STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE: A PLAN TO BETTER SUPPORT NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NSW Department of Education
CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW 7

IMPROVEMENT THEME ONE: QUALITY TEACHING TO IMPROVE EVERY STUDENT 9

IMPROVEMENT THEME TWO: TAILORED SUPPORT TO IMPROVE EVERY SCHOOL 17

IMPROVEMENT THEME THREE: PRIORITISING TEACHING TIME 21

IMPROVEMENT THEME FOUR: LEADING THE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY 24

THE PATH FORWARD 29

REFERENCES 32
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

Our vision is to be Australia’s best education system, and one of the finest in the world.

Education is critical to participation and prosperity in a knowledge-based economy. As technological change and global connectivity accelerates, the need for world-class, up-to-date skills will also increase. Providing a high quality and future-relevant education is essential to give NSW students the best start in life, and to prepare them for rewarding and productive lives.

Today, the NSW education system performs well by Australian and global standards. We have the third strongest academic outcomes in Australia, with many examples of academic excellence and improvement. In 2017, NSW achieved the Premier’s priority education target to grow the proportion of NSW students in the top two NAPLAN bands by 8%. Additionally, the gap between Aboriginal students and all students has decreased across a number of domains, including in Year 9 numeracy where the gap in students performing at or above the national minimum standard has decreased from 15.2 percentage points in 2010 to a 4.6 percentage point difference in 2017. Students across our system participate and excel academically and in the arts and sport, and make outstanding contributions to their communities.

However, to make our vision a reality, we must continue improving. Global evidence shows that providing high-quality support for schools such as quality professional learning for school leaders and teachers, tailoring of support, enabling innovation and minimising the administration burden on school leaders and teachers is critical to improving system and student outcomes.

Recognising this, in April 2017 the department established the Educational Services Division (Educational Services) to focus on the delivery of support and services to schools. The new division comprises five pre-existing directorates and one new directorate, School Services, which was created from existing Educational Services teams. The division continues to work closely with the School Operations and Performance Division (SO&P) to improve outcomes in schools, but focuses its attention on the provision of support and services, including teaching services, wellbeing services, services relating to Aboriginal education and community engagement and systems support. Combining the directorates into a single division enables consistent service delivery to support the department’s vision.
Educational Services Review
As part of achieving our vision, the department launched a review considering: “To what extent does the newly formed Educational Services Division provide schools the support required to improve student outcomes – and what do we need to do differently?” The review and its findings follow the recent announcement of the School Leadership Package, which provides quality resources and programs to support leadership development within schools.

School leaders were the focal point of this review. Over two months, more than 1200 principals were surveyed and engaged in focus groups. The review team also engaged with nearly 800 other stakeholders and analysed local and international research. We asked review participants:

■ What support matters to improve student outcomes?
■ Is our current focus on the support that matters?
■ Is the support we provide high in quality? If not, where are the gaps?
■ How good is the experience for school leaders in accessing support services?

72% of school leaders surveyed were “satisfied with the provision of services to their schools”. Qualitative commentary highlighted multiple examples of staff from the Educational Services Division providing highly valued support to school leaders. The commitment of Educational Services staff to supporting schools – and the deep expertise they bring to that effort – was repeatedly highlighted by school leaders as invaluable.

While the majority of school leaders were satisfied with most services, Educational Services recognises that there is more to do to provide the professional learning, systems and support that meet the demands of a continually improving system. For NSW to be the best education system in the country, we must continue to improve the support we provide to foster high quality leadership within schools.

Stakeholder feedback identified a number of opportunities for Educational Services to improve service and support provision to schools. Specifically, school leaders said they would like higher levels of support for complex case management and curriculum delivery, and access to more consistent, high quality professional learning.

Stakeholder feedback is arranged in this report in four broad categories, called ‘improvement themes’. Each theme is introduced with evidence for the importance of the theme in improving outcomes; followed by the feedback collected throughout the review; concluding with our commitments to improve Educational Services’ supports, systems and processes.

72% of school leaders surveyed were “satisfied with the provision of services to their schools”.

Review of the Educational Services Division

education.nsw.gov.au
31% OF SCHOOL LEADERS SURVEYED DISAGREED THAT SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO IMPROVE TEACHING QUALITY IS ADEQUATE

The first theme focuses on improving services that national and international evidence shows are critical to improving quality teaching and student outcomes for the whole child, such as quality professional learning and curriculum support for teachers. These services showed lower satisfaction levels among schools leaders: 31% of school leaders surveyed disagreed that support for professional learning to improve teaching quality is adequate and 38% of principals surveyed disagreed that curriculum support is adequate. School leaders also asked that professional learning place greater focus on enhancing classroom practice, rather than compliance or policy content, and adopt adult learning principles.

Secondly, stakeholders said they feel most services and support target the majority of users and are not tailored to schools or students with unique needs. School leaders explained that they wanted someone to stand ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ with them to understand their specific needs, and deliver tailored support and services to their schools.

Thirdly, school leaders asked for services to be more user-friendly, as the experience of sourcing, selecting, securing and using services can be laborious and reduces teaching time in schools. Many school leaders said they relied on personal networks and SchoolBiz to understand the availability of services and support. They also found first-point-of-contact numbers for accessing support often outdated and systems such as MyPL difficult to navigate. School leaders suggested that by improving the usability of services, such as Access Requests and support for complex case management, they could spend more time teaching and leading.

Lastly, interviews, surveys and focus groups with Educational Services staff revealed that improving our services to school communities means Educational Services must make changes to the way it works. Staff and school leaders alike requested three main changes to the way the division works: clarity on the role of the new Educational Services Division, greater collaboration within and across divisions to enable seamless implementation, and more defined career pathways that attract and retain the best talent to the division.

