Australian Government

QUEENSLAND

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

National Partnership for
Low Socio-Economic Status
School Communities

NATIONAL SMARTER SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIPS

Queensland Government

Independent Schools Queensland
choice & diversity

QCEC
WITH VISION AND SPIRIT

CONTENTS

The Smarter Schools National Partnership on Low SES School Communities is a joint initiative of the Australian Government and Education Queensland, Independent Schools Queensland and Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

TABLES

INTRODUCTION

The *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership* is a joint initiative between the Australian Government, the Queensland Department of Education and Training (DET) and Catholic and Independent schooling sectors. State and non-state schools located in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland will participate and work towards improved student learning outcomes through innovative approaches to leadership, school operations, teaching, student learning and parent community partnerships.

The Australian Government will contribute $231.75 million over seven years (2009 – 2015) to the National Partnership. State and non-state schools and systems will match this funding. The Partnership will be rolled out in 170 Queensland schools from 2009. This comprises progressive implementation in 131 state schools, 30 Catholic schools and 9 Independent schools.

Each schooling sector, in consultation with local communities, will determine which strategies best respond to local needs. In addition to a number of systemically driven strategies, the plan provides a bank of ideas that school principals can use as a starting point as they develop their own school plan in consultation with their local community.

The plan integrates six key reform areas aimed at improving student learning outcomes in participating schools. These reform areas are:

- Incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers

- Adoption of best-practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals

- School operational arrangements that encourage innovation and flexibility

- Provision of innovative and tailored learning opportunities

- Strengthened school accountability; and

- External partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and provision of access to extended services.

This plan provides an opportunity for schools to test new reforms in the way schooling is funded, structured and delivered in low socio-economic status communities which, if shown to be successful, could be developed into recommendations for system-wide change. Many of these strategies will also be tested in Phase 1 and 2 schools to determine if they should be continued or modified in future phases.

Each school sector will provide direct support to schools as they engage in the reforms. Sectors will provide on-going advice and professional development to school leaders responsible for developing school plans and implementing the reforms.

CROSS-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

The non-government sector in Queensland includes Catholic and Independent schools, represented by Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ).

QCEC and ISQ have been engaged as partners in the development of this Implementation Plan. Representatives from the sector have been integral to the development of the reform areas and specific actions contained in the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan has been endorsed by both ISQ and QCEC.

Governance during this development period has occurred through the Queensland Schooling Sector Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) Committee, which is chaired by the Director-General of DET and has as members the respective heads of the government, Catholic, and Independent schooling sectors. The Queensland Schooling Sector CEOs Committee will continue as the overarching governance forum between the schooling sectors for the life of this Agreement. DET will continue to work collaboratively with the non-government sector, both systemically and with individual schools as required, in implementing reforms under this Agreement.

The non-state sectors will report six-monthly to DET on the progress of implementation, and provide data to inform full annual reporting to ensure payments from the Commonwealth are triggered in a timely manner.

ISQ will distribute Commonwealth facilitation funding directly to the targeted Independent schools. Schools will determine which reforms and strategies to implement. Systemically, ISQ has committed to strategies in the following areas:

- Leadership development / performance development for principals
- Teacher induction, recruitment, and professional development
- Support for rural and remote schools
- Effective use of student data; and
- Student wellbeing and engagement.

QCEC will distribute facilitation funding to the Dioceses, which will determine the expenditure of facilitation funding and co-investment on school or cluster reforms at a local level. QCEC have committed to implementing strategies in the following areas (these strategies will be implemented in one or more Dioceses):

- Principal and teacher incentives
- Leadership development / performance development for principals
- Workforce planning
- Teacher induction, recruitment, and professional development
- Effective use of student data
- Community engagement and reporting
- Student wellbeing and engagement; and
- Maintaining the QCEC funding distribution mechanism to help low socio-economic status school communities.

REFORM INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES

Schools in the *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership* will take part in reforms in each of the following areas:

- Introducing incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers
- Adopting best practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals
- Introducing school operational arrangements that encourage innovation and flexibility
- Providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities
- Strengthening school accountability; and
- Forming external partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and provision of access to extended services.

