



Australian Government

National School Reform Agreement

2023 Annual Report on progress in implementing the national policy initiatives

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National School Reform Agreement: 2023 Annual Report on progress in implementing the national policy initiatives

This report outlines the progress towards implementing the national policy initiatives in 2023 against agreed milestones contained in the *National School Reform Agreement* (the Agreement). It is the fifth annual public report, as required by clause 53.a. of the Agreement, and follows publication of the 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 progress reports.

The Agreement features three reform directions that focus on supporting students, student learning and achievement; supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement; and enhancing the national evidence base.

The reform directions are progressed nationally through eight national policy initiatives, together with a suite of state-specific activities outlined in bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and states or territories.

The national policy initiatives are developed in close consultation and collaboration with government and non-government education authorities and broader education stakeholders including, but not limited to, teachers, school leaders and parents.

On 29 March 2023, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education announced the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System (the Review) to advise on what reform priorities should be included in the next agreement. To allow for the Review to take place, the current Agreement was extended for 12 months to 31 December 2024. Australia's Education Ministers continue to collaborate and implement the remaining national policy initiatives throughout the remainder of the Agreement.

Key milestones achieved over 2023:

- A(i) and A(ii) Online Formative Assessment Initiative: The Australian Government, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and Education Services Australia (ESA) progressed work on assessing the feasibility of an approach to sharing existing formative assessment items. ACARA piloted the approach with years 4, 6 and 8 in 18 schools during Term 3 2023.
- A(iii) Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training: A cross-jurisdictional working group consisting of education and skills representatives continues to work collaboratively on development of a national strategy on vocational education and training (VET) in schools. Work on developing the strategy is being led by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

- C(i) Unique Student Identifier: The Australian Education Senior Officials Committee (AESOC) endorsed the Schools USI Implementation Workplan in September 2023. The workplan outlines activities related to legislation, information privacy, data governance, communication and business readiness, and design and technical activities.
- C(iii) The Post-School Destinations Survey (now known as GENERATION) first year of data was released, and students were interviewed for the second survey in 2023. The final report of the post-school destinations data linkage proof-of-concept project was considered out-of-session by the Education Ministers Meeting (formerly known as the Education Council) in December 2023.

Under clauses 51-55 of the Agreement, all parties have committed to reporting on progress in implementing agreed national policy initiatives outlined in Schedule B to give the community confidence that Education Ministers are making efforts to improve the quality and equity of Australia's schooling system. Table 1 of this report reflects progress as at 31 December 2023 against revised National School Reform Agreement Schedule B milestones approved by Education Ministers on 4 September 2020.

Table 1: Progress in implementing the national policy initiatives against milestones in Schedule B of the *National School Reform Agreement* (up to 31 December 2023)

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
Note: A(i) and A(ii) are being progressed jointly A(i) Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors	a) Education Council consider proposal(s) for the development of learning progressions across the Australian Curriculum learning areas and general capabilities, including consideration of existing progressions and development stages, timelines and estimated costs.	Early 2019	Yes.	
	b) Subject to Education Council agreement at a), develop and trial learning progressions and formative assessment capability for learning areas and general capabilities, with priority on literacy and numeracy in the early years of schooling.	2021 - 2022	Partially.	In August 2022, Education Ministers noted advice on the Beta Development Phase and that some jurisdictions had matured considerably in their capability over recent years, especially during COVID-19, and that the option to share that material to meet the online formative assessment need should be explored. Ministers agreed not to proceed with the next phase of the

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
				project at this stage and to consider advice on whether resources currently available in some states could be used to meet the needs of smaller jurisdictions and a way forward.
	c) Subject to Education Council agreement to a) and b) above, existing and new learning progressions and formative assessment capability for agreed Australian Curriculum learning areas and general capabilities are progressively made available.	From 2022	No	On 15 December 2022, EMM agreed that the Australian Government, on behalf of AESOC, will work with ACARA, ESA, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland to develop a detailed approach to sharing existing assessments and assessment items to establish a bank of assessments and an approach to: a) aligning the assessment /assessment items to Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum, which has aligned and embedded the literacy and numeracy learning progressions; b) developing suitable measurement scales to underpin the literacy