Implementing improvements

Four priority themes have been identified to improve services. These are underpinned by 15 specific commitments (see Exhibit 1). As implementation of these priorities begins, schools will receive more tailored and effective services relevant to their different needs. They will also receive more streamlined, user-friendly support and services, maximising the time teachers and principals can devote to the core business of teaching, learning and leading.
### Exhibit 1: Our commitments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality teaching to improve every student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services will...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Focus on quality professional learning programs to improve classroom practice, support the implementation of existing and new curricula and build capacity to educate the “whole child”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adapt professional learning delivery to incorporate adult learning principles such as “learning by doing”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Make the professional learning offering consistent across the state, in both quality and availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Continuously refresh the portfolio of professional learning based on participant feedback and evidence of impact, including directing resources towards most impactful programs and tracking participant feedback on effectiveness</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tailored support to improve every school</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services will...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Co-design and deliver support packages that are tailored to the different needs of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify, assess and disseminate innovative practice from NSW schools, national networks and international research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expand networks to connect principals and teachers with similar challenges or common development interests</td>
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<tr>
<th>Prioritising teaching time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Services will...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Clearly communicate ways to contact School Services and develop a “no wrong door” approach in School Services teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Employ user-centric design to improve the visibility and accessibility of quality assured services available from Educational Services, other divisions and other providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Streamline system-support services so that schools can more easily source, select, access and use them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Improve consistency and ease in accessing expert wellbeing advice, access requests and complex case coordination services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Embed a culture of continuous improvement for support provided by Educational Services by measuring and taking action to improve service effectiveness and efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<th>Leading the improvement journey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services will...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Clarify Educational Services role in delivering the department’s vision to schools, within the division and to other divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collaborate closely with other divisions and between directorates to enable consistent delivery of high quality services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ensure Educational Services attracts, retains and develops the best talent to deliver its services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delivering the full complement of commitments will take time and will evolve as we learn more and seek feedback from school leaders. Implementation design will be through collaboration and co-creation within the department, including input from school leaders and teachers.

School leaders will see change shortly. New professional learning in literacy and numeracy progressions will be rolled out to Early Action for Success schools in 2018 and 2019. A selection of quality-assured services will be available state-wide and presented in a user-friendly format, and a new operating model will allow school leaders to more easily access support.

Successfully delivering these commitments will support NSW in becoming Australia’s leading education system, and one of the finest in the world.
CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

The Educational Services Division was established in April 2017 as a separate division in the NSW Department of Education. Previously, all functions associated with school operations or support services for public schools were provided under the School Operations and Performance Division (SO&P). In this new model, SO&P leads and directs the operations and performance of public schools, while Educational Services is responsible for the provision of educational, corporate and business services that add value to teaching and learning. Exhibit 2 displays the organisation chart for the NSW Department of Education and Exhibit 3 outlines the functions of the directorates of the Educational Services Division.

Approach to the review

The review team, supported by McKinsey & Company, considered local, national and international research that outlines best practice in educational service delivery. This research was supplemented by insights gathered from participants across the system, including principals, department non-teaching staff, and external stakeholders.

ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

The learning and wellbeing of students is the focus of our work. We coordinate and deliver high quality and responsive policies and services to schools to improve student learning outcomes.

Exhibit 2: The NSW Department of Education organisation chart
Review inputs included:

- **Literature review of local and international research and case studies:**
  The review drew on lessons from many school systems internationally, including Ontario, Alberta, Long Beach, New York, Boston, Singapore and Shanghai, and considered published international research such as McKinsey's 2010 report *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better.* It also looked at research conducted locally by the NSW Department of Education's Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE).

- **Surveys:**
  Three surveys of principals, Educational Services Division staff and Directors, Public Schools NSW. In all, nearly 2000 survey responses were collected and analysed. These surveys are the primary quantitative evidence base of the review.

- **Focus groups and interviews:**
  15 focus groups with principals and Educational Services staff, as well as over 30 interviews with internal and external stakeholders (including department Executive Directors and the Primary Principals’ Association, the Secondary Principals’ Council, the NSW Teachers Federation, the NSW Education Standards Authority and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group). In total, over 160 individuals gave qualitative input through focus groups and interviews. This input provided deeper insight and helped to explain the findings from the surveys.

### Exhibit 3: Support offered by the directorates of the Educational Services Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aboriginal Education and Communities | • Assists with the provision of innovative, relevant and meaningful learning and teaching strategies that meet the needs of Aboriginal students and promotes knowledge and understandings of Aboriginal histories, cultures, languages and contemporary issues for all students and staff.  
  • Contributes to State and National policies and strategies that impact on Aboriginal students, their parents, families and their communities. |
| Learning and Teaching | • Provides support in areas of curriculum content and delivery, teaching practice and professional development to both school based staff and colleagues in the Division. The four units in the Directorate facilitate access to special programs and initiatives, provide policy support, curriculum advice and resources, and assist in disseminating innovation to the system. |
| Learning and Wellbeing | • Provides strategic direction, manages policies and reporting, develops professional learning for the system to support student engagement and wellbeing and coordinates the provision of specialist services. The directorate also works in partnership with stakeholders to provide prevention and intervention responses for at risk students and to support cross-government policy in disability, child protection, wellbeing, and health. |
| Learning and Business Systems | • Provides leadership in the development and implementation of systems, initiatives and processes to effectively support school and corporate operations. The Directorate’s work includes the development of digital resources, international student programs, policy coordination and review, selective schools, information and contract management, evaluation of school-based programs, business engagement, the Assisted School Travel program and provides financial services and funding to schools. |
| School Services | • Delivers and coordinates local services and assistance to schools across the state with the aim of building the capacity of teachers and leaders to improve and support student learning. This includes providing advice and professional learning, and the facilitation of services to schools, students and their families. |
| Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) | • Delivers modern finance, human resource, payroll, student management and student wellbeing systems to schools. LMBR Support continues to provide important support and ongoing training to schools using new LMBR systems and provides training for the new Enterprise Financial Planning Tool (eFPT). |
IMPROVEMENT THEME ONE: QUALITY TEACHING TO IMPROVE EVERY STUDENT

WHAT MATTERS MOST

National and international research shows school systems that demonstrate continuous improvement on outcomes focus heavily on improving the quality of teaching. This is achieved by raising the calibre of teachers entering the profession (which is out of scope for this review), raising the expertise of existing teachers and principals, and retaining high-performing individuals.

There is significant evidence demonstrating the importance of quality teachers to individual student outcomes. One international study found two students with the same intrinsic ability, but with two different teachers, can diverge by as much as 50 percentile points after three years. A second study found that being in a class with an effective teacher had an impact 14 times greater than being in a class with five fewer students. CESE research also shows that quality teaching practices, such as setting high expectations, explicit teaching, and using data to inform teaching practice positively impact student outcomes.

High calibre, relevant and effective professional learning is critical to producing quality teachers and supporting quality teaching in schools. As a system, we have an obligation to provide our schools with high quality support that enables high quality teaching. This includes support for improving teaching quality, effective curriculum delivery and student wellbeing. Educational Services can underpin the development of the above by providing the best quality professional development and learning resources that are based on the foundations of adult learning principles, including by being sustained, site-based, peer-led, collaborative, modified for individual teachers’ needs, and consistent with school culture.

