Selective schools offer valued choice and excellent outcomes for gifted students and their families but the existing selection system is no longer fit for purpose. Designed for 12 fully selective high schools in 1991, it has stretched to accommodate 48 selective high schools and 76 primary schools with opportunity classes.

Why?

- Students from disadvantaged groups face unintended barriers to entry
- Shortcomings in test design and inconsistencies in school assessment practices mean that the process may not identify all the students it is intended to
- As the selective education system has grown more complex over time, a number of gaps have emerged that constrain its effectiveness

Actions

- **ACTION 1:** Encourage more gifted students from under-represented groups to apply
- **ACTION 2:** Ensure appropriate provisions and adjustments for gifted students with disability
- **ACTION 3:** Make the selection process more relevant for gifted students from rural and remote areas, and the selective schools that target them
- **ACTION 4:** Minimise imprecision to increase confidence in the accuracy of measurement
- **ACTION 5:** Align the difficulty of the tests to the ability levels of the gifted students sitting them
- **ACTION 6:** Update the frameworks used to guide test design and incorporate state-of-the-art assessment strategies
- **ACTION 7:** Ensure mathematical and English ability are correctly weighted
- **ACTION 8:** Reduce predictability and coachability, and support schools in preparing their students to sit the selection tests
- **ACTION 9:** Partner with schools, families and communities to revise the School Assessment Score process
- **ACTION 10:** Close the gender gap in the selection system
- **ACTION 11:** Consider adjustments to the process of nominating school preferences
- **ACTION 12:** Partner with schools, families and communities to review post-Year 7 entry to selective education
- **ACTION 13:** Strengthen the department’s ability to link data across the NSW education system and its responsiveness to emerging trends in selective education

Findings

- **FINDING 1:** Selective schools continue to offer valued choice for gifted students and their families
- **FINDING 2:** The existing selection process is no longer fit for purpose and needs updating for the coming decades
- **FINDING 3:** Students from disadvantaged groups face unintended barriers to entry in the selective education system
- **FINDING 4:** Shortcomings in the assessment process mean it is not capturing all students’ true ability and so may not identify all the students it is intended to
- **FINDING 5:** A number of gaps in the selection system constrain its effectiveness
- **FINDING 6:** NSW selective schools need a world-class selection process