

NSW Department of Education

Quality Time Program

Mid-year update

Streamlining administration and improving support resources for teachers, principals and school-based non-teaching staff

July 2022





The Quality Time program targets



The NSW Department of Education's Quality Time program aims to simplify, modernise and reduce administrative processes and practices so teachers, principals and school-based non-teaching staff can focus on the work that matters most – teaching, leading and supporting learning.

While many tasks essential to teaching and learning have an administrative component, and many administrative tasks are vital in supporting student participation in the classroom, there is also low-value and unnecessary administration that takes up too much time.

The initial target set by the Minister for Education is a 20 percent reduction in time spent on low-value administrative tasks by the end of 2022. This equates to 40 hours for teachers, 40 hours for school-based non-teaching staff and 190 hours for principals. The department is on track to meet this target in 2022, and the Quality Time program is already looking ahead to activities and initiatives in 2023 and beyond.

As well as a reduction in the time taken up by low-value administrative tasks, the department continues to manage the overall ask of teachers, principals and school-based non-teaching staff through our 'Consolidated School Schedule' process to limit new initiatives. There is also ongoing work to review and reduce what has previously been considered 'business as usual' activity in our schools.

This update shares progress since the September 2021 <u>Quality Time</u> <u>Action Plan</u>, including progress in response to the extensive feedback staff provided in 2021. This update also outlines new initiatives we are exploring or committed to delivering beyond the 2022 target.

Acting on consultation and feedback

In September 2021, the department sought feedback on proposed initiatives and gathered further suggestions for improvement. More than 4,000 submissions were received from teachers, school-based non-teaching staff, principals, parents and community members. Key themes were also discussed during quarterly meetings with stakeholder groups, including the Minister's Quality Time Working Group.

While feedback varied according to staff type, there was significant overlap and a clear consensus that 'Curriculum resources and support' was the most important area, with widespread appreciation for the Learning Resources Hub (now known as the Universal Resources Hub) and support for its continued development and improvement. Some further key areas that were important to teachers and principals included assessment; reporting to parents (particularly report writing); and teacher accreditation processes.

The feedback that staff provided has informed the addition more than 40 new initiatives that are underway or being explored and a 7th workstream.



The department is on track to deliver against the 2022 Quality Time target



Despite COVID-related disruptions, significant progress has been made against many Quality Time initiatives. The department is on track to deliver its 20 percent target by the end of 2022.

To date, the Quality Time program has saved an estimated 191 hours per principal, 29 hours per teacher in addition to the 10 hours saved as at December 2020, and 60 hours per school-based non-teaching staff member.

While the department is measuring current initiatives against the 20 percent time saving target, the improvement program will go beyond 2022 and will shift to a more comprehensive approach to measuring impact and effectiveness. This will move away from minutes saved and will focus on delivering outcomes in the areas where staff have told us there is need for real change.

To date, the Quality Time program has saved on average an estimated





Key initiatives contributing to progress against the 2022 target



The Universal Resources Hub

Teachers told us that curriculum resources and support was their most important priority area. To provide extra support, we have delivered the Universal Resources Hub where staff can access quality-assured teaching and learning resources. This makes it easier for teachers to find high-quality resources to improve their practice and reduce lesson-planning time. The Hub has contributed to our delivery against the 2022 Quality Time target, with 11,812 individual school users and take-up in 2,026 different schools. We will continue to build the resources on the Universal Resources Hub over time. There is also an opportunity to link the resources to curriculum reform to reduce teacher workload and administrative burden.

Feedback on the Universal Resources Hub

"What an amazing one-stop shop! As a teaching principal, I am constantly searching for authentic and engaging learning tasks for my students and at the same time, the other half of me is thinking about student wellbeing, attendance, data use ... What a wonderful idea to have all of these fabulous resources in a single place..."

Primary School Principal, Rural/Remote NSW







Check-in assessments

Assessment resources were another key area of opportunity that teachers identified in their feedback to the department. We have delivered centralised assessment resources in the form of check-in assessments, which help to monitor students' progress in literacy and numeracy. The quick, online assessments are mapped to the NSW syllabuses and schools can access feedback soon after the completion of the assessment, with streamlined marking and analysis. This has reduced schools' need to source or develop their own assessment resources in relation to literacy and numeracy, contributing to progress against the 2022 Quality Time target.