List of reforms and suggested strategies for schools

The following list of strategies includes both systemic reforms and strategies that individual schools may choose to implement. Not all of these reforms will be taken up by all sectors, or by all participating schools.

Incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers

- Introduce principal performance agreements, including incentive payments, to attract high-performing principals to schools in low socio-economic status communities
- Introduce one term of paid leave for Bands 10 & 11 principals from their base school upon satisfactory completion of the full-term of their agreement
- Introduce new opportunities that encourage teacher workforce continuity
- Trial targeted teacher recruitment, development and support strategy
- Trial an incentive scheme for classified / promotional teacher positions
- Support principals and other school leaders to undertake professional exchanges and sabbaticals; and
- Introduce customised professional development for principals and aspiring principals.

Adoption of best practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals

- Introduce backfill arrangements for Band 7 teaching principals to provide them with time to implement National Partnership reforms
- Develop new systems that will allow principals to directly appoint up to 10 per cent of their teaching staff

- Provide principals with the flexibility to plan their own staffing mix

- Provide principals with greater flexibility to maximise the use of their global budget

- Enhance governance options for schools with differential models of school autonomy and community accountability

- Redesign processes for managing unsatisfactory performance

- Provide processes and resources to support a high staff performance culture in school

- Implement new and creative approaches to support staff wellbeing and resilience in an effort to enhance workforce continuity

- Deliver systemic induction programs to provide graduates and newly appointed teachers with a comprehensive induction to teaching in a low socio-economic status environment; and

- Provide greater teacher access to professional development.

School operational arrangements that encourage innovation and flexibility

- Implement school-wide approaches to increase positive behaviours, improve attendance, identify early intervention needs, improve transition between schools, and meet the social and emotional learning needs of students (School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support)
- Develop schools as community hubs (Principals, in consultation with their broader school community, will develop and implement new ways to engage parents and students after school hours to promote improved learning outcomes, such as: extended hours of library access over weekends and evenings, homework clubs, summer schools, extra tuition for students after school and on holiday and/or on weekends, parenting programs, adult learning programs. These opportunities may be delivered by a range of community-based providers)

- Provide support for schools in rural and remote locations

- Create a more flexible and tailored approach to managing teacher transfers, including more effective movement of teaching staff across schools to promote school improvement and innovation

- Employ additional specialist staff; and

- Pilot a variety of cluster support services models to provide additional administrative and corporate services support for smaller schools.

Providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities

- Introduce a personalised learning approach that supports teachers to focus on the individual learning needs of each student
- Engage local mentors (Schools will engage with previous students or other local celebrities to promote a positive approach to school attendance and effort)

- Introduce Deadly Maths (Program aimed at improving teacher understanding of the nature and pedagogy of mathematics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

knowledge, culture, language, and out-of-school life, and providing learning support to targeted students participating in school based apprenticeships and traineeships)

- Support traineeships and apprenticeships (The provision of support aimed at improving literacy and numeracy levels on completion of school and for employment opportunities post-school. The strategy will support young people until completion of their apprenticeship or traineeship, which may be beyond school completion. Additional traineeships will be available for school leavers. To promote an effective transition from school, additional traineeships will be provided as part of the Employment Support Package)

- Provide additional teacher aide support

- Introduce a tiered model of academic and social/emotional screening that will identify student needs, personalise intervention services and monitor progress over time

- Conduct school action research on cohort engagement and achievement (All state schools will undertake action research projects as outlined in their school plan that focus on improved engagement and outcomes of various student cohort groups such as students with disabilities, students with learning difficulties, Indigenous students, students with English as a second language, refugee students and homeless students)

- Enhance existing alternative education programs as well as design and establish new centres on school sites to provide young people that have disengaged from education or are at risk of disengaging with a place and an opportunity to engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment

- Support the transition between primary and secondary

- Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the four areas of school practice – personal and professional accountability, organisational environment, community partnerships and curriculum and pedagogy; and

- Provide professional development to assist teachers to explicitly include the teaching and learning of social and emotional learning programs within the Prep to Year 9 curriculum.