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
				and numeracy progressions initially (followed by other learning areas of the Australian Curriculum); c) identifying the most cost-effective and expedient way to share assessments with teachers/systems across Australia, using existing national agency infrastructure or an existing share platform; d) making the assessments available on an opt-in basis for teachers across Australia to use; and e) ensuring that issues of intellectual property, assessment security and integrity are adequately addressed. On 16 June 2023, AESOC endorsed the establishment of a steering committee to oversee the work.

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
				ACARA piloted the approach with years 4, 6 and 8 in 18 schools during Term 3 2023.
Note: A(i) and A(ii) are being progressed jointly A (ii) Assisting teachers monitor individual student progress and identify student learning needs through opt-in online and on demand student learning assessment tools with links to student learning resources, prioritising early years foundation skills	a) Education Council consider a proposal for the enhancement of formative assessment capabilities, including consideration of existing IT solutions, online assessment resources and digital learning resources and potential benefits to students, teachers and school leaders. It is expected the proposal will include development stages, timelines, governance arrangements and estimated costs.	Early 2019	Yes.	
	b) Subject to Education Council agreement at a), Education Council commission: the design, build and piloting of an opt-in formative assessment facility with priority on early years literacy and numeracy. Assessments should be matched to agreed learning progressions (such as English,	Early 2021	Partially.	As in A(i)(b) above.

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
	mathematics, science and critical and creative thinking), and the development of supporting professional learning modules to build teacher and school leader capacity and capability to use effective formative assessment practices.			
	c) Subject to Education Council agreement at a) and b), progressively develop and release nationally available online on-demand formative assessment resources (linked to the development schedule for learning progressions across Australian Curriculum learning areas and general capabilities), refine the online formative assessment facility based on feedback from the pilot and align digital teaching resources to the learning progressions.	From 2022	No.	As in A(i)(c) above.
A (iii) Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work,	a) Education Council agree panel membership and terms of reference for a review of senior secondary education, pathways to work, further education and	Early 2019	Yes.	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
further education and training	training and consideration of prerequisites for university entry.			
	b) Subject to Education Council agreement at a), Education Council receive review report and consider recommendations for any national initiatives to strengthen student pathways, with States and Territories to independently consider recommendations for local response.	From June 2020	Yes. The final report is available at Looking to the Future: Report of the Review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training - Department of Education, Australian Government	
	c) Subject to Education Council agreement at a) and b), Education Council has implemented, or is progressing, agreed recommendations as appropriate.	From December 2020	Yes.	
B (i) Reviewing teacher workforce	a) Education Council consider an implementation strategy for the	Early 2019	Yes.	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
needs of the future to attract and retain the best and brightest to the teaching profession and attract teachers to areas of need	recommendations of the National Review of Teacher Registration.			
	b) Education Council begin to develop options for a national teacher workforce strategy.	Mid 2019	Yes.	
	c) Subject to b), Education Council agree to an option for a national teacher workforce strategy to support decision making of teacher employers and initial teacher education (ITE) providers. It is anticipated the strategy would identify requirements to address workforce issues of supply, demand, retention, attrition, hard to staff schools, specialisation, teaching out of field, rural and remote workforce and any gaps in data identified by Parties and sectors.	September 2020	Yes.	
	d) Subject to Education Council agreement at b) and c), Education Council implement a national teacher workforce strategy to respond to teacher workforce needs of	From December 2020	Yes.	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
	the future and support decision making of teacher employers and ITE providers.			
B (ii) Strengthening the initial teacher accreditation system	a) States and Territories ensure that accredited initial teacher education programs require pre-service teachers to have successfully completed an endorsed final-year teaching performance assessment prior to graduation.	From January 2019	Yes.	
	b) Commence national quality assurance activities in cooperation with all jurisdictional authorities.	From January 2019	Yes.	
C (i) Implementing a national unique student identifier (USI) that meets national privacy requirements in order to support better understanding of student progression	a) Education Council consider:	Late 2019	Yes.	
	i. a proposal for a national USI to enhance school and system self-review and external quality assurance, including proposed approach and compatibility with existing USIs ii. Governance, privacy protections, national data access protocols and	September 2020	Partially.	The governance, privacy protections, national data access protocols and protections, and estimates and proposed allocations of costs were broadly considered by the end of

