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**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR WA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2016–2019**

HIGH PERFORMANCE — HIGH CARE



Department of
Education



FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL



“ In this plan we are committed to a ‘high performance – high care’ culture focused on our students. ”

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This strategic plan, High Performance – High Care, prioritises our work over the next four years that we believe will make a real difference to the lives of our students.

The empowerment reforms of recent years have placed in the hands of school leaders and their communities the critical levers to drive improvement at the school level. This improvement will now focus even more directly on student learning.

That is why, at the heart of this plan, is a commitment to a culture of ‘high performance – high care’.

We must have high expectations for every student to succeed – to accomplish their very best. A good education opens doors of opportunity and we should expect those doors to be open to all. Our teachers, support staff, school leaders, parents and the wider community must not take their eyes off this clear objective. A culture of high performance sees everyone working to achieve their best.

Alongside this, we understand that children and young people are precious and must be nurtured to grow and develop. A culture of high care acknowledges that our staff are very influential at different stages in the lives of students – from early childhood right through to the end of school and, indeed, beyond.

The four priorities in this plan – success for all students, high quality teaching, effective leadership, and strong governance and support – build on the commitments in Classroom First, including for the public school system to become a stronger system of distinctive schools.

It is both a privilege and a responsibility to be entrusted with the education of children and young people across this State. I believe our schools have earned the trust of the Western Australian community through the hard work, commitment and passion of our staff for the success of students.

This plan furthers our endeavours for our school communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharyn O'Neill".

Sharyn O'Neill

December 2015

BUILDING ON STRENGTH



Substantial progress has been made in putting the public school system in Western Australia on a new and exciting footing for the future.

Empowering school communities

The clear objective of the reform agenda in train is to empower school communities with a greater sense of investment in, and ownership of, their schools and their children's education.

This empowerment comes as a result of a deliberate move away from the old system of highly centralised control over schools to school communities having greater autonomy over the decisions that affect students.

School leaders are nurturing in others a strong sense of personal meaning and commitment to the ideals of their schools.

They are drawing together the influence of those who support their schools in ways that enhance the education opportunities for students.

Teachers are adopting more evidence-based approaches in their teaching practices to deliver high quality instruction.

Support staff are contributing in new and different ways to student learning and wellbeing, and to developing successful schools.

And families and communities are becoming more involved, active and engaged in their schools and their children's learning.

The result is a strong coalition of expertise and support that is unique and distinctive to each school while lifting standards across the public school system.

The challenge ahead is to continue to deliver and support meaningful autonomy to school communities in ways that enhance this sense of empowerment.

A culture of high performance and high care

At the heart of our drive for continued improvement is the creation of a 'high performance – high care' culture in every school and in regional and central offices.

Every member of staff has a contribution to make to this culture. Holding high expectations of the children and young people in our care – as well as of ourselves and our colleagues – is vital. So are reflecting on our performance, seeking feedback on how we can improve, and working together to support change.

As professional educators, our responsibilities have always extended beyond maximising the academic outcomes of our students. There is a strong human side to teaching that values relationships, engagement, support and respect.

We strive to create a culture in which every student experiences a sense of belonging to the school community, of being known and understood as an individual; and of staff who care about each student's overall progress and wellbeing.

Entwining a culture of high performance with a culture of high care will enable us to achieve the highest educational objectives.

THE NEXT PHASE



Effective leadership and high quality teaching

At the core of a high performance – high care culture is effective leadership in every school and high quality teaching in every classroom.

That is why a significant focus of this plan is on strengthening school leadership and teacher effectiveness.

School leaders play a critical role in driving high-level teaching practice among their teachers. High performing systems around the world are clear that improving the effectiveness of teaching is the only way to really lift student performance and, therefore, school performance.

As the impact of highly effective teaching is cumulative, even relatively modest increases in effectiveness can make big differences to students' learning.

Research paints a clear picture of what highly effective teachers do – and we have large numbers of these teachers in our schools. Expert teachers are observing their colleagues teach, giving feedback to help them improve, and welcoming them into their classrooms so they can see great teaching in action.

Expert teachers are also learning themselves by examining the impact of their own teaching strategies and comparing it with others in the search for more powerful teaching strategies.

