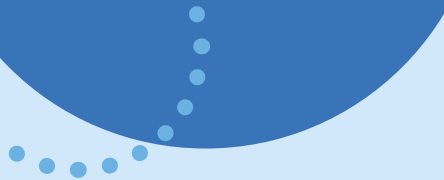




# Quality Time

## Action Plan to simplify administrative practices in schools

September 2021



The School Success Model is the department's evidence-led approach to improving student outcomes. It refocuses the entire department on the role we all play to ensure time spent at school is focused on what matters most – leading, teaching and supporting students. The Quality Time program aligns with the School Success Model's goal to bring a greater sense of shared responsibility and accountability for improvement across every part of the department. The program seeks to simplify and modernise administrative processes and practices so that every student, every teacher, every leader and every school improves every year.

## What we are doing and why

Teachers hold one of the most crucial positions in society. They play a vital role in determining student outcomes.

Administration is a core part of teachers' and school leaders' work. High-value administrative processes enable teachers to deliver on agreed outcomes and work towards aspirational targets. Effective administration enables teachers to:

- track and analyse students' progress
- inform parents and carers of their child's achievement
- maintain and improve their professional practice
- meet the compliance, health and safety requirements essential to the running of a school.

Effective teaching and learning cannot occur without the support of administrative processes. Some of these processes are centrally mandated and some are locally driven. However, not all administrative tasks and practices are made equal. We have heard from teachers and principals that too much time is spent on

low-value administrative work that is overly burdensome, such as manually processing forms. Teacher time needs to be redirected to high-value tasks, such as adapting and differentiating lesson content and resources for the individual needs of their students.

The Quality Time program seeks to simplify and modernise administrative processes and practices, to ensure that teacher and school leader time is spent on the work that matters most and best supports quality teaching and learning. We want the time our teachers and instructional leaders spend outside of the classroom to be quality time that supports improved school operations and student outcomes.

This is why we are committed to freeing up time by reducing low-value administrative tasks. Our target is 20% for our teachers by the end of 2022. This equates to a reduction of 40 hours of low-value administrative tasks per teacher per year.

Building on work already under way, we have listened to feedback from teachers to inform the future direction of our ambitious change program. There are 2 main purposes to this work:

1. free up time spent on low-value work so our teachers can focus on activities that improve student outcomes
2. simplify and modernise the administration processes involved in teaching as well as leading a school.

Feedback from teachers has clearly identified 6 key opportunity areas:

1. Curriculum resources and support
2. Assessment and reporting to parents and carers
3. Accreditation
4. Processes and support services
5. Extracurricular activities
6. Data collection and analysis.

The Action Plan details the initiatives that have been identified to address these 6 opportunity areas. Details on how to provide feedback on the initiatives contained in the Action Plan are outlined on the last page of this document.

This Action Plan focuses on teachers. However, we will also be continuing the work we have already started to simplify and modernise administration for principals and administrative staff, to better support them in the important work they do.

No single solution addresses the challenges our teachers face. The work to simplify and improve administrative practices in schools will be ongoing and will require regular review. By working towards these targets in partnership with schools, we aim to achieve our goal of ensuring every student, every teacher, every leader and every school improves every year.

Not all administrative tasks and practices are made equal. We have heard from teachers and principals that too much time is spent on low-value administrative work that is overly burdensome. Improvements in the following areas can help support more effective administration:



Expectations



Support



Systems



Policies



Processes



# Who we are engaging with

There will be a number of different forums to ensure we are gathering insights and testing solutions with the right people. These groups include:



## 1. Principals

- Quality Time principal focus group
- NSW Primary Principals' Association
- NSW Secondary Principals' Council



## 2. Teachers

- Quality Time teacher focus group
- NSW Teachers Federation



## 3. Administrative staff

- Quality Time school administration focus group
- School Administration and Support Staff Professional Association
- Public Service Association



## 4. Others

- Minister's working group
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- departmental process optimisation team
- a select group of pilot schools
- key corporate staff including Directors, Educational Leadership (DELs) and School Performance executives



## 5. Parents and carers

- Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW

Feedback on the Quality Time Action Plan is welcome from anyone, and details on how to submit feedback are provided on the last page of this document.





# What we have achieved

We have delivered an estimated 10 hours per year reduction in administrative burden for teachers through number of improvements over the last 3 years, with further initiatives currently being piloted, or in early stages of implementation.