In 2022, a Year 6 check-in writing assessment will be implemented in addition to reading and numeracy. This will be externally marked and provide schools with quality data to support judgement for school-based reporting, program evaluation and transition of students to high school.

Feedback on Check-in assessments

"An absolute revelation today when I learnt that the Check-in assessments now automatically feed into PLAN2. A great move and great to see PLAN2 becoming less time-consuming for data entry..."

Primary School Principal, Metropolitan NSW





Teachers, Principals and Non-Teaching Staff

Streamlining internal communication

Focus groups revealed a concern for teachers, principals and non-teaching staff about the volume of communication to schools. We have streamlined and bundled our communication with staff through the Staff Noticeboard and centralised communication scheduling. This is in addition to the development of centralised communication resources which support schools to respond to local COVID-19 cases and to keep the school community updated with current health advice. This initiative has also contributed to our 2022 Quality Time target.



Other key initiatives



Teachers

Other curriculum support measures

In addition to measures that directly contribute to the 2022 Quality Time target, the department has put in place a range of other curriculum supports for teachers, reflecting the importance of this area for our workforce. Supports in place include:

- 78 Best in Class teachers who have supported more than 6,300 teachers across more than 680 schools
- More than 1,500 Assistant Principals, Curriculum Instruction positions, which support strong instructional leadership models in schools, have been established in 2022. A further 780 positions will be recruited in 2023
- \$15 million for additional release time for primary teachers to engage with the new curriculum.



Teachers and Principals

Improvements to Scout

In addition to improved data management through Check-in assessments that contribute to the 2022 target, the department has made significant improvements to the broader 'Scout' business intelligence and data analytics platform. This includes improvements to existing Scout reports, and the capacity to create new reports, including a School Dashboard for Principals, HR related reports, student assessment reports including NAPLAN, Check-in assessments, attendance and engagement reports as well as the Student Application Activity report (measuring student engagement during home learning). Scout has also been a critical source of COVID-related information for schools in managing staff and school operations. With over 2 million reports run over the last 12 months, Scout brings together a vast amount of data into one location, allowing users to view all information that is relevant to them at one time and supports evidence-based decision making.



Teachers

Curriculum implementation resources designed by teachers, for teachers

We have listened to feedback from teachers about the curriculum implementation supports they would like. We have created comprehensive, evidence-based resources, including scope and sequences, units of work and assessment and reporting advice. We have 400 schools implementing the new K-2 English and mathematics syllabuses with their Year I cohorts. These schools are trialing the resources and providing feedback. We are also releasing a series of 'micro-learning' modules, aimed at building understanding of new syllabuses and approaches to teaching it. The modules are short (max 20 min per module), released in stages, and focused on small sections of curriculum content, saving teachers' time by allowing them to choose which modules will best support their learning needs. These modules complement professional learning released by NESA to support knowledge of new syllabuses.





Some of the other key programs that are contributing to the 2022 Quality Time target include:

Projects	Teachers	Principals	Non-teaching staff
Automation of 60 percent of the Annual School Report , removing the need for principals to manually fill in data such as NAPLAN and HSC results, and financial and workforce information.		✓	
Supporting and enhancing the school audit process , to assist principals and school-based non-teaching staff.		✓	✓
Automated attendance reporting which now automatically synchronises attendance data from some third-party systems. This saves time for school-based non-teaching staff by removing the need to manually transfer the attendance records to department systems.			√
Simplified teacher validation checks through integration of ClassCover and department systems so that teacher verification status is automatically shown in the ClassCover software application. This removes the need to check the teacher status manually on separate department systems including NESA accreditation status, Working with Children Check and mandatory training status.		✓	✓
Creation of additional Asset Service Officer roles to provide asset management support to school.		✓	
Improved access request process for students applying for additional support provisions, including changes to the local support class placement panel process to ensure student placement into support classes is fairer, more responsive to students' needs, and more transparent.	✓	✓	
Work on streamlining teacher accreditation has started, in partnership with NESA, responding to staff feedback about the administrative load and paperwork associated with current accreditation processes.	✓	✓	

Where to next for the Quality Time program?

Work to reduce administrative burden is ongoing and will continue beyond the achievement of the 2022 targets.

Views gathered through consultation and focus groups with school staff, the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens, and the Minister's Quality Time Working Group have been crucial in identifying and informing future work priorities.