WHAT REVIEW PARTICIPANTS SAID

69% of principals told us that the professional learning support they receive is adequate to meet their school’s needs for quality teaching (see Exhibit 4). Principals in both the survey and focus groups consistently named individual staff members and teams in Educational Services as passionate, knowledgeable and indispensable.

ONE INTERNATIONAL STUDY FOUND TWO STUDENTS WITH THE SAME INTRINSIC ABILITY, BUT WITH TWO DIFFERENT TEACHERS, CAN DIVERGE BY AS MUCH AS 50 PERCENTILE POINTS AFTER THREE YEARS
Exhibit 4: The adequacy of different types of support provided by educational services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service types</th>
<th>Principals who agreed that support is adequate¹</th>
<th>Percent respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspensions, expulsions, attendance and special needs support</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular activities and initiatives</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance support</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs building positive school culture &amp; climate</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and community engagement</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning for teaching quality</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leadership support</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex case coordination</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum delivery support</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Number of respondents who agreed with the statement: ‘the level of support my school receives from Educational Services is adequate to meet my school’s needs’. Respondents scored answers 1 to 6 (1= Strongly disagree; 6= Strongly agree)

SOURCE: Principal survey

While school leaders were generally satisfied with professional development and curriculum delivery support, they were less satisfied with these compared to other categories of services. Principals suggested professional learning could be improved in two areas: i) providing better content, covering themes most important to improving student performance and wellbeing; and ii) improving delivery of professional development, to ensure better engagement, accessibility and consistency.

Areas for improvement in professional learning content
Principals suggested three areas where Educational Services can improve the content of professional development and support:

- Place more emphasis on classroom practice and education innovation
  We were told that a large proportion of professional learning focuses on compliance. Principals told us that although this is important, they would like professional learning to have a greater focus on curriculum and improving classroom practice.

  Principals also requested more opportunities to learn about the latest evidence-based innovations in education, suggesting, for instance, the work that CESE is doing could incorporate a practical application for the classroom.

PRINCIPALS REQUESTED MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT THE LATEST EVIDENCE-BASED INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION
PRINCIPALS FELT EACH SCHOOL WAS “RE-INVENTING THE WHEEL”, AND THAT CURRICULUM MODULE TRANSLATION WOULD BE MORE CONSISTENT IF DONE CENTRALLY

- Help schools deliver the curriculum in the classroom
  We heard that teachers need more support to translate the new syllabus practically into classroom teaching.

  Principals told us they often feel overwhelmed when a new syllabus is released. Principals said that, in the past, syllabuses often came with ready-made modules, but now they don’t come with any practical resources. Other principals felt each school was “re-inventing the wheel”, and that curriculum module translation would be more consistent if done centrally. One principal noted:

  “There is a need for teachers to participate in quality professional learning in all key learning areas as teaching and learning is our core business. At the moment there is a ‘shared ignorance’ with teachers interpreting syllabuses and curriculum without expert guidance. If we want quality teachers and teaching that improves student outcomes, we need quality training delivered by curriculum experts where teachers can engage in professional dialogue and learn from each other.”

  Exhibit 5 is a diagram representing the common steps that some principals report following a new syllabus release from NESA. It was created by speaking to more than 60 principals in nine focus groups over the course of this review, and highlights areas that are both easy and difficult to navigate during the experience. It shows how Educational Services can improve our service delivery to schools.
### Exhibit 5: Current principal “customer journey” when new syllabus is released

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key insights</th>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Impact on principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identification of need</strong></td>
<td><strong>Principals are frustrated figuring out how to unpack and translate new syllabus using the support currently offered</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I receive an email from NESA with new syllabus</td>
<td>“It feels like ‘here’s your new curriculum, good luck!’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I identify teacher(s) with relevant knowledge and ability</td>
<td>“You can have a wonderful curriculum, but if you haven’t been given the right support in implementing it, it’s useless.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I rally my selected teachers to commit to translating the new syllabus into teaching units</td>
<td>“It’s a roller coaster getting things in place to adapt a new curriculum.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I review the resources I have available already such as people, equipment, expertise, etc.</td>
<td>“We don’t want to reinvent the wheel. We look to see what resources we have available.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with teachers, I unpack the new syllabus to define the requirements and a path forward</td>
<td>“We map the difference between new and old to find out what has changed. It could be made clearer to save us some time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I start keeping an eye out in email and department communications (i.e. School Biz) for relevant training being offered</td>
<td>“There have been so many syllabuses released in a short period of time, it’s hard to figure out where to next. If can be wave after wave.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I reach out to my network of other principals to find out if they have found anything</td>
<td>“I go to my network because it’s the fastest way to get on the right track even though we’re all reinventing the wheel every time this happens.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m ringing around to find out what a quality curriculum and offering looks like</td>
<td>“I want to know what quality looks like and there isn’t a single view of that across the department.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Find relevant training</strong></td>
<td><strong>Principals have to navigate so many different pathways to ensure they’re identifying the right training from reliable sources</strong></td>
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Review of the Educational Services Division

12
## Exhibit 5 continued: Current principal “customer journey” when new syllabus is released

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key insights</th>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Impact on principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decide</strong></td>
<td>Without a centralised view of what’s on offer principals are uncertain they’re making the best choice</td>
<td>I only have a finite amount of resources and I want to make sure I’m making the most of my teachers’ time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receive training</strong></td>
<td>Principals are left feeling unsure as to the quality of service received as there is no way to tell trainings offered contain effective content</td>
<td>I find funding to release teachers for the duration of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I send teachers to attend the training and hope the one I chose is high quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When teachers return to school I have them present training back to colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measure</strong></td>
<td>Principals don’t have a consistent way to measure the curriculum’s success.</td>
<td>The selected teachers and I work over the next few months to develop new units of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I wait to understand how effective the training and curriculum update was to make an impact on the student outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provide more proactive support for student wellbeing

Principals consistently said support for student wellbeing was high quality and “invaluable” to their school. In the survey of principals, 82% said that the support their school receives for suspensions, expulsions, attendance and special needs was adequate to meet the needs of their school.

However, we also heard that school leaders need more proactive support and professional learning related to student wellbeing. Both principals and Educational Services staff felt that the nature of support from the division had become largely reactive in recent years. School leaders expressed a desire for more proactive support to help teachers and schools build the skills to manage the holistic wellbeing of students. School leaders suggested this was particularly important for early-career teachers as they build their craft in the school environment.

Areas for improvement in the delivery of professional learning

School leaders identified two opportunities to improve the delivery of professional learning.