We understand that there is more work to be done to reach our targeted 20% reduction. We are working with teachers and principals to identify new opportunities to free up time, and this Quality Time Action Plan is a key part of this process.

**Action Key:** ✓ completed  
🔄 in progress


## Curriculum resources and support

-  Rolled out the Learning Resources Hub (reading and numeracy) ✓
-  Continue updating the Learning Resources Hub as part of the School Success Model program, including adding quality assured resources in line with the syllabus rollout under the NSW curriculum reform 🔄









## Assessment and reporting to parents and carers

-  Rolled out the check-in assessments for reading and numeracy (select years in primary and secondary) ✓
-  Rolling out additional assessments, such as writing and other areas 🔄






## Accreditation

-  Updating the department's policy in line with NESA's Teacher Accreditation Act changes, with a broader review of accreditation policies currently underway 🔄

## Processes and support services

-  Introduced single-sign-on capability to main department systems ✓
-  Enhanced MyPL (professional learning management system), with a teacher dashboard and improved search functionality ✓
-  Successfully completed a pilot to digitise student administration forms that are used by schools, with the development of quick reference guides (QRGs) to support schools with these processes ✓
-  Undertake a pilot to reduce mandated time on non-teaching activities as part of the school day such as lunch, recess, and bus or transport duty ↻
-  Streamlining school communications ↻
-  Established a 'process improvement and optimisation' team, piloting best practice solutions across a selection of schools in metro and regional locations – including case studies of schools using innovative administration methods ↻
-  Transforming support services to deliver high-quality, strategic services to our customers in schools and across the department via a 'single front door' to access support services, dramatically simplifying and improving the customer experience, so that our staff and schools can focus on work related to improving student outcomes ↻
-  Continually improving the Master Schedule process – the department's process to plan and prioritise change for schools ↻

## Data collection and analysis

-  Provided clearer guidance on the use and phasing out of data fields on the student record cards ✓
-  Digitised student enrolment for the majority of students ✓
-  Automated data transfer from assessments developed by the department to SCOUT and PLAN2 (check-in assessments, phonics and Best Start Kindergarten and Year 7) ✓
-  Removed the requirement for absences to be imported to EBS (a department data system) ✓
-  Automated the process to transfer attendance data from schools to the department's data warehouse ✓

# Opportunity areas

## Curriculum resources and support

### What is the opportunity?

From **duplicating effort** to **accessible, high-quality resources**




Skilled programming and lesson planning are a critical part of teaching, however, this task can be quite time-consuming.

We can help teachers do this more efficiently through the development and promotion of system-wide, high-quality and easily accessible teacher resources.

For example, by improving the accessibility and quality of teacher resources, we can save hours of time teachers previously used creating and searching for content. This will allow them to focus their time on activities that add the most value to student growth and progress, such as adapting and differentiating content and resources for their individual students' needs.

### Action plan

#### We will explore opportunities to:

-  develop a curriculum management system to easily find resources mapped to the curriculum – including improved ways to store, find and share previous lesson plans and learning programs
-  build on existing statewide networks such as statewide staffrooms and Yammer to provide improved systems for further collaboration
-  utilise expert teachers and resources, such as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALTs), Best in Class teachers and What Works Best resources to highlight efficient practices.



## Assessment and reporting to parents and carers

### What is the opportunity?




From **inefficiency and double-handling** to **efficient and effective assessment and reporting processes**

High-quality assessment helps teachers know how their students are progressing and informs next steps for learning. Assessment provides feedback to teachers on the effectiveness of their teaching approaches. Effective feedback provides students and their parents and carers with relevant, explicit, ongoing, constructive and actionable information about their performance against learning outcomes from the syllabus.

By using a range of marking techniques and different types of assessments, it is possible to reduce the time teachers spend on marking and providing students with feedback, without negatively affecting learning outcomes.

### Action plan

#### We will explore opportunities to:

-  develop additional formative assessment resources and templates
-  improve guidance around expectations for reporting to parents and carers
-  establish a joint working group with parents, carers and teachers to explore ways to streamline reporting processes.

## Accreditation

### What is the opportunity?

From **multiple processes** to **streamlined systems**

Accreditation is a process by which teachers demonstrate quality teaching practice against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Accreditation upholds the integrity and accountability of the teaching profession and ensures high-quality teaching in every classroom. Quality feedback and professional learning are central to improved practice and an integral part of accreditation.