A list of additional suggestions from the feedback received is included in the Appendix. The department is looking to explore these areas further to guide the development of the Quality Time program in the future.

The department is considering the recommendations of the recent Grattan Institute report 'Making Time for Great Teaching' (2022), including exploring the integration of specialist and support staff in schools to perform duties that don't require teaching expertise.

Regular reporting on progress and achievements will be introduced on the department's website including case studies on the impact time-saving initiatives are having within schools.



Realising the benefits of Quality Time

To help staff get the benefit from Quality Time initiatives, we also need to carefully consider the impacts of any new initiatives that schools may be asked to engage with or implement. Some of the feedback we received from staff highlighted the impacts of change processes for schools.

In addition to progressing time-saving initiatives outlined in this plan, the department has undertaken a holistic review of the activities that school-based staff are asked to deliver, with an assessment underway as to what can be stopped, streamlined, improved or where additional centralised support can be provided. This will bring clarity of expectations and ensure that only essential work is being undertaken.

The department also now requires all new changes or initiatives for schools to be reviewed to ensure change is governed, that a quality assurance process is undertaken, and that sufficient support for implementation is provided.





Appendix: Work underway in the Quality Time workstreams

Workstream 1

Curriculum resources and support

From duplicating effort to delivering accessible, high-quality resources



Skilled programming and lesson planning are a critical part of teaching. Searching for, verifying and adapting quality resources, however, can take teachers significant time.

The development and sharing of centralised, high-quality resources for optional and on-demand use by teachers is in progress. By ensuring these are easily accessible, searchable and adaptable, teachers can be better supported through curriculum changes, making it easier to personalise and differentiate learning to the specific needs of students.

These resources are being developed by teachers for teachers and will be made available to schools following feedback provided by teachers and leaders in curriculum early adopter schools.

- The department's curriculum support is valued and should remain a priority of the Quality Time program.
- Centralised resources, linked to units of work and lesson plans, would be welcomed across all subject areas.
- Resources should remain optional for use, and be designed to be easily adaptable according to the professional judgement of teachers to cater to varied learning needs and contexts.
- Quality resources must be easy to find, and feedback made it clear that this is an area with room for improvement.
- Curriculum and lesson planning resources are of particular benefit to early career teachers, and to teachers in small schools or small faculties where peer-to-peer resource sharing is more challenging.
- In addition to resources, on-the-ground supports such as curriculum advisors and mentors are beneficial and appreciated.





 Launch of the Universal Resources Hub (reading and numeracy).

Activity underway



- Continuing to update the Universal Resources Hub as part of the School Success Model program, including adding qualityassured resources, units of work, and scope and sequences, in line with the syllabus rollout under the NSW curriculum reform, as well as improved ways to store, find and share teaching and learning content.
- Developing a curriculum management system to easily find resources mapped to the curriculum.
- Building on existing state-wide networks such as state-wide staffrooms to provide improved systems for further collaboration.
- Utilising 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.

Initiatives being explored next



 Provide additional resources on an online learning platform including resources for students and parents. "The department is providing some fantastic curriculum and resource support at the moment. There is an issue with the amount of information schools get about this and then being able to find what you want when you need it. Streamlining where all of the resources are and how you find them is important."

Primary School Principal, Metropolitan NSW

"I think that the resource hub is an excellent initiative. ... Working in an SSP [School for Specific Purposes] with students with intellectual disabilities, I'd love to see some resources developed or made available for students in our area."

School for Specific Purposes (SSP) Teacher, Rural/Remote NSW

"I would like to see programs done for all stages and all subjects that are ready to use ..."

Central School Teacher, Rural/Remote NSW

Assessment and reporting to parents and carers

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



High-quality assessment helps teachers monitor student progress and inform next steps for learning. Assessment provides feedback to teachers on the effectiveness of their teaching approaches. Effective feedback cycles provide students, parents and carers with explicit, constructive and actionable information on student performance against learning outcomes from the syllabus, and how they can improve.

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.

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- Reporting was identified as an area with significant room for procedural improvement.
- Teachers reported that given the duplicative review processes, language limitations and inconsistencies in how A-E grades are awarded, the educational benefit of semester reports does not justify the considerable time spent by school staff in compiling and reviewing them.
- Comments recommended provision of clearer templates, changes to context expectations, technological solutions, and more overarching reforms to modernise the reporting and feedback process.
- A centralised bank of on-demand and adaptable formative assessments and learning resources explicitly linked to syllabus outcomes would be welcomed.
- The fast data analysis provided by check-in assessments is generally considered beneficial.





