



Australian Government

National School Reform Agreement

2024 Annual Report on progress in implementing the national policy initiatives

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National School Reform Agreement: 2024 Annual Report on progress in implementing the national policy initiatives

This report outlines the progress towards implementing the national policy initiatives in 2024 against agreed milestones contained in the *National School Reform Agreement* (the Agreement). It is the sixth and final annual public report, as required by clause 53.a. of the Agreement, and follows publication of the 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 progress reports. This Agreement ceased on 31 December 2024.

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

The reform directions were 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.

Implementation of the national policy initiatives was undertaken 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 Agreement was extended for 12 months to 31 December 2024. Australia's Education Ministers continued to collaborate and implement the remaining national policy initiatives throughout the remainder of the Agreement.

To reflect amendments over the final year of the Agreement, Table 1 of this report has been updated for national policy initiatives A(ii) to include additional milestones and timings at A(ii)(d) and revised timing for the C(i)(c) milestone. 'Education Council' has been updated to 'Education Ministers Meeting' throughout this report.

Key milestones achieved over 2024:

- A(i) and A(ii) Online Formative Assessment Initiative. The Australian Government is continuing to work with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to deliver a collection of formative assessment resources that will enhance teaching quality, support equitable student outcomes and facilitate the successful implementation of Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum.

- C(i) Unique Student Identifier: The enactment of the Commonwealth legislation to extend the unique student identifier (USI) system to the schooling sector in 2024 marked a significant accomplishment in the delivery of a USI for school students. The schools USI project continues to be a priority for all governments as a national enabling initiative under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 (BFSA) and Better and Fairer Schools Agreement - Full and Fair Funding 2025-2034 (BFSA-FFF). The Australian Government and the states and territories, in conjunction with the non-government school sector, are now focussed on achieving the final milestone for the initiative under the BFSA and BFSA-FFF: All school students will have a USI by the end of 2027.
- C(iii) The Post-School Destinations Survey (now known as GENERATION) second year of data was released, and students were interviewed for the third survey in 2024. 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. In January 2024, Ministers agreed to continuation of the National Post-School Destinations Subgroup to report back to EMM with costed project options to consider the future of the data linkage asset.

Under clauses 51-55 of the Agreement, all parties committed to reporting on progress in implementing agreed national policy initiatives outlined in Schedule B to give the community confidence that Education Ministers were making efforts to improve the quality and equity of Australia's schooling system. Table 1 of this report reflects progress as at 31 December 2024.

Table 1: Progress in implementing the national policy initiatives against milestones in Schedule B of the *National School Reform Agreement* (up to 31 December 2024)

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
<p>Note: A(i) and A(ii) are being progressed jointly</p> <p>A(i) Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors</p>	<p>a) Education Ministers Meeting 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.</p> <p>b) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting 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.</p>	<p>Early 2019</p> <p>2021 - 2022</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>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</p>

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
				be explored. Ministers agreed not to proceed with the next phase of the 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 Ministers Meeting 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	Partially	In December 2022, EMM agreed that the Australian Government, on behalf of AESOC, would 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 formative assessments. ACARA piloted the approach with years 4, 6 and 8 in 18 schools during Term 3 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:
				<p>In 2024, the project was rebased to prioritise efforts to meet the needs of teachers who may not have ready access to quality assured formative assessments aligned to the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>In 2025, the Australian Government will continue to work with ACARA to progress the rebased scope of work with a view to seek ministers' agreement to an approach by the end 2025.</p>
<p>Note: A(i) and A(ii) are being progressed jointly</p> <p>A (ii) Assisting teachers monitor individual student progress and identify</p>	<p>a) Education Ministers Meeting 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,</p>	<p>Early 2019</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>As in A(i)(b) above.</p>