Many teachers find locating the right information and documenting accreditation time-consuming and challenging. Multiple systems and agencies have resulted in duplication.

We will be driven by the principle, teachers only need to tell us once.

NESA sets the accreditation policy for NSW. To solve common problems, the department will work with NESA to streamline processes.

### Action plan

#### We will explore opportunities to:

-  remove duplicative processes, steps and requirements between NESA and the department
-  provide clear and simple guidance on end-to-end accreditation steps for all roles
-  develop system enhancements to simplify teachers' ability to access and manage their accreditation information
-  improve reminders for required steps and suggestions of how to keep on track with accreditation
-  streamline administration requirements for maintaining accreditation
-  better integrate accreditation and performance and development plans
-  clarify guidance on recommended professional development linked to accreditation requirements.

## Processes and support services

### What is the opportunity?

From **confusing, uncoordinated changes** to **clear communication and change management**



Departmental processes, policies and systems and cultural expectations often cut across a number of different areas and may impact on the ability of teachers to work effectively.

A range of improvements are already underway, including streamlining of policies, improving administrative technologies and simplifying processes.

We anticipate we will identify further opportunity areas, as we continue to get feedback from teachers across the state and learn from innovative schools approaching administration in a different way.

### Action plan

#### We will explore opportunities to:

-  provide further clarity on requirements, including using school toolkits such as those currently being created by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, which mirror successful toolkits created in the UK
-  develop a process to quality-assure wellbeing service providers in schools to provide improved support and clearer guidance to schools.

## Extracurricular activities

### What is the opportunity?

From **lengthy processes** to **meaningful risk management and better guidance**








Extracurricular activities, such as excursions and sports carnivals, are important to a well-rounded education. For many teachers, they also provide the opportunity to pursue a passion area outside of the classroom.

The administration involved in organising these activities can be extensive. There are significant opportunities to learn from efficient processes that currently exist within schools.

We can also provide more guidance and clarity for teachers and principals about managing workload connected to extracurricular activities.

### Action plan

#### We will explore opportunities to:

-  develop a single space for users to access information and advice on extracurricular activities with information simplified and presented in context
-  offer training for different staff profiles
-  streamline approval processes, resources and advice for principals on how to manage extracurricular activities
-  clarify mandatory requirements – and what is optional
-  provide clearer advice on WHS requirements
-  deliver a new excursions policy and procedures including new approval process and resources for overseas excursions
-  digitise manual forms and payment processes
-  develop example excursions linked to the curriculum with accompanying pre-filled paperwork to be reviewed
-  provide schools with simplified access to a pre-approved list of system providers, with modules for streamlined variation of routine processes such as planning, risk assessment, permission notes and payments.

## Data collection and analysis

### What is the opportunity?




From **disjointed and inefficient collection** to **automation and single-source data**

Collection and analysis of data is important to ensure our students receive the appropriate and tailored levels of support. It gives schools important evidence to support the effective delivery of educational programs.

However, schools have said they find the data collection, monitoring and analysis processes to be time-consuming.

### Action plan

#### We will explore opportunities to:

-  develop an online 'Parents to Pay' system, which includes a language translator service and an improved mobile experience
-  streamline paperwork and processes for HSC monitoring and VET
-  automate data transfer from formative assessments developed by the department to PLAN2
-  streamline data management within schools and automate data collection from data sources already available within schools
-  develop pre-filled data requirements across different levels of government or government agencies
-  provide pre-approved system providers which enable streamlined data collection and management



# What are the next steps?

## We would like to hear from you

We welcome your feedback on the Quality Time Action Plan. This feedback will help us in our aim to free up time for our teachers and support better teaching and learning practices.

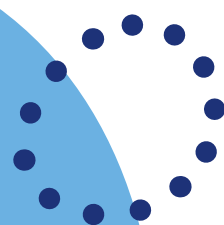
### How to provide feedback

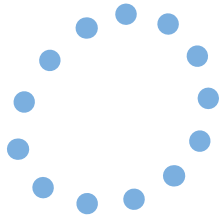
Please submit feedback regarding the initiatives outlined in this document via the [Quality Time feedback form](#) by **Term 4 Week 2 (Friday 15 October 2021)**

### What happens next?

Your feedback will be used to inform the next iteration of our action plan, which we will share in Term 4 2021.

In the meantime, we will continue to develop the work and explore opportunities highlighted in this document, working with the different consultation groups.






We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

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## Say hello

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