Employ adult learning principles

Stakeholders expressed a desire for professional learning that is consistent with adult learning principles to ensure greater engagement and impact of training. Examples of adult learning principles include modifying content for individual needs and providing the opportunity to reflect on learning with peers. One Director, Public Schools NSW commented in the survey that “Adobe Connect sessions have not adequately replaced the opportunity for face-to-face professional learning with associated professional dialogue, networking and sharing of innovation and best practice.” Principals suggested they would prefer professional learning that had the following attributes:

- More on-the-job training, rather than online sessions or lectures at conferences
- Designing professional development within comprehensive learning journeys, as opposed to standalone sessions
- More opportunities to share with and learn from peers

Improve consistency in the quality and accessibility of services

School leaders requested more consistency in both the quality and accessibility of services across the state. Principals stated they had experienced a wide variation in the quality of services delivered by Educational Services, both within and across operational directorates. To mitigate this problem, principals suggested standardising training for new Educational Services staff.

Teachers and principals in rural and remote schools told us they face particular difficulties in accessing quality professional learning, with the lack of availability of face-to-face training outside the greater Sydney area key to this issue. Further, due to a lack of relief teachers in rural and remote areas, school leaders told us they experience difficulties finding casual teachers to backfill positions for the duration of the training and related travel.
OUR COMMITMENTS

Educational Services will focus on improving quality teaching by facilitating the delivery of only the highest quality professional learning. Educational Services will:

1.1 Focus on quality professional learning to improve classroom practice, support the implementation of existing and new curricula and build capacity to educate the ‘whole child’ by:

i. enhancing the availability and quality of professional learning that develops the fundamentals of effective classroom practice, in particular by linking evidence-based practice with improving student outcomes (e.g. practices outlined in CESE’s ‘What Works Best’ report, or other local and global research)

ii. making high quality support for new curricula available to all schools in the 12 months before the curricula are required to be taught in schools, as well as in the year after schools transition to the new curricula. This will be achieved by:

- engaging with NESA early and often throughout the development of new syllabus so that we have sufficient input in ensuring the syllabus is relevant and appropriate for NSW public school students;

- planning new high quality professional learning for the new syllabus so that it is ready to be deployed to schools at least 12 months before curriculum implementation;

- deploying additional capacity and expertise when new syllabuses are released so that increased demand can be met;

- clearly defining operational roles between NESA, Educational Services and other divisions for supporting school leaders during the rollout. For example, as a part of their broader role in supporting schools in school planning, Directors, Educational Leadership could support school leaders in all schools in planning for the new syllabus, as well as identifying which schools might benefit from more substantial support. In this model, staff from Educational Services could focus on designing, delivering or facilitating access to professional learning;

- offering additional professional learning to schools identified as requiring further support, for example in effective pedagogical approaches, assessment, or content areas.

MAKING HIGH QUALITY SUPPORT FOR NEW CURRICULA AVAILABLE TO ALL SCHOOLS IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE CURRICULA ARE REQUIRED TO BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS
DEPLOYING A RANGE OF CLASSROOM STRATEGIES, SUPPORTING STUDENT WELLBEING, BUILDING ENGAGEMENT, EFFECTIVE INCLUSION, AND GETTING SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

iii. introducing new professional learning designed to build the capacity of school leaders and teachers to proactively engage and teach ‘the whole child’, including:

- designing a suite of early career professional learning for new teachers to develop essential skills and knowledge including understanding and managing challenging behaviours, the value of knowing your students and deploying a range of classroom strategies, supporting student wellbeing, building engagement, effective inclusion, and getting support when needed

- ongoing professional learning to refresh skills and build capacity in the specific areas most relevant to each teacher (through more in-depth modules)

1.2 Adapt professional learning delivery to incorporate adult learning principles — in particular, a mixture of theory and ‘learning by doing’ in the classroom, delivered over an extended period (rather than ‘one day training’), and enhanced by peer coaching and collaboration

1.3 Make the professional learning offering consistent across the state, in both quality and availability, by creating a single state-wide approach in the design and delivery of professional learning; eliminate the duplication of effort across operational directorates in the design and delivery of professional learning

1.4 Continuously refresh the portfolio of professional learning based on participant feedback and evidence of impact to direct resources towards more effective professional learning; systematically track participant feedback, at the point of completion of the professional learning and ideally 6 to 12 months later, to see whether new practices have been incorporated; assess the effectiveness of professional learning accordingly and revise the design if they are not assessed as effective.
IMPROVEMENT THEME TWO: TAILORED SUPPORT TO IMPROVE EVERY SCHOOL

WHAT MATTERS MOST
International research undertaken by McKinsey & Company shows that school systems that significantly improve outcomes tailor support to schools based on specific needs. For example, schools in low performing systems require more prescriptive forms of support, such as pre-defined lesson plans, to ensure quality outcomes across the system as levels of teacher experience and capability are generally lower. Schools in higher performing systems benefit from focusing more on the professional development of teachers and school leaders, and over time devolving a greater level of autonomy to innovate as their needs demand.

As such, Educational Services needs to allow for differentiation in its support, so the most effective services can be provided to all schools. Within any school system there is variation in school attributes: NSW has 2210 public schools, which differ in performance, size, geography, the socioeconomic status of students and type. This means the quantity and type of support that individual schools require differs greatly. For example, small schools in rural and remote locations could benefit from shared instructional leadership support which is less relevant to larger schools or those in metropolitan regions.

Further, international evidence suggests that schools that are excelling within the system require opportunities for their teachers and principals to share ideas and learn from peers, while inexperienced teachers or principals benefit from more intensive support. Therefore it makes sense that support models based on school characteristics and performance levels will be most successful in improving outcomes across the system. This model has been successfully used in systems such as those in Ontario, Canada, which have introduced customised interventions for schools that map to their point on a school improvement journey (see Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Tailored approach deployed by Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership initiative (OFIP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trajectory</th>
<th>Segmentation exercise</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over the past 3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving</td>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stagnating</td>
<td>Performance achievement:</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>As measured by % of students at Level 3 or 4 in reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working towards delivering schools received:
- Short-term finance and HR resource support to allow for professional development
- Committed coach time to help build, monitor and evaluate school- and district-based strategies and action plan
- Support from regional teams in facilitating and supporting professional learning communities (PLCs)

Delivering schools received:
- Support from central regional teams in:
  - Helping boards develop system improvement teams
  - Developing networked professional learning for school leaders
  - Offering guidance on ‘what works’ based on schools with similar characteristics, but different levels of performance

1 Level 3 equals ‘meets provincial expectations’, and Level 4 equals ‘exceeds provincial expectations’
SOURCE: Ontario Student Achievement Division; Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat; Supporting Low-Performing Schools in Ontario, Canada (2002)
A number of NSW Public Schools have successfully improved outcomes as part of targeted system-wide strategies. At its best, Educational Services has provided valuable support to schools engaged with this work. The Connected Communities Strategy selected 15 schools in the most disadvantaged areas of the state with the aim of improving outcomes for students, particularly Aboriginal students. The Strategy positions schools as community hubs that facilitate a range of services from birth, through school, to further training and employment, and draw support from a range of government departments and agencies. Connected Communities primary schools markedly improved reading and writing results in Years 3 and 5 in 2017. The Strategy’s final evaluation report will be published in 2018.  