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
and improve the national evidence base	protections and estimates and proposed allocations of costs.			2020 with further development and refinement required.
	b) Subject to Education Council agreement at a), implement the institutional arrangements necessary to support the implementation of a national USI.	March 2021	No	In November 2021, Education Ministers noted the approach to pilot an option for the USI with South Australia, New South Wales, Northern Territory, and the independent and Catholic school sectors within those jurisdictions. The pilot commenced in January 2022 and concluded in June 2022. In December 2022, Education Ministers noted the outcomes of the pilot and agreed to the operating model for the schools USI as the basis for national implementation. Ministers also agreed that AESOC will oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive workplan on legislative, information privacy, data governance,

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
				cybersecurity, technical, stakeholder and costing matters. In September 2023, AESOC endorsed a comprehensive implementation workplan; delivery of agreed workstreams is underway.
	c) Subject to Education Council agreement at a) and b), and subject to meeting national privacy requirements, schools and systems to progressively work to create a national USI for each student from 2021.	All students to have a USI by the end of the agreement	Not yet applicable.	This milestone was not met and, as part of the NSRA extension agreement, parties agreed to a new final milestone that all Commonwealth arrangements to enable a national USI for school students will be in place by the end of 2024.
C (ii) Establishing an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system	a) Education Council consider options for an independent national evidence institute, including scope of functions, potential for expansion of existing capabilities, interaction with existing national bodies, funding and governance arrangements.	Late 2019	Yes.	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
improvement and policy development	b) Subject to Education Council agreement to an option at a), implement the institutional arrangements necessary to support an independent national evidence institute.	Mid 2020	Yes.	
	c) Subject to Education Council agreement at a) and b), the national evidence institute commences operations from 2020, and inter alia, develops and implements a national research and evidence plan.	From 2020	Yes. More information is available from the Australian Education Research Organisation website.	
C (iii) Improving national data quality, consistency and collection to improve the national evidence	a) Education Council agree equity and proficiency standards (for numeracy and literacy assessed by NAPLAN) as part of the scheduled review of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling.	December 2018 & February 2023	Yes.	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
base and inform policy development.	b) Education Council consider strategic opportunities to enhance the national evidence base, including options for measures of child development status at school entry, student learning gain, general capabilities, post-school destination information, attainment, retention, wellbeing, post-school outcomes.	Life of the agreement	Ongoing (as continuing through 2024)	The Department of Education has considered strategic ongoing opportunities, with 4 projects underway to enhance the national evidence base that will continue through 2024, • The <i>Post-School Destinations Survey (GENERATION)</i> commenced in 2022 and is on track. • The final report for the post-school destinations proof-of-concept data linkage project was considered by Education Ministers in late-2023. Ministers agreed to continuation of the National Post-School Destinations Subgroup to report back to EMM, via SPG and AESOC, with costed project options to consider the future of the data linkage asset. • The National School Readiness Project Final Report was noted by

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
				Education Ministers out of session in early 2023. The report will inform preschool outcome measures being progressed through the Preschool Reform Agreement. No further action is required on the project. • The Student Wellbeing Project has been completed as commissioned under the Agreement. A new intergovernmental working group, led by the ACT, has been established to address contextual changes as well as consider commonalities and challenges in measuring student wellbeing.