The challenge is for these high quality practices to be evident in every school and every classroom. We want all teachers to have the same effect as our best teachers.

There is a clear and critical role for school leaders to recognise the different levels of teaching expertise in their schools and harness their expert teachers to build the capacity of the whole teaching staff.

We need empowering school leaders who enable teachers to work collaboratively and question their effectiveness; to create opportunities and use resources to deliver the best outcomes for their students; and to embrace more active involvement of parents and the community in the school.

The next phase

We have had unprecedented changes in our system in the past decade. Many of these changes require time and sustained effort over several years for their education benefits to be realised fully.

For the next four years our focus is to bring the ambitious reform agenda currently in place to have a very direct and sustained impact on student learning.

Our approach to system-wide improvement is to establish clear expectations for staff and students; create the conditions that enable everyone to perform at their best; and design accountability settings in which staff can demonstrate their effectiveness.

Implementation of our previous strategic plan, Excellence and Equity, has placed us in a strong position to now integrate all the elements of the reform agenda and drive them forward through a high performance – high care culture at all levels of the system.

Most importantly, our priorities over the next four years and our commitment to the Western Australian community remain constant: for every child to be provided with a high quality school education – whatever their ability, wherever they live, whatever their background.



A high quality school education for every child – whatever their ability, wherever they live, whatever their background.



PRIORITY 1: SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS



High expectations of success for every student in every school.

We will:

- expect a visible, student-by-student high performance – high care culture based on strong individual case management
- commit to State and national targets to increase student achievement including in literacy and numeracy, Aboriginal attainment, and the proportion of students eligible for university or completing vocational education and training certificates in the new WA Certificate of Education
- require schools to set high expectations and targets for the specific progress of students (or groups) based on rigorous analysis of data
- encourage greater responsibility of parents and the community to lift student attendance alongside implementation of school-based strategies
- strengthen services across the system to improve student behaviour and engagement, and introduce alternative settings to meet the specific needs of some students
- maintain a strong focus in the primary years and beyond on the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy
- encourage greater interest and competence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, and seek to increase the proportion of students studying these subjects in senior secondary years
- strengthen the gifted and talented education strategy to ensure specialist instruction and support for identified students
- develop in students skills for emerging industries and technologies including teamwork, problem solving, creativity, independent thinking, critical analysis, initiative and communication
- ensure students are confident and adaptive users of technology to prepare them for the learning, social and employment opportunities of the future
- work with families and communities early to give children the best start to learning including wrap-around services and collaboration with other organisations and agencies
- encourage schools to create opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership and care in school and the wider community.

System performance information:

- Percentage of students achieving 90% or above attendance.
- Percentages of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 at or above national standards in NAPLAN.
- Mean scaled scores of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN.
- Percentage of Year 8 cohort (Year 7 in the future) awarded the WA Certificate of Education on completion of Year 12.
- Percentage of students achieving an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) for university entry and/or certificate II and above.
- Percentage of students demonstrating literacy and numeracy proficiency for the WA Certificate of Education.
- Percentage of students making expected progress in literacy and numeracy between Pre-primary on entry assessment and Year 3 NAPLAN.
- Extent to which the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student performance is reduced.
- Extent to which parents, students and staff are satisfied with the management of student behaviour.

PRIORITY 2: HIGH QUALITY TEACHING



A renewed and relentless focus on the best possible teaching practices.

We will:

- articulate high expectations and standards of teacher performance through induction, professional learning and evaluation based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- expect a professional ethic among teachers to collaborate as a key strategy to improve teacher quality
- achieve school-wide agreement on strategies to increase consistency in teaching quality and practices
- assist teachers to develop analytical and evaluative practices to ensure expertise and confidence in diagnosing the impact of their teaching and adapting interventions for greater success
- provide more practical and direct specialist support and advice on instructional practice for teachers of students with disability by better using and sharing the expertise of teachers in education support settings
- help schools to create a more comprehensive approach to student wellbeing and support services that better meet growing demand for mental health, pastoral care and psychological support
- expect all school staff to maintain positive, respectful relationships with students, parents and each other as part of caring learning environments that support student wellbeing
- explore movement towards a competency-based career structure premised on nationally agreed standards
- explore the development of an online learning institute to strengthen technology-based learning and support, and to complement online professional collaboration among students, staff and parents
- provide opportunities for casual and temporary teachers to participate in learning opportunities to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills.