Early Action for Success is part of the department’s strategy for implementing the NSW Government’s Literacy and Numeracy Plan. It aims to improve students’ literacy and numeracy skills through a targeted approach in the early years of schooling. From 2017, 22 Assistant Principals and 366 Deputy Principals, Instructional Leadership, Literacy and Numeracy provide support to 531 schools to drive improvement in literacy and numeracy. A further 24 schools have self-funded to participate in the Strategy in 2017. In 2017, NAPLAN Early Action for Success schools have on average improved results for their Year 3 students on reading and numeracy, with fewer students in the bottom two bands, and higher mean scores.  

The Bump It Up Strategy is another example of targeting schools for tailored support. Bump It Up was implemented to increase the number of students in the top two NAPLAN bands. The program identified schools with potential to improve based on their performance relative to that of similar schools and where it was deemed most appropriate, provided targeted support to bump up the performance of students in the middle two bands of NAPLAN. 137 schools were chosen for the program and it contributed to an uplift in NAPLAN results in 2017, as can be seen in Exhibit 7, such that the Premier’s target of increasing the number of students in the top two NAPLAN bands by 8% by 2019 has been achieved two years ahead of target.  

Exhibit 7: NAPLAN results for bump it up and non-bump it up schools  

Proportion of NAPLAN results in the top 2 bands for Bump It Up and all other schools

1 Data was pooled across Years 3/5 and 7/9 and across reading/numeracy. Source: NSW Department of Education and NSW Education Standards Authority
Our ambition is to ensure all public schools in NSW receive the quantity, type and mix of services and support they need, delivered in a way most appropriate for each school. Just as we aim to cater for the needs of every individual student in our classrooms, we must cater for the varied and individual needs of the schools in our system, to best support them in improving student outcomes.

WHAT REVIEW PARTICIPANTS SAID
In 2012, the Local Schools, Local Decisions (LSLD) reforms devolved more authority to schools to decide how resources should be allocated. A significant proportion of departmental resources was allocated directly to schools with the objective of further empowering schools to choose the support that most suited their individual needs.

Areas for improvement

■ Equipping principals to make informed decisions about the right services for their school
While school leaders told us they generally appreciate the additional authority LSLD has enabled, many told us they feel ill-equipped to make informed decisions about choosing services for their school. Further, many principals are unclear about the support available to them across the system, including from Educational Services and other providers. They told us that the increased responsibilities that came with LSLD left them with little time to source services appropriate to their needs from limited or, at times, non-existent resources. Principals commented they would find it easier if packages of services were recommended to them and tailored to suit their school’s attributes. One principal said “The services provided are often generic rather than provided after consultation with individual schools and staff in order to provide a tailored package. For this reason, my staff prefer to lead professional learning themselves or engage a third-party provider as we feel we have greater control over the content and the quality of the professional learning.”

■ Facilitating peer connections
Principals also told us they would like the department to foster more opportunities for them to connect with their peers on the basis of school attributes or personal interests. While some principals have formed their own communities of practice, we heard that many other principals feel isolated and would appreciate the opportunity to connect with colleagues facing similar challenges. Most principal peer interaction is currently organised around a ‘Principal Network’, but we heard that principals would also like to connect with others in ‘communities of interest’. The main purpose of these communities of interest would be to share ideas and experiences, and learn from peers leading schools with similar needs, in supportive environments.

■ Disseminating innovations more widely
With a view to improving outcomes across the system, principals asked Educational Services to play a larger role in disseminating innovation from across NSW and further afield. One principal commented that “The good thing about teachers is they’ll steal a good idea... but the system doesn’t facilitate the sharing of good ideas.” Leaders recognised that sharing ideas and disseminating evidence-based innovations is a vital function in a high performing system that aims to get even better.
OUR COMMITMENTS

Educational Services will differentiate its support to schools based on the individual needs of schools identified in their school plans. Educational Services will:

2.1 Co-design and deliver support packages that are tailored to the different needs of schools, by:

i. addressing the individual needs of schools and incorporating support to improve quality teaching, student wellbeing, school leadership and school administration – all drawn from the best support available to schools, whether delivered by Educational Services, other divisions or other providers;

ii. developing an approach built from the existing School Excellence Framework which articulates improvement strategies for schools at different stages of the improvement journey. This will include the option of more targeted and intense support for schools early in the journey, and enabling improvement through peer networks and innovation for schools excelling at the foundations.

iii. designing and delivering through a tightly integrated working model involving principals, SO&P, Educational Services, Corporate Services, and other divisions and third-parties where appropriate;

iv. using a systematic approach to align this support model with individual school plans and outcome objectives, measuring impact over time, and adjusting the support program where necessary.

2.2 Identify, assess and disseminate innovative practice from NSW schools, national networks and international research. This would take the form of a focused Educational Services team to coordinate across Educational Services directorates, CESE, other divisions and schools with a clear process for proactive and reactive idea capture. Proactive approaches could involve identifying schools that are showing unusually rapid improvements in outcomes, understanding what they have done differently, and incorporating support for this practice within tailored support packages.

2.3 Expand networks of schools beyond local networks, to connect schools with similar challenges or common development interests and complement existing professional and geographic networks by enabling collaboration of principals and teachers across groups based on shared interests and attributes. A range of collaboration approaches should be tested with principals, including digital tools and face-to-face networking.

CO-DESIGN AND DELIVER SUPPORT PACKAGES THAT ARE TAILORED TO THE DIFFERENT NEEDS OF SCHOOLS
**IMPROVEMENT THEME THREE: PRIORITISING TEACHING TIME**

**WHAT MATTERS MOST**
Maximising the amount of time teachers and school leaders spend on teaching and learning activities is critical to improving education outcomes. Although schools must complete some essential non-teaching and learning activities, for instance, compliance training and various administrative duties, at successful schools these activities are minimised and simplified as much as possible.

School systems typically support schools in maximising teaching and learning time by reducing the administrative burden of schools in two ways:

- Directly providing administration resources to schools
- Undertaking administrative duties centrally to simplify administrative systems and activities.