 Implemented the check-in assessments for reading and numeracy (select years in primary and secondary).

Activity underway



- Develop additional formative assessment resources and templates for on-demand, optional use by teachers
- Improve guidance around expectations for reporting to parents and carers.

Initiatives being explored next



- Implement a single sign-on (SSO) for teachers and students to streamline the delivery of department-developed assessments
- Establish a joint working group with parents, carers and teachers to explore ways to streamline reporting processes.

"A clear and consistent reporting expectation should be in place across all schools. Hours of time are consumed by individual schools creating and refining their reporting to parents."

Primary School Principal, Rural/Remote NSW

"Formative assessment resources and templates would be great, all located in one place that is easy to find. Reduced reporting expectations ... and communicating this to parents rather than making it the responsibility of each school to do so."

Central School Teacher, Rural/Remote NSW

Accreditation

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 that locating the right information and documenting accreditation can be time-consuming and challenging. The principle that teachers only need to 'tell us once' will drive the improvement to accreditation procedures.

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) sets the accreditation policy for NSW. To solve common problems, the department will work with NESA to streamline processes.

- Accreditation is a point of frustration for teachers at all levels of experience.
 The processes for gaining and maintaining accreditation are challenging.
- Teachers would appreciate stronger linkage between accreditation processes and meaningful professional development.
- Further consideration of the unique needs of specific staff groups such as beginner teachers, experienced teachers and those seeking higher accreditation is needed.
- Improvements to date have been appreciated, but further improvements including the ones listed in this plan, are necessary.





Activity underway



- Updating the department's policy in line with NESA's Teacher Accreditation Act changes, with a broader review of accreditation policies currently underway
- Remove duplicative processes, steps and requirements between NESA and the department
- Provide clear and simple guidance on endto-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 with performance and development plans
- Clarify guidance on recommended professional development linked to accreditation requirements.

"Yes, a great way forward. This would definitely take pressure off staff and assist with meeting the required outcomes effectively and realistically."

Primary School Principal, Metropolitan NSW

"This has improved but I would like the focus to be on developing my skills, exposure to best practice and mentoring from the more experienced so that I am growing as a teacher and not just ticking boxes."

Primary School Principal, Metropolitan NSW

School administrative processes

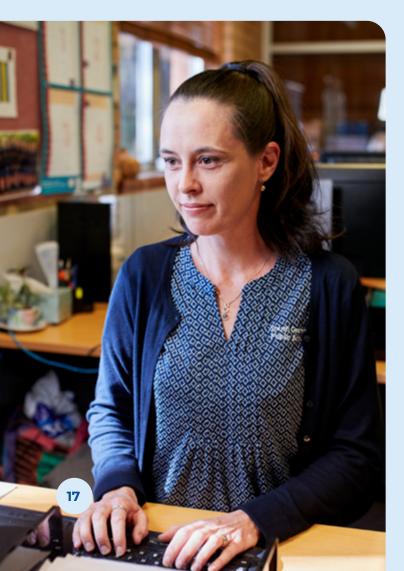
From uncoordinated changes to clear communication and change management



Departmental processes, policies and systems could be better aligned with the way schools operate.

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

It is anticipated that further opportunities will be identified as feedback continues to be sought and as case studies of innovative school administrative practices are collected and shared.



- Process and system improvements are necessary and have the potential to reduce administrative load.
- Consultation indicated that the draft Action Plan was not clear about the department's proposed action in this area.
- This workstream should relate specifically to non-classroom processes, such as recruitment, workplace health and safety, finance, asset management and probity checks.
- Changes to departmental policy and processes felt constant and the rate and support to implement these changes could be better managed.
- Staff emphasised the need for clear, concise communication of the timing and rationale for procedural changes.



- Introduced single sign-on capability to main department systems
- Enhanced MyPL (professional learning management system), with a teacher dashboard and improved search functionality
- Provided one-to-one support for the school budget.

Activity underway



- Digitise student administration forms that are used by schools, and provide quick reference guides (QRGs) to support schools with these processes
- Streamline departmental operational policy documents
- Ongoing streamlining and improvement of communication to schools
- 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
- Develop a digital 'single front door' and service catalogue to simplify the process for staff to find and use department information and services
- Further prioritise and limit changes impacting schools through the Master Schedule/Consolidated School Schedule.