System performance information:

- Proportion of teachers assessed as proficient against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- Extent to which graduate teachers are supported to achieve proficiency against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- Extent to which professional learning is available and accessible to staff.
- Survey information from schools on relevance and effectiveness of school support services.
- Extent to which parents and students are satisfied with the quality of teaching.

PRIORITY 3: EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP



Strong and empowering leadership in every school and across the whole system.

We will:

- expect leaders to commit to and adopt the values of public education to anchor ethical decision making and behaviour
- expect school leaders to develop a shared vision in staff of high quality teaching that drives school-level recruitment, professional development, productive collaboration among staff, and performance management
- develop a comprehensive leadership strategy that incorporates the full leadership lifecycle of identifying, nurturing, developing and supporting aspiring, beginning, current and senior leaders
- tailor new leadership programs based on the Australian Professional Standard for Principals to increase school empowerment including an advanced leadership program for Independent Public School principals
- ensure school leaders focus on staff wellbeing including implementing sustainable approaches that support the physical, mental and social welfare of staff
- focus the efforts of school leaders on strategies for student wellbeing and safety
- harness the capability of school leaders to contribute to system development and leadership as significant assets in advancing the reform of the public school system
- support school leaders to lead self-reflective teaching practices that are owned by staff as a necessary part of school improvement
- implement the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework as a clear statement of expected practice and behaviour in schools and communities to increase Aboriginal student achievement and drive improvement planning
- introduce structured collegial reviews targeting aspects of school improvement to exemplify high standards, strengthen school self-assessment and share expertise among school leaders
- provide tangible support for school leaders to identify and act swiftly on underperformance as a key part of ensuring high quality teaching and support
- incorporate the perspectives of staff, students, parents and the community as active participants in school improvement planning.

System performance information:

- Extent to which principal performance is judged to be satisfactory through performance management processes.
- Extent to which employment diversity targets are achieved for women, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal people, people with disability and youth.
- Development of a comprehensive leadership strategy and associated leadership programs.
- Implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework.
- Extent to which school leaders participate in professional learning on health and wellbeing.
- Extent to which parents and staff are satisfied with school leadership.

PRIORITY 4: STRONG GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT



A capable and responsive organisation for now and into the future.

We will:

- continue to provide opportunities for schools to shape the distinctive ways they respond to student and community aspirations, including through the Independent Public Schools initiative
- strengthen the expectations of principals through the Delivery and Performance Agreement for Independent Public Schools and the Funding Agreement for all other schools
- promote empowerment of local communities by increasing the capacity of school board members to fulfil their responsibilities including oversight of budget, input into school business planning and involvement in principal selection
- introduce a comprehensive and cyclic review for each school not reviewed externally as part of the Independent Public Schools initiative to provide assurance that these schools are performing to expectation
- explore models of vocational education and training that deliver programs and qualifications in schools to maximise opportunities for senior secondary students to achieve
- investigate ways to strengthen secondary schooling in regional areas including delivering high quality residential college services
- consolidate services for students with disability to ensure the best possible support is available
- strengthen information technology in schools to support learning, collaboration and management
- continue to improve school infrastructure across the State
- enhance the capability of school support staff to add value to classroom effectiveness, care and school management
- increase collaboration with other agencies and make best use of strengthened networks to support school staff
- ensure central office and associated school services evolve towards a more enabling role to support school staff while maintaining transparent accountability, governance and funding frameworks
- introduce performance assessments, including feedback from schools, for system-level programs and initiatives to ensure the best support is provided to students and school staff.

System performance information:

- Implementation of the Independent Public Schools initiative.
- Schools' compliance with the Delivery and Performance Agreement for Independent Public Schools and the new Funding Agreement.
- Extent to which cyclic reviews of schools that are not Independent Public Schools demonstrate delivery of high quality education.
- Improvement in information and communication technology capacity in schools.
- Implementation of Government and Department legislative and policy requirements, including budget and workforce planning.