curriculum and pedagogy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and range of professional learning opportunities offered</li> <li>• Percentage of participants based on student enrolments</li> <li>• Feedback from participants about the quality of learning opportunities.</li> </ul>	2010-2013
<p>Professional learning is provided to staff to support their engagement and interaction with parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing skills in communication, successful collaboration, cultural awareness and issue management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and range of professional learning opportunities offered</li> <li>• Number of participants</li> <li>• Feedback from participants about the quality of professional learning</li> <li>• Feedback from parents.</li> </ul>	2010-2013
<p>Formal processes established to engage parents and students in system and school-based decision making processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining the parent satisfaction survey</li> <li>• Refining the role of the Disability Education Reference Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent satisfaction survey data</li> <li>• Disability Education Reference Group role and terms of reference defined and implemented</li> <li>• Evidence of parent satisfaction in school decision making</li> <li>• Student representation on the Disability Education Reference Group</li> <li>• Proportion of students participating in ILP development.</li> </ul>	2010
<p>Parent guide to disability education written:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and writing a parent guide to disability education that describes services, processes and policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide written and published.</li> </ul>	2011
<p>Parent networks are established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instigating networks to support parents sharing knowledge and information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent networks established.</li> </ul>	2010-2013

### Strategic Priority 4: There is a whole-of-government approach to student learning outcomes

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeline
<p>Service agreements are developed between Department of Education and Training (DET) and Therapy ACT, and DET and ACT Health to support students and classroom staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a service agreement with Therapy ACT for therapy services in schools</li> <li>• Establishing a service agreement with ACT Health to support students with mental health issues and chronic medical conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service agreement with Therapy ACT signed</li> <li>• Service agreement with ACT Health signed.</li> </ul>	2010-2012
<p>DET will work collaboratively with other agencies to implement the <i>ACT Government Policy Framework for Children and Young People with a Disability and their Families</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Disability ACT and ACT Health to meet obligations under the policy framework</li> <li>• Working with Disability ACT to support the implementation of <i>Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross government implementation plans developed and implemented.</li> </ul>	2010-2013

## Strategic Priority 5: Schools/staff develop networks and work with the community

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeline
<p>Networks are developed to facilitate the sharing of expertise, knowledge and resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms are established and formalised that help schools develop networks to support individual students and groups of students</li> <li>• The synergy between specialist schools and regular schools is increased in terms of staff expertise, pedagogies and learning opportunities for students and staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks established and formalised</li> <li>• Number of partnerships and actions established.</li> </ul>	2010-2013
<p>Collaborative partnerships are developed with community organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigating opportunities to collaborate with appropriate community organisations to share knowledge, expertise, professional learning and resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing partnerships developed and actions identified.</li> </ul>	2010-2013
<p>A Cross Sectoral Disability Education Steering Group established to coordinate agreed actions from the Review of Special Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigating opportunities to collaborate with the Catholic Education Office and The Association of Independent Schools to share knowledge, expertise, professional learning and resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing partnerships developed and actions identified</li> <li>• Cross Sectoral Disability Educational Steering Group established</li> <li>• Cross Sectoral Disability Education Working Group established.</li> </ul>	2010-2013



# For more information

## **ACT Department of Education and Training:**

*ACT Department of Education and Training*

*Strategic Plan 2010–2013: Everyone matters*

[www.det.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/publications\\_a-z](http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z) (see DET Strategic Plans)

*School Improvement in ACT Public Schools*

*Directions 2010–2013*

[www.det.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/publications\\_a-z](http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z) (see DET Strategic Plans)

## **Legislation:**

*Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)*

[www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol\\_act/caypa2008242.txt](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol_act/caypa2008242.txt)

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*

[www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/dda1992264.txt](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264.txt)

*Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Commonwealth)*

[www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Pages/disabilitystandardsforeducation.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Pages/disabilitystandardsforeducation.aspx)

*Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)*

[www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol\\_act/da1991164.txt](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol_act/da1991164.txt)

*Education Act 2004 (ACT)*

[www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-17/current/pdf/2004-17.pdf](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-17/current/pdf/2004-17.pdf)

*Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)*

[www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol\\_act/hra2004148.txt](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol_act/hra2004148.txt)

*Human Rights Commission Act 2005 (ACT)*

[www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2005-40/current/pdf/2005-40.pdf](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2005-40/current/pdf/2005-40.pdf)

## **Policy:**

*Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014*

[www.dhcs.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/79872/final\\_policy\\_framework\\_PUBLISHED.pdf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/79872/final_policy_framework_PUBLISHED.pdf)

*The ACT Government Policy Framework for Children and Young People with a Disability and their Families*

[www.dhcs.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/file/0018/121329/Children\\_and\\_Young\\_People\\_Policy.rtf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0018/121329/Children_and_Young_People_Policy.rtf)



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