Initiatives being explored next



- Review end-to-end processes and develop tools and resources to support schools in setting up efficient local processes
- Deliver a consolidated set of modern digital tools to accelerate operational leadership for new school principals
- Refresh the device strategy for schools to provide staff with updated and compliant devices and leverage contemporary learning tools
- Automate data entry of payments into third party administrative systems
- Implement a new website search to improve intranet navigation and make information easier to locate
- Develop supporting material to provide guidance for filling temporary roles (expression of interest).

"Streamline administration processes so that there is only one system to add information to and will merge into other systems."

Primary School School Administration Officer, Metropolitan NSW

"Consider if the change is actually necessary. ... Has the initiative been thoroughly researched? Has it been successful in other settings?"

Primary School Teacher, Metropolitan NSW

Student and staff support services

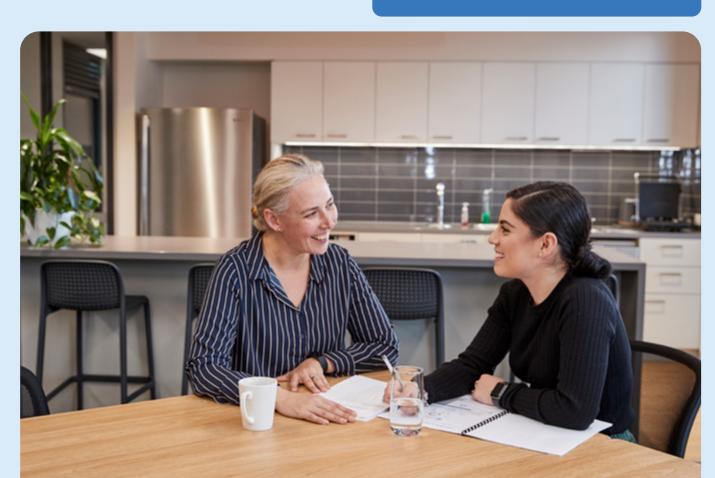
From inaccessible services to clear, flexible and high-quality support



While teachers, school-based non-teaching staff and principals all have different responsibilities regarding student learning, wellbeing and safety, there is substantial overlap in the frustrations school staff can experience while engaging with various administration systems and processes.

Whether it be in student reporting, excursion planning, or the management of student welfare and disability support, feedback from schools has highlighted the importance of considering a variety of staff roles and support needs when designing improvements.

- Wellbeing services, behaviour supports and counselling services are all identified as an additional opportunity area for improvement.
- Feedback called for an expansion of the department's resource hub to encompass a central source of support services, available online, which addressed the needs of all students.
- The need for additional counsellors and supports for students with complex needs was also highlighted.





- Improved the access request process for students applying for additional support provisions including the following changes:
 - Integration funding support for students in Year 6 is automatically rolled over to Year 7 at their secondary school without the need for a new access request which saves time for schools.
 - A Centralised Integration Funding Support team has been established to support the funding application process to reduce the time taken to respond to requests, and changes to the system have reduced the need for applications to be returned to school for editing
 - Removal of access request applications for students requiring only an itinerant support teacher hearing and vision which saves time for schools
 - New placement panel Standard
 Operating Procedures (SOP) and system
 changes allow the disability confirmation
 to be updated by Delivery Support teams
 after application submission by schools
 resulting in reduced numbers of access
 requests returned to school for editing
 - Standardised panel procedures for access requests to be managed on average within 28 school days from submission, for requests for immediate and next term support provisions, to a panel decision being recorded.
- The Team Around a School model aims to provide schools with easy access to support using a 'one call model'. School executive or learning and support team staff can contact their local Assistant Principal Learning and Support or Learning and Wellbeing Officer to request support. There is no form or application required
- Established a panel of pre-screened specialised allied health professionals which can be readily engaged to support students with disability.

Activity underway



 Develop a process to quality-assure student wellbeing service programs to provide schools with improved support and clearer quidance.

Initiatives being explored next



 Develop an integrated application management system as part of the future access request experience. The system will link student needs, associated adjustments to National Consistent Collection of Data and applications for Integration Funding Support and support classes.