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
	timelines, governance arrangements and estimated costs.			
	<p>b) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting agreement at a), Education Ministers Meeting commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, 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. 	Early 2021	No	As in A(i)(c) above.
	c) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting agreement at a) and b), progressively develop and release nationally available	From 2022	No.	As in A(i)(c) 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:
	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.			
	<p>d) Education Ministers Meeting consider a proposal for sharing existing assessments and assessment items to establish a bank of assessments and an approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. aligning the assessment / assessment items to Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum, which has aligned and embedded the literacy and numeracy learning progressions; ii. developing suitable measurement scales to underpin the literacy and 	From December 2023	Partially	As in A(i)(c) 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:
	<p>numeracy progressions initially (followed by other learning areas of the Australian Curriculum);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. 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; iv. making the assessments available on an opt-in basis for teachers across Australia to use; and v. ensuring that issues of intellectual property, assessment security and integrity are adequately addressed. 			
A (iii) Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work,	a) Education Ministers Meeting 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 Ministers Meeting agreement at a), Education Ministers Meeting 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 <u>Looking to the Future: Report of the Review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training - Department of Education, Australian Government</u>	
	c) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting agreement at a) and b), Education Ministers Meeting has implemented, or is	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:
	progressing, agreed recommendations as appropriate.			
B (i) Reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future to attract and retain the best and brightest to the teaching profession and attract teachers to areas of need	a) Education Ministers Meeting consider an implementation strategy for the recommendations of the National Review of Teacher Registration.	Early 2019	Yes	
	b) Education Ministers Meeting begin to develop options for a national teacher workforce strategy.	Mid 2019	Yes	
	c) Subject to b), Education Ministers Meeting 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	September 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:
	and remote workforce and any gaps in data identified by Parties and sectors.			
	d) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting agreement at b) and c), Education Ministers Meeting implement a national teacher workforce strategy to respond to teacher workforce needs of the future and support decision making of teacher employers and ITE providers.	From December 2020	Yes	
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	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
C (i) Implementing a national unique student identifier (USI) that meets national privacy requirements in order to support better understanding of student progression and improve the national evidence base	<p>a) Education Ministers Meeting consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 protections and estimates and proposed allocations of costs. 	<p>Late 2019</p> <p>September 2020</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Partially</p>	<p>The governance, privacy protections, national data access protocols and protections, and estimates and proposed allocations of costs were broadly considered by the end of 2020 with further development and refinement required.</p>
	<p>b) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting agreement at a), implement the institutional arrangements necessary to support the implementation of a national USI.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	<p>Partially</p>	<p>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.</p>

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N, partially, or not yet applicable	If no, or partially, the reason is:
				<p>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, cybersecurity, technical, stakeholder and costing matters.</p> <p>In September 2023, AESOC endorsed a comprehensive implementation workplan. An updated implementation plan was endorsed by AESOC in 2024. Delivery of agreed workstreams is underway.</p> <p>In December 2024, the Australian Parliament passed amendments to the Student Identifiers Act to enable delivery of the Schools USI initiative</p>

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 establish the concept of a 'schools identifier'.
	c) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting 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.	Australian Government arrangements for a USI to be in place by end of 2024	Superseded	<p>The next stage of this initiative will be delivered as a National Enabling Initiative under the BFSA and BFSA-FFF. The final milestone now being: <i>All school students will have a USI by the end of 2027.</i></p> <p>Implementation plans, to be generated by jurisdictions in mid-2025, will be reflected in a new national project plan for endorsement by Education Ministers.</p>
C (ii) Establishing an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development	a) Education Ministers Meeting 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:
	b) Subject to Education Ministers Meeting 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 Ministers Meeting agreement at a) and b), the national evidence institute commences operations from 2020, and <i>inter alia</i> , develops and implements a national research and evidence plan.	From 2020	Yes More information is available from the <u>Australian Education Research Organisation website</u> .	
C (iii) Improving national data quality, consistency and collection to improve the national evidence	a) Education Ministers Meeting 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 Ministers Meeting 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	Yes	<p>The Department of Education has considered strategic ongoing opportunities, with 2 projects to enhance the national evidence base that continued through 2024,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Post-School Destinations Survey (GENERATION)</i>. • 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 Education Ministers out 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:
				<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Wellbeing Project has been completed as commissioned under the Agreement.