

Evaluation of the Home School Liaison Program: Department response

The findings and recommendations from The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation’s evaluation of the Home School Liaison Program have informed the redesign of the program to better support students at highest level of need. This forms the basis for the department’s response to all of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

The department’s response to the recommendations is in draft and under consultation from 4–18 March 2026.

Recommendation	Department response	Rationale and next steps
Program purpose and delivery		
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Clarify the HSLP purpose and target population (4.8.1), taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more robust early intervention (4.8.1.2) • increased support for older students (4.8.1.1). • that declining applications for older students should not be on the basis that legal action is no longer an option beyond 14 years (8.3.1.1). 	Support	Endorsed by department executive for implementation in 2026.

<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Revise the current tiered support framework for attendance to include more detailed descriptions of intervention tiers, and the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders with particular attention to clarifying the scope and purpose of all HSLP intervention-focused roles (HSLOs, AAOs, AAs and SAAs) (4.8.3, 6.2.1).</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>Endorsed by department executive for implementation in 2026.</p>
<p>Workforce needs</p>		
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Extend and strengthen the HSLO and AAO workforce (4.8.2) to ensure the workforce can meet program demand (6.1.2.1) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating attendance associate (AA) and senior attendance associate (SAA) roles to expand the HSLP workforce (4.8.2) • developing a consistent policy and process for contract renewal (6.8.1) • convening more effective recruitment panels with deep understanding of the roles to select the best candidates (4.8.4) • providing a career pathway in the HSLP for AAOs (5.6.7) 	<p>Support in part</p>	<p>The implementation of recommendations 1 and 2 impact the implementation of this recommendation in full.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Re-assess the attendance support needs of principal networks at least every 3 years to ensure that HSLP staff are deployed where most needed (4.8.5).</p>	<p>Support in part</p>	<p>System-level data will be used to identify student attendance support needs aligned to operational implementation of recommendations 1 and 2.</p>

Program structure and reporting		
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Establish a formal HSLP governance structure to address aspects such as oversight of program operations, risk assessment, communication, monitoring and reporting, and strategic policy (5.6.1).</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>The department's Child Protection Steering Committee and the Equity, Wellbeing and Aboriginal Education Sub-Executive Group serve as governance for oversight of the program.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Revise the HSLP reporting structure to support more effective delivery by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a chief education officer (CEO) role responsible for overseeing the HSLP delivery (5.6.2). • creating a dedicated HSLP administrative team to reduce the administrative burden on HSLOs, AAOs, SAAs and AAs (6.1.3.1) • having HSLOs at the equivalent of clerk level 9/10 and SAAs report to an LWA (5.6.8) • having HSLOs at the equivalent of a clerk level 7/8 and AAs report to an LWO (5.6.8) 	<p>Support in part</p>	<p>The department is considering reporting structure options to support more effective delivery, which will be aligned to operational implementation of recommendations 1 and 2.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>Enhance supervision of HSLOs and AAOs to support more effective service delivery by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delegating completion and approval of HSLO PDPs to LWOs (5.6.3) • revising LWO role descriptions to ensure alignment with the work undertaken (5.6.4) • reducing duplicate HSLO and AAO reporting lines to multiple PMs (5.6.5) 	<p>Support in part</p>	<p>The department is considering supervision options to support more effective service delivery, which will be aligned to operational implementation of recommendations 1 and 2.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing attendance expertise of program managers to improve the quality of HSLO supervision (5.6.6) <p>Providing cultural AAO supervision by wellbeing practitioners (7.5.2)</p>		
Cultural safety		
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Conduct a cultural safety review of HSLP policies and procedures (7.5.1) and enhance the cultural safety for staff and program beneficiaries through measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing cultural safety training to all HSLP staff (7.5.3) clarifying the purpose and scope of the AAO role to harness their cultural skills and knowledge in culturally safe ways without undue burden (6.2.1) engaging Elders and community leaders to support Aboriginal families (7.5.5) exploring options for compensating AAOs for cultural load. This should occur through consideration of a whole of government policy around cultural load compensation (7.5.4). adapting program processes and time frames to increase cultural safety for students and families (8.2.1.1; 7.5.1) 	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>Cultural safety will form part of the intensive induction processes for the new intervention.</p>

Program processes and documentation

Recommendation 9

Revise program procedures and policies to ensure that they reflect the operational needs and functions of the program and do not impose unnecessary workload burden on staff, making sure that:

- specified program timeframes reflect case complexities and external factors impacting attendance support (8.2.1.1)
- home visit procedures and risk assessments are considered to better enable home visits to be conducted at the point of need (8.2.2.1)
- conditions for HSLO and AAO access to department vehicles reflects their need and does not increase workload pressure (6.7.1)
- there is a defined process for HSLOs and AAOs to provide feedback on program functioning, with clear responsibilities for all staff to ensure feedback can be addressed, as necessary (6.5.1)

Support

New procedures will be developed to implement the new program.

