

State of Education in NSW

Overview

This overview outlines the scope and content of the inaugural edition of the biennial State of Education in NSW.

A major initiative to improve access to education data

The inaugural edition of the biennial State of Education in NSW report is a major initiative of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE).

In launching the Centre, the Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, announced that CESE would be an innovative hub of education data and evaluation, created to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of education in NSW.

This new report brings together a wealth of data, information and commentary about education in this State. It reports on activities and outcomes in the four main sectors - early childhood education and care, school education, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

The availability of information and education data in this report supports the principles of transparency, participation, collaboration and innovation which are identified as priorities by the NSW Government. These open data principles can lead to more responsive policies and better service delivery right across the spectrum of education in NSW.

A frank account of progress in education

As well as contextual information about the size and characteristics (e.g. the providers, students, workforce and funding) of each of the four sectors, the report presents a frank account of progress towards national and NSW goals and targets for education. For each of the four sectors, the report highlights what is going well and where there is room for improvement.

For example early childhood development indicators such as AEDI assessments indicate that children are increasingly developmentally ready for school, with fewer being assessed as developmentally vulnerable than in 2009.

In school education, NSW students continue to score above OECD means in international assessments, but there have been declines in mean scores and relative rankings.

Performance in NAPLAN assessments is mixed – while the proportions of students in the top two performance bands has increased for Years 3, 5, and 7 in Reading and Years 5 and 9 for Numeracy, the overall proportions of students at or above national minimum standards leave room for improvement.

In the VET sector, there are pleasing outcomes for the number of people with higher qualifications, with performance ahead of targets in relation to Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas. However, the numbers of apprentices and trainees commencing or in training have declined in recent years, and the proportion of young people not fully engaged in education, training or work (around one in four) is cause for concern.

Higher education is increasing the proportion of people in NSW with qualifications at Bachelor level and above and is offering more opportunities for undergraduates from low socio-economic (SES) areas.

The report also notes the association across all sectors between poorer education outcomes and selected student characteristics. In this edition, the focus is on students from low SES areas, in rural and remote locations and with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

Independence of the report

The State of Education in NSW has been produced by CESE in collaboration with key stakeholders in education in NSW – the Department of Education and Communities, the NSW Catholic Education Commission, the Association of Independent Schools NSW and the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.

The Advisory Council of CESE has provided independent oversight of the project, with Australian and international education experts ensuring that the report presents a frank account of activities and outcomes for education in NSW.

Information for a wide audience

This report is the inaugural edition of a new biennial online publication, and presents a current baseline picture of performance for a wide audience including policy makers in government and non-government education sectors, teachers and post-school educators, school leaders and parents. It is the first time that information of this kind has been available in the one report, with data presented in graphical and easy-to-read formats from a wide range of publicly available sources which are noted throughout.

For more information

The report is available on the CESE website at www.cese.nsw.gov.au

Further information about the report may be obtained through CESE at cese@det.nsw.edu.au or by telephone on T 02 9561 1211.