Strengthened school accountability

- Introduce Turnaround Teams of experienced school leaders and teachers that will work directly with school staff in implementing reform strategies
- Participate in the Teaching and Learning Audit
- Develop systemic capability for teachers to track student performance and intervene where redirection or further supports are required
- Develop and implement corporate systems to enable sophisticated use of and access by schools to data to improve decision-making
- Develop skills of teachers and school leaders in effective data analysis and development of appropriate interventions
- Increase commitment to community reporting and engagement; and
- Conduct evaluation and review.

External partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and the provision of

access to extended services (including through brokering arrangements)

- Engage in 'widening participation' work with students to improve transition of low socio-economic status students to further learning'
- Establish wellbeing centres and employ additional staff such as allied health professionals (e.g. therapists, nurses, psychologists) to support the wellbeing of students and better engage their parents
- Strengthen links with early childhood providers
- Form business partnerships
- Introduce a new event that celebrates effective parent, community and school partnerships
- Provide advice and support on improving responses to student wellbeing issues such as attendance, effort, behaviour and homework
- Provide advice to schools wishing to introduce parenting programs for families especially prior to Prep enrolment
- Support 'sister school' relationships to be developed between teachers and leaders of participating schools and high-performing schools; and
- Establish online forums and discussion groups to promote problem-solving and sharing of innovations across schools, particularly in rural and remote locations.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND MEASURES

The following indicators will be reported against at a Queensland level as part of the *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership* reporting process.

Table 1: State-level performance indicators

Outcomes	Performance indicators
All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling.	The proportion of children enrolled in and attending school.
Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving.	Literacy and numeracy achievement of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in national testing.
Schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the education disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children.	The proportion of Indigenous and low socio-economic status children enrolled in and attending school. Literacy and numeracy achievement of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 Indigenous and low socio-economic status students in national testing. The proportion of the 19-year-old Indigenous and low socio-economic status population having attained at least Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Quality Framework (AQF) Certificate II. The proportion of Indigenous students completing Year 10.
Australian students excel by international standards.	The proportion of students in the bottom and top levels of performance in international testing (e.g. Program for International Student Assessment, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study).
Young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.	The proportion of the 19-year-old population having attained at least a Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II. The proportion of young people participating in post-school education or training six months after school. The proportion of 18 to 24-year-olds engaged in full-time employment, education or training at or above AQF Certificate III.

In addition to the above outcomes and indicators specified in the *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership*, the following performance indicators will be used by sectors (state, Catholic, Independent) and schools to report on progress and outcomes achieved by participating schools over the four-year plan.

Table 2: Sector-level and school-level performance indicators

Outcomes	Performance indicators
Schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the education disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children.	The percentage of Indigenous students completing Year 10. The proportion of young people participating in post-school education or training six months after leaving school.
Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving.	Percentage of Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students at or above the National Minimum Standard for Reading and Numeracy (all students, Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students). Mean scale scores of Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students for Reading and Numeracy (all students, Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students).
All students are successfully engaged in learning.	Average student attendance rate (all students, Indigenous students, non-Indigenous students). Apparent retention rates[1] for Years 8 -10 (all students, Indigenous students, non-Indigenous students). Apparent retention rates[1] for Years 10 – 12 (all students, Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students). Percentage of Year 12 students that are completing/completed a SAT or were awarded one or more of the following: QCE, IBD, VET qualification (all students, Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students). Level of student wellbeing at the school[2] (all students, Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students). Student cohort (Indigenous, students with disabilities, ESL students, refugee students, students with additional learning needs, students at educational risk including homeless students) achievements via action research case studies.
Community confidence in the capability of schools	Level of satisfaction of parents and students.[3]

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1 Apparent Retention Rate. Apparent Retention Rates are derived annually from aggregate enrolment data. The rate represents the proportion of full-time students in Year 12 divided by the same cohort's number of full-time students when in Year 10 (e.g. the number of full-time Year 12 students in 2008 divided by the number of full-time Year 10 students in 2006). Given that the rates are derived from enrolment totals, they are treated as indicative or apparent only.