"I'm encouraged by this opportunity to have greater supports available for teachers. The level of diversity within our inclusive classrooms requires flexible support options so that the school can make decisions that are appropriate to their situation.

High School Teacher, Metropolitan NSW

Extracurricular activities

From lengthy processes to meaningful risk management and better guidance



Extracurricular activities, such as excursions and sports carnivals, form a valued part of a well-rounded education. For many teachers, they also provide the opportunity to further explore their interests and apply a variety of learning methods 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.

Improved guidance and clarity can be provided in order to manage workload connected to extracurricular activities.

- While some schools have developed efficient local processes to coordinate and organise extracurricular activities, feedback indicated that many schools found the process to be excessively burdensome.
- Some teachers highlighted they would no longer be running these activities due to the administrative burden or time required outside of regular working hours.
- The risk management process was highlighted as particularly time consuming, even for the simplest excursions.





 Delivered a new excursions policy and procedures including new approval process and resources for overseas excursions.

Activity underway



- Develop a centralised digital location for users to access streamlined information and advice on the organisation and management of variations of routine
- Offer training for different staff profiles, for example in relation to overseas excursions process and requirements
- 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
- Digitise manual forms and payment processes
- Develop example excursions linked to the curriculum with accompanying templates 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.

Initiatives being explored next



- Develop a bank of venue, accommodation and transport providers for excursion options across the state
- Explore options to consolidate the variation of routine coordination process in schools.

"This is crucial - we need the ability to mentor the whole student ... extracurricular activities are essential for this..."

High School Principal, Rural/Remote NSW

"Great idea to provide standardised systems to address organisation for these activities."

Primary School Principal, Rural/Remote NSW

Data collection and analysis

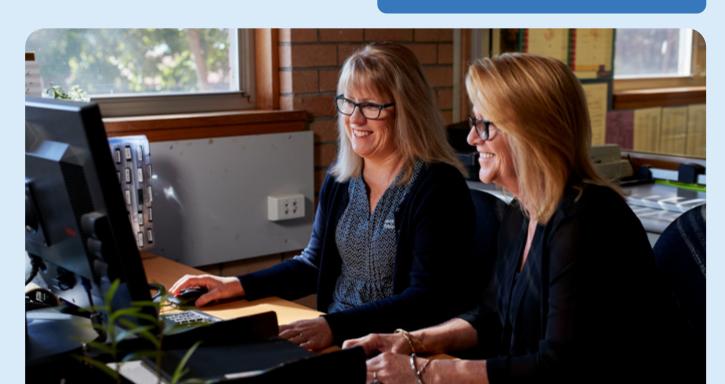
From disjointed and inefficient methods of collection to automation and single-source data



The collection and analysis of data is important as it gives schools valuable evidence to support school management and the effective delivery of educational programs.

However, schools report that department data collection, monitoring and analysis processes can be time consuming.

- Feedback received strengthened the call to reduce the volume of data required to be collected and held by schools.
- Comments on data collection made it clear that it needs to be considered broadly and include not just data entry, but also the collection of evidence on student learning, and the documentation of procedural compliance.
- HSC monitoring and VET paperwork were highlighted as areas of particular importance to simplify, as well as an overall call for less double handling between systems.
- Comments also requested support to make data capture and analysis more useful for learning through specialist staff or professional development.





- 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, as well as on-demand diagnostic assessments for reading and numeracy)
- 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.

Activity underway



- Implement an enhanced 'Parent Online Payment' system including a language translator service and an improved mobile experience for parents and carers
- Streamline paperwork and processes for HSC monitoring and VET
- Automate data sharing between third-party software used by schools to department systems to eliminate the need for doubleentry of information
- 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.

Initiatives being explored next



- Develop a data governance framework to lessen the amount and complexity of data collections required, streamline processes, limit to appropriate users, and achieve effective use of data gathered
- Create an online "education passport" that allows students to store and share academic and co-curricular achievements in a single digital location
- Consolidate and uplift internal and external systems
- Automate data transfer from formative assessments developed by the department to PLAN2.

"This is an area where the department could significantly decrease teachers' workload."

High School Principal, Metropolitan NSW

"Automate data transfer between systems to avoid teachers having to double handle information."

Primary School Principal, Rural/Remote NSW

For more information

Visit education.nsw.gov.au for ongoing updates about the Quality Time program

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

Say hello

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