The department has recently taken steps to improve in these areas. In September 2017, we announced the new School Leadership Strategy, which allocates more funding to schools for the provision of business managers or additional administrative support. This is a part of a larger package to better enable school leaders to spend more time on instructional leadership.

The Educational Services Division has also centralised many tasks that schools would otherwise undertake. Examples include supports for students with additional needs, finance systems, the Assisted School Travel Program and some compliance requirements. In addition, although principals identified specific areas for improvement in the system, MyPL has been designed to make the tracking and management of professional learning and accreditation easier and more efficient for teachers.

Our intention is that all the support provided by Educational Services to schools gives teachers and leaders more capacity to deliver improved quality teaching and therefore improved outcomes for students. The suite of services and systems and processes should be accessible and user-friendly. We aim to minimise the administrative burden of school leaders by reducing the quantity of duties required of them, and where possible, providing extra resources to support the duties schools must perform.

**WHAT REVIEW PARTICIPANTS SAID**
In focus groups, principals said they spend significant time on administrative duties and many commented they feel overwhelmed by their daily workload. We heard that the amount of work has increased significantly since the Local Schools, Local Decisions reforms were enacted in 2012. Consistent with this, the recent Principal Workload Study found that principals spend 43% of their time on tasks that take less than 5 minutes and 40% of their time on 'leading the management of the school.' Just 30% of the average principal’s time is spent in leading, teaching and learning.

Principals said that improving the experience of finding and accessing services, as well as making key services more user-friendly, would reduce the time they spend on administrative duties.
Areas for improvement in finding and accessing services

- **Providing clear points of contact**
  Some principals commented that the first-point-of-contact numbers in their local offices were not always useful in helping them understand which services are suitable for their needs. They explained that phone numbers are not always up-to-date, and when they are, the person at the other end does not always have the corporate knowledge or expertise to advise on policies or recommend services to them. As a result, principals tend to ‘phone a friend’ or rely on SchoolBiz (a weekly online newsletter sent to all school staff in the Department) to understand service availability.

  Principals commonly stated they would appreciate an interface that could serve as a ‘single source of truth’ for every service that they can access. This would dramatically reduce the amount of time they spend searching for support from either the department or other providers.

- **Streamlining content and interface of MyPL**
  Principals appreciated that the MyPL system is designed to reduce the administrative burden of monitoring and providing proof of completion of professional learning hours for accreditation purposes, but suggested that the experience of searching for programs could be improved. Principals commented that there were too many programs on the system and there is no way to understand how the quality differs between programs based on user feedback.

  Principals also noted the system is only for programs provided by the department, and provides no visibility on what is available through other providers, including the NSW Primary Principals’ Association, the NSW Teachers Federation, and others.

Areas for improvement in the user-friendliness of key services

- **Improving the Access Request process**
  Principals noted two key challenges with the Access Request process. Firstly, the online system was described as clunky and slow, and particularly difficult when a change had to be made to an already-submitted form. Secondly, principals reported receiving different advice from different people within Educational Services as to how to best complete the form to get the best outcome for their students.

- **Providing better support for complex case management**
  Principals commented that support for complex case management and for students with significant needs could be improved. Principals said it can sometimes be difficult to find the right person within Educational Services to help in complex situations, which can add to the stress of the situation. One principal said: “We require more support in the area of complex case management - managing challenging behaviours and families. It is very dependent on which personnel you get to assist you, as to how effective the process is. My last experience has been very positive; however it took several phone calls and emails to get to the point where the support was effective. More personnel would be good - and I realise many are new to their role.”
OUR COMMITMENTS

Educational Services will prioritise teaching time by making our services, systems and processes more user-friendly and accessible.

In addition to the commitments we recently announced in the School Leadership Strategy (including to provide additional resources to schools to employ extra administrative assistance), we are committed to improving the useability and visibility of services for schools. We will:

3.1 Clearly communicate ways to contact School Services and develop a ‘no wrong door’ approach in School Services teams.

3.2 Employ user-centric design to improve the visibility and accessibility of quality assured services available from Educational Services, other divisions and other providers to make high quality services and professional learning easy to find by:

i. working closely with school leaders to develop a user-friendly digital tool to help schools understand and navigate the supports available.

ii. curating and coordinating easy access to priority and complementary support services (such as curriculum, proactive wellbeing and other priority services) from other providers as part the digital tool (e.g. teacher and principal associations, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Inc, NESA and other third party providers) with the goal of empowering schools to find the highest quality, most suitable services for their needs.

iii. publishing available evidence of impact and regular direct feedback from schools on services delivered (e.g. through user-ratings for professional learning). We will use this data as a tool to highlight the most effective services to schools and revise and improve services.

3.3 Streamline system-support services so that schools can more easily source, select, access and use them. We will evaluate which services are not well-aligned with Educational Services’ core role (which is to deliver services to schools that lead to improved student outcomes) and are less user-friendly as a result, and transfer ownership of these services to other divisions where appropriate.

3.4 Improve consistency and ease in accessing and using reactive support for student wellbeing by:

i. simplifying the Access Request process and making the criteria for request approval transparent and timely;

ii. ensuring high quality wellbeing expertise is consistently available and accessible;

iii. improving the speed, effectiveness and user-friendliness of complex case support.

3.5 Embed a culture of continuous improvement for support provided by Educational Services by measuring and taking action to improve service effectiveness and efficiency. We will define clear impact and efficiency metrics for each service provided by Educational Services, make these metrics transparent and use them to improve the reliability and efficiency of services over time.
IMPROVEMENT
THEME FOUR: LEADING THE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

WHAT MATTERS MOST
The previous three chapters focused on our intention to improve the design and delivery of services we provide to NSW schools. To be successful in this, Educational Services needs to be an organisation that is capable, aligned and working together.

Research shows that organisations that focus on organisational health – that is, the underlying mindsets and behaviours that influence long-term performance – do better over a longer period than organisations that focus on performance alone. In fact, ‘healthy’ organisations perform twice as well as ‘unhealthy’ organisations.41 ‘Healthy’ organisations focus on three key areas:

- **Orientation**: Organisations orient their people, products and processes around a common vision, and communicate that vision to stakeholders at every opportunity.

- **Implementation**: Organisations employ effective coordination and accountability mechanisms to implement the vision, along with ensuring the right people are in the right roles and are purposefully motivated.

- **Development**: Management invests in the ongoing development of its people and their career tracks and in the flow of new ideas and thinking into the organisation.