Apparent retention rates are a broad indicator of young people's participation in secondary school education. However school retention is only one measure of positive engagement for young people who may choose to participate in a range of school, training or work options.

2 Student wellbeing at school. To inform this indicator two measures are derived: one from the student survey the other from the parent survey.

Students. The related questions of the school opinion survey seeks responses to the level of student satisfaction with the following:

That teachers help you do your best? That you are treated fairly? That you are safe at school? That you are happy to go to school? (These questions may be different for school in the Independent and Catholic Sectors) Parents. The related questions of the school opinion survey seeks responses to the level of parent satisfaction with the following: With the encouragement given to your child? Your child is treated fairly at this school? Your child is safe at this school? Your child is happy to go to school? (These questions may be different for schools in the Independent and Catholic Sectors).

3 Satisfaction. Responses from the School Opinion Survey in relation to the following: Students. Percentage of students satisfied with the proposition, "getting a good education." Parent. Percentage of parents satisfied with the proposition, "that this is a good school." (These questions may be different for schools in the Independent and Catholic sectors).

SCHOOL SELECTION

Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSED) identifies geographic areas that are relatively disadvantaged, based on a range of indicators relating to the economic and social resources of people and households within an area. Schools were identified as relatively disadvantaged based on the IRSED score of the addresses of the students or the location of the school. The Commonwealth provided Queensland with a list of schools that were classified as disadvantaged using this method. Each sector then selected schools that would be targeted in the *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership*.

A list of participating schools is available at:
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/default.aspx

State schools

State schools were included based on IRSED scores, with the following adjustments:

- Preference was given to large state high schools in order to address the accumulative disadvantage evidenced in large high schools in particular

- Special schools and a detention centre school were excluded as they already have flexible staffing processes and additional funding to assist in improving student outcomes

- Small schools (Band 5 and 6) were excluded, as they will benefit more efficiently from cluster services; and

- Schools scheduled for closure as part of the *State Schools of Tomorrow* initiative were excluded.

Selected state schools represent a spread of schools across the state. The proportion of Indigenous students in the school and the proportion of students with a disability were contributing factors in selecting which schools would commence participation first.

Catholic schools

Catholic schools were chosen after consultation between QCEC and Diocesan and Edmund Rice Education Australia education officers to determine the schools that would benefit most from starting the program earliest. Principals of these schools were consulted in determining this list. All schools on the list provided by the Commonwealth were included.

Independent schools

Independent schools were selected from the list provided by the Commonwealth. The timing of the schools' involvement in the *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership* has been the result of attempting to match the schools' enrolments with the approximate level of funding being received at that time through the National Partnership. For example, those schools with smaller enrolments have been included in the early phases where the proportion of funding is comparatively smaller.

SCHOOL-LEVEL PLANS

School plans will:

- Take state Implementation Plans as their starting point

- Be developed by principals in participating schools, education authorities and systems, ensuring that students, teachers, parents and communities (including representatives of groups of students at risk in the school and their parents such as Indigenous students, young parents, students with a disability, students with a language background other than English, homeless students) are properly consulted

- Identify and acknowledge student backgrounds, valuing student strengths and what they bring to the learning environment, through consultation with families and communities

- Draw on the suggested strategies for school plans to identify and assess the student and school needs and strategies

- Identify school national partnership funding and co-investment, and how this will be spent

- Identify the activities and strategies being implemented by the school, including those being implemented as part of the *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership*

- List the systemic performance indicators that will form the basis for prioritising reform activities and the evidence that will be used by the school to demonstrate improvement

- Identify local stretch targets that will be used to measure and assess school progress including relevant 'Closing the Gap' targets for Indigenous students

- Include explicit strategies and targets aimed at:

  o closing the gap of achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students

  o improving the literacy, numeracy and science performance of students

  o improving reporting and engagement of parents and the community

  o improving student wellbeing and engagement

  o improving student transition from school to work and further study

- Include strategies that focus on developing teacher incentive and workforce planning strategies