<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>Revise the SOG and provide clear, explicit and consistent communication of policies and procedures (4.8.6, 6.6.1), making sure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it identifies the purpose and target population for the program (4.8.1, 4.8.6) • program policies and procedures are revised and standardised and presented in comprehensive detail, addressing current gaps and inconsistencies (4.8.6) • it details the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders (4.8.6) • it includes a comprehensive statement of duties for the HSLO and AAO roles that captures the full scope of the roles (6.1.1.1) • it is supported by a robust communications plan to enhance communication within the HSLP structure and between principals/DELS and HSLP program staff (4.8.6, 6.6.1) 	<p>Support</p>	<p>New program guidelines will be developed to support the new program.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>Refine the application and case acceptance process to reduce administrative burden for all staff and improve consistent decision making. This should include consideration of options such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing a centralised, online application within the HSLP CRM system (8.1.5.1) • establishing a standardised application review and case allocation process that incorporates HSLO/AAO feedback (8.1.5.2) 	<p>Support in part</p>	<p>The department is considering the application and case acceptance processes to reduce administration burden, which will be aligned to operational implementation of recommendations 1 and 2.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying comprehensive acceptance criteria and applying them consistently (8.1.5.2) using technology (such as Artificial Intelligence) to streamline and standardise processes (8.1.5.3) 		
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>Improve the timely convening of Secretary’s Conferences and reduce the burden on the small pool of trained HSLOs and AAOs by increasing the pool of available conveners through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> considering options for using external conveners (8.3.2.1) offering more convener training opportunities to HSLOs and AAOs (8.3.2.1). 	<p>Support</p>	<p>Convener training will form part of the intensive induction processes for staff.</p>
<p>Data and systems</p>		
<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>Assess the CRM software requirements for HSLP (9.1.5.1) and implement the most fit-for-purpose option, with attention to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> integration with other departmental systems reporting on aspects of attendance (9.1.5.2) a comprehensive and well-documented hands-on training program for all HSLP staff who will use the new/improved CRM system. (9.1.5.3) 	<p>Support in principle</p>	<p>CRM software requirements will be developed to align with existing systems to ensure continuity of support and information sharing.</p>

<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>Conduct a needs analysis among HSLP staff to determine their data access requirements (9.2.2.1) and ensure ongoing access for all HSLOs and AAOs to all data necessary for their role, including individual student attendance data from Scout (9.2.2.2).</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>CRM software requirements will be developed to align with existing systems to ensure continuity of support and information sharing.</p>
<p>Professional learning, peer support and wellbeing</p>		
<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>Review and revise HSLP-specific professional learning to more effectively address all HSLP staff needs. This should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revision of the current induction program to provide comprehensive and timely role-specific induction for all program staff (10.1.1.3) • revision of the content and frequency of ongoing statewide PL to ensure it is better suited to staff needs (10.2.3.1) • increased provision of network-based, face-to-face PL that targets the needs of HSLOs and AAOs (10.2.3.2) • increased collaboration opportunities for HSLOs and AAOs to enable them to learn from their colleagues' experience (10.3.1.1) 	<p>Support</p>	<p>Intensive induction processes for the new intervention will more effectively address the needs of the HSLP workforce, including a focus on cultural safety and trauma-informed practice.</p> <p>Ongoing, high-quality professional development will be embedded into business-as-usual operations to support staff capability and ensure consistent practice and continuous improvement.</p>

<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>Provide additional measures to support HSLO and AAO wellbeing to prevent burnout and maintain their efficacy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing additional EAP sessions and other formal support options (6.3.1) • implementing a structured peer mentoring and support program (6.4.1) 	<p>Support in-principle</p>	<p>The department is considering additional options to support the wellbeing and efficacy of the HSLP workforce, which will be aligned to operational implementation of recommendations 1 and 2.</p>
--	------------------------------------	--