To be one of the world's leading education systems in terms of performance, Educational Services should focus on improving organisational health through clear orientation, better implementation and a greater focus on innovation and talent development.

WHAT REVIEW PARTICIPANTS SAID
The creation of the Educational Services Division enables a sharper focus and integrated approach to service design and delivery. It provides the opportunity to ensure people are oriented towards its purpose so implementation and development practices are more streamlined.

Several ‘healthy’ orientation, implementation and development practices are already in place. Educational Services staff were consistently recognised for their shared dedication to improving public education, the high levels of collaboration within directorates and their relevant expertise. 67% of principals and 65% of Directors, Educational Leadership surveyed agreed with the statement that ‘Educational Services has the right people in the right roles’.

However, review participants recognised that rising to the challenge of transforming the education system requires specific improvements to make Educational Services ‘healthy’ enough to achieve its goal of continual improvement.

**Areas for improvement in orientation**

- **Providing clarity on roles**
  The department has undergone structural changes that have affected the way educational services are administered. Educational Services staff said they have little visibility of the work done by their colleagues outside their own unit. Principals commented they can now find it difficult to know where to get the support they have received in the past.
Ensuring consistency of advice
The Local Schools, Local Decisions reforms devolved more authority to schools to choose the support that most suited their individual contexts. Review participants commented that advice to schools about specific matters has varied.

Areas of improvement for implementation

Improving collaboration across staff in order to better coordinate service delivery
The review found that collaboration levels vary greatly within the department. Collaboration within teams is very high, and this has created a positive work environment in many instances. However, collaboration across different teams or divisions is reported to be low.

Participants in the review commented that increasing collaboration could significantly improve the coordination of service delivery, resulting in higher quality services and a more user-friendly experience. Specifically, improving inter-directorate collaboration could reduce incidents of different directorates duplicating efforts to create professional learning, and in so doing, improve consistency of service quality and access for schools. Increasing understanding of the services offered across the department could better equip Educational Services and SO&P staff to direct principals to services that meet their needs.

Areas of improvement for development

Aligning staff with tasks that best utilise their expertise
Issues relating to staffing gaps and the misalignment of expertise with tasks were raised throughout the review. Principals noted that there are some gaps in the expertise required by schools, such as support for complex case coordination and subject-specific curriculum expertise. There was also concern over a misalignment of expertise with the focus of day-to-day activities, for instance, Educational Services staff commented that people with years of teaching experience were spending a large part of their time on administrative tasks. Finally, there was feedback that the organisation will need to grow its continuous improvement capabilities to successfully transform.

Revisiting the 3-year rule to balance the need for school-based experience with corporate knowledge
A large number of the participants in the review spoke of the effect the ‘3-year rule’ has on Educational Services’ ability to attract and retain talented people. A large number of staff within Educational Services are subject to this rule, which requires teaching service staff to return to a school-based role after 3 years in the division. This rule was introduced to ensure currency of school-based experience within Educational Services.

INCREASING COLLABORATION COULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE COORDINATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY
There were concerns that while the rule was designed to ensure Educational Services staff can understand the situation faced by schools and be provided with opportunities to maintain teacher accreditation, the 3-year timeframe is actively hindering the division from building the corporate knowledge it requires to provide expert advice and support for complex problems. School leaders also commented that the rule sometimes makes their job more difficult, as they must hold a role within their school for a staff member who wishes to take up the secondment within Educational Services. This makes it difficult to backfill the position.

Educational Services staff suggested allowing more flexible models of working within the division to allow staff to conduct part time or casual teaching in schools. Another idea was to allow for flexibility in the number of years between school-based roles (for example, rather than requiring it to be 3 years, the timeframe could be extended).

- **Introducing clear career pathways**
  
  Finally, some principals and Educational Services staff commented that taking a job within Educational Services can be perceived as disruptive to a teacher’s career path. There is no promotion or perceived benefit when a teacher transitions back into a school after being in an Educational Services role, despite the additional skills and experience that were likely to have been obtained within the division. Review participants commented that clearer career pathways are required to ensure Educational Services attract the highest quality talent from across the system. There are strengths within world-wide systems to be considered, such as Singapore’s (see Exhibit 8) who do this through career pathways with parallel structures that allow individuals to transition from the Ministry of Education to schools (and vice versa).

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**Exhibit 8: Singapore’s career pathways for teachers**

Singapore provides attractive career tracks to build expertise...

…and offers flexibility in line with professional interest

- Teachers have the option to pursue three different career tracks depending on the expertise they want to build:
  - Teaching track: For a career focused on pedagogical excellence
  - Leadership track: For a career in school administration
  - Specialist track: For a career in curriculum and instructional design, educational psychology and guidance, educational testing and measurement, or educational research and statistics

- Teachers have flexibility for lateral movements across the different tracks as long as teachers satisfy the standards and criteria of the post or career track they want to move to

SOURCE: MOE, NCEE, Rethinking Human Capital in Education: Singapore as a Model for Teacher Development, Rating Teachers and Rewarding Teacher Performance: The Context of Singapore
OUR COMMITMENTS

Educational Services will clarify its role, encourage greater levels of coordination and collaboration and invest more in its people.

Educational Services will:

Orientation
4.1 Clarify Educational Services’ role in delivering the department’s vision to schools, within the division and to other divisions by:

i. articulating the role of Educational Services in achieving the department’s purpose;

ii. increasing the frequency and sophistication of the division’s approach to communication — both internally and with schools and other stakeholders. This approach will include more holistic and consistent communication, oriented around the needs of different audiences and roles – building on the existing term-based calendar approach of communications to schools and parents.

Implementation
4.2 Collaborate closely with other divisions and between directorates to enable consistent delivery of high quality services by:

i. strengthening collaboration with other divisions to support Educational Services in its purpose - in particular, ensuring that insights and capabilities from CESE are fully leveraged in the design, delivery and measurement of support;

ii. building closer collaboration across Educational Services directorates by creating projects with shared outcomes and deliverables.