- Include an evidence-based action research project aimed at improving attendance, participation and learning outcomes for highly represented student cohorts such as those recognised as Indigenous, refugees, non English speaking background, learning difficulties, disabilities and homeless

- Take into account synergies between existing school plans and state reforms, identifying 'gaps' that might be successfully addressed for particular schools and their cohorts and limitations of any suggested reforms

- Outline how the school will re-allocate its own resources in support of the plan's reform strategies; and

- Develop a strategy to ensure sustainability of new practices and that new models are able to be delivered in the longer term, prior to the end of the four year funding round.

Templates have been developed to assist schools to focus their planning on the outcomes to be achieved and also monitor and report on actions and reforms.

Plans will be signed off by the principal and school parent organisation representative or school board member as appropriate and will be published on every school website. Published annual school reports will outline progress against targets and strategies referenced in the school strategic plan.

SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC STUDENT COHORTS

All schools will undertake action research projects as outlined in their school plan that focus on improved engagement and learning outcomes of various student cohort groups, such as students with a disability, students with learning difficulties, Indigenous students, ESL students, refugee students and homeless students. The choice of cohort will vary depending on which groups are significantly represented at the participating school.

Each year, schools will be required to report on learning outcomes achieved across these cohorts. The findings of these projects will be published online and fed into the evaluation so all schools can benefit from the learning's.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

The *Closing the Gap Education Strategy* outlines the Department's strategic direction for state schools and regions to close the gap in Indigenous education disadvantage.

The strategy aims to:

- Deliver clear, concise messages for regions and schools

- Specify a small number of targets based on the COAG and Toward Q2 outcomes; and

- Contain a small number of evidence-based service lines, priority areas and initiatives.

Each four-year school strategic plan will be required to include specific strategies designed to close the gap between achievement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The Department has identified a small number of service lines to drive transformational improvement in outcomes to 'close the gap' in Indigenous student learning and life outcomes including foundation learning with a focus on literacy and numeracy. This service line is based on data and evidence-based research and recognises the critical importance of building the foundations for learning and preparing children to start school.

Other service lines are:

- Health and physical activity as a precondition to learning

- Participation to employment; and

- Culture and enterprise.

Two of the key underpinning principles for the strategy are:

- **Place based solutions with a whole of school approach to improving learning.** Place-based solutions are about recognising the need for services to take account of local circumstances and be informed by appropriate consultation and negotiation with local school communities. In addition to solutions being place-based, they must be built on whole-school approaches. The purpose of developing a whole-school approach is to establish a planned, systematic approach to teaching and learning in order to improve learning outcomes of Indigenous students.

- **Case-managed performance and accountability.** This principle recognises the importance of managing individual performance of students and being held to account for the outcomes.

The Regional Executive Directors and their Executive Directors of Schools have strong relationships with all of the schools in their region, and are best equipped to create the conditions for improving Indigenous student achievement. The *Closing the Gap Education Strategy* is therefore strongly regionally focused.

Each region has developed an Indigenous education regional plan, to document the strategies and actions the region will undertake to achieve negotiated targets. The *Closing the Gap Education Strategy* provides the guiding framework for these plans.

A key element of the strategy is the negotiation of differentiated targets with each region for improvement in Indigenous student achievement. These targets are documented in regional resource agreements through which funding is distributed to regions and schools to implement 'Closing the Gap' initiatives.

Under each service stream are priority areas and initiatives that evidence and experience indicate will improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes for Indigenous students. They aim to enhance, complement and improve performance of mainstream education and training initiatives to meet the needs of Indigenous students.

The Department's *Closing the Gap Education Strategy* can be found at the following website *http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/indigenous/pdfs/closing-gap.pdf*

MORE INFORMATION

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations website:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Queensland Department of Education and Training website:

http://education.qld.gov.au/nationalpartnerships/

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Independent Schools Queensland website:

http://www.aisq.qld.edu.au/files/files/whatsnew/NP.pdf

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Queensland Catholic Education Commission website:

http://www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au/