Development
4.3 Ensure Educational Services attracts, retains and develops the best talent to deliver its services by:

i. increasing the flexibility of role requirements to make it easier to get the right capabilities in the right roles. In particular, Educational Services will review the ‘3 year rule’ and consider a more nuanced approach to balance the need for recent school-based experience with the benefits of building corporate experience. Maintaining a position for Educational Services staff in their original school throughout their time with Educational Services should also be reviewed in this context.

ii. re-designing career pathways to make Educational Services a place to advance a career - either through opportunities to scale the career ladder within the Division or to transition back to schools without negatively affecting career progression.
iii. better utilising the unique skillsets of staff with teaching backgrounds in roles that most require their expertise; and by balancing the sourcing of talent from both within and outside education to boost capabilities, including continuous improvement and customer experience design. This will involve diversifying the range of talent pools Educational Services typically draws from, including greater emphasis on attracting high-performers from other government agencies and the private sector.

iv. investing in building a common set of core capabilities amongst all Educational Services staff. Capability building should focus on both ‘hard’ skills (e.g. using data to drive improvement, understanding the School Excellence Framework, leading collaborative problem-solving, familiarity with adult learning principles) and soft skills such as leadership strengths, customer mindset and bias for action.
THE PATH FORWARD

This review is the first step in transforming the way the department delivers support to public schools. Our vision is to become Australia’s best education system and one of the world’s finest. To achieve this, we must continuously improve all aspects of our system, from the quality of teaching and leadership in schools, to the development of policies and delivery of services provided to support teachers and leaders educating the 780,000 public school students in NSW.

We have already started work on some of the opportunities for improvement raised in the review. The School Leadership Strategy commits the department to ten actions which will better enable school leaders to focus on leading teaching and learning in their schools. Amongst other actions, this Strategy will allocate another $50 million in flexible funding and interim staffing entitlement adjustments to schools so that leaders may hire a business manager or additional administrative support.

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy will employ a system-wide approach to professional learning in literacy and numeracy across the state in 2018. Additional resources will be developed to support teachers in planning and programming to meet the literacy and numeracy learning needs across the curriculum.

Educational Services, together with SO&P, is defining a new operating model for working with schools. This new model will give schools clarity on where to go for all their support needs, and ensure that Directors, Educational Leadership and School Services collaborate to deliver support to schools seamlessly. We are also working to improve our recruiting practices, and to quality assure third party providers in priority service areas so that schools can more easily select providers offering high quality services.
In the next school year, school leaders will begin to notice a difference in the way educational services are delivered to their schools. The department will work to improve understanding within schools and other divisions of Educational Services’ role by communicating more frequently and clearly to the entire department. While schools will continue to receive existing supports, Educational Services will apply a new quality assurance framework to key professional learning to assure school leaders of a consistently high quality of service across the state. These quality services will be made easier to find by establishing clear points of contact for all services types as well as in a user-friendly search engine. New tools and resources for the support of Literacy and Numeracy learning progressions will be launched, and we will improve access to quality assured student engagement and attendance programs delivered by third party providers. We will also work to establish clear roles for Educational Services and NESA in planning for new curriculum delivery.

These changes will be consolidated during the following two years to pave the way for our longer-term transformation:

- Educational Services will bolster its professional learning offering with new offerings on classroom practice, curriculum and proactive wellbeing so that schools in NSW are provided with the highest quality programs.

- Educational Services will provide more support to schools when a new syllabus is released. This will include establishing a closer working relationship with NESA to ensure the division can proactively provide high quality professional learning to schools to support curriculum delivery.

Exhibit 9: Sequencing our commitments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools can expect.</th>
<th>Improved access to Ed Services’ offerings</th>
<th>The highest quality services statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality teaching to improve every student</strong></td>
<td>Clarity on Ed Services’ role and most effective offerings (Semester 1, 2018)</td>
<td>Clarity on which professional learning programs meet the highest standard of quality and are available state-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New early career learning journey for teaching staff focused on engaging the ‘whole child’</td>
<td>New ‘learning journey’ to improve classroom practice based on stages of professional development and evidence-based models for syllabus required to be taught in schools by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Published user feedback for professional learning programs</td>
<td>Updated core professional learning offerings to reflect adult learning principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Learning journeys that are fully integrated with career paths and teacher accreditation</td>
<td>Learning journeys that are fully integrated with career paths and teacher accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Support packages that are linked to schools’ characteristics and performance</td>
<td>Packages that are continuously updated with the latest international and national innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Expanded networks that connect them with schools with similar needs or interests</td>
<td>Expanded networks that connect them with schools with similar needs or interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritizing teaching time</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New search function that enables users to easily find programs and services that are most relevant to them from comprehensive set of Educational Services programs and services</td>
<td>New early career learning journey for teaching staff focused on engaging the ‘whole child’</td>
<td>Wellbeing support consistently delivered at the highest standard of user friendliness and quality statewide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased support resources for principals to free up professional time</td>
<td>Published user feedback for professional learning programs</td>
<td>Improved delivery times and user experience across all services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear points of contact to recommend support and services to schools</td>
<td>Learning journeys that are fully integrated with career paths and teacher accreditation</td>
<td>Wellbeing support consistently delivered at the highest standard of user friendliness and quality statewide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Expanded networks that connect them with schools with similar needs or interests</td>
<td>Service portfolio continuously revamped based on published user feedback and measurable evidence</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leading the improvement journey</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Leadership Institute and principal scholarships for broader principal learning and development</th>
<th>New career pathways and professional development ensure working in Educational Services means a step forward in career paths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Leadership Institute and principal scholarships for broader principal learning and development</td>
<td>New career pathways and professional development ensure working in Educational Services means a step forward in career paths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest quality services statewide

2020 and beyond
WE WILL DELIVER THESE CHANGES CONSISTENTLY AND RELIABLY, BY MEETING NEW MILESTONES EVERY SCHOOL TERM

- All professional learning will be updated to reflect adult learning principles and to ensure it is engaging and effective.

- New tailored support packages based on school needs will ensure school leaders receive the best assortment of services for their school.

- The introduction of better metrics to track and measure support program effectiveness will enable continual improvement so Educational Services programs are effective at delivering outcomes.

- The systems and processes required for Access Requests will be simplified to be more intuitive and transparent.

Beyond the next three years, we will institutionalise the changes. This phase will focus on continuous improvement of services through transparent reporting mechanisms and alignment of our operating models and services to reflect world class service delivery.

We recognise that we cannot achieve this transformation alone. The changes will require a coordinated effort across the entire public school system to implement these commitments. Educational Services staff will work closely alongside school leaders to design services that are high impact, user-friendly and accessible. Feedback will be welcomed and flow freely to ensure our commitments are having the impact we intended.

We also recognise that accountability for delivering on our commitments is critical. We will deliver these changes consistently and reliably, by meeting new milestones every school term. We will also increase the frequency with which we communicate within the department throughout the transformation process.

Although this is an ambitious transformation, we know that nothing short of this level of ambition is required to achieve our vision for the system. We are committed to fulfilling our vision, because every child and young person in NSW deserves the highest quality education to give them the best chance of success in life.
REFERENCES


vii Ibid


