

SCHOOL EXCELLENCE PROCEDURE

Implementation document for the School Excellence policy

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Document history

Version	Date	Description	Approved by
1.0.0	05/08/2020	Consolidated instructions previously provided in three documents: School Excellence Implementation Guidelines (External Validation, School Planning, Self-assessment)	Deputy Secretary, School Performance North Deputy Secretary, School Performance South
1.0.1	08/04/2021	Updated contact details on cover page	Senior Communications and Engagement Officer
1.1.0	05/10/2021	Updated sections 3.2, 8.2 and 8.5 to clarify needs-based funding and school development review process	Director, School Excellence

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1 Introduction

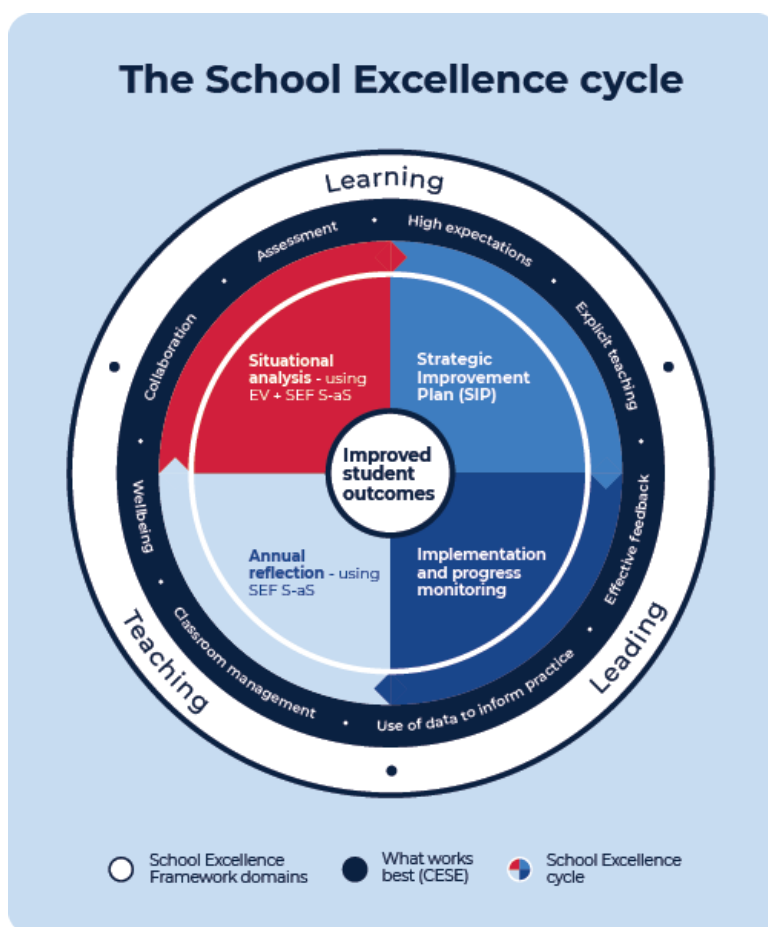
This document provides information on implementing the School Excellence policy as schools move through the School Excellence cycle. Schools should also refer to the [School Excellence Framework](#), [School Excellence in Action](#), [School Excellence Terminology](#) and other related resources available on the department's website and intranet.

1.1 School Excellence cycle

The School Excellence cycle includes four components:

- situational analysis
- Strategic Improvement Plan
- implementation and progress monitoring
- annual reflection.

Improving student outcomes is at the core of the School Excellence cycle. School Excellence is underpinned by the [School Excellence Framework](#) (SEF) and research from the Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation (CESE), including the [What works best](#) research. The framework supports all NSW public schools in their pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of quality practice across the key educational domains of learning, teaching and leading. It also informs and guides principals' decision-making. The [What works best: 2020 update](#) outlines eight quality teaching practices that are known to support school improvement and enhance the learning outcomes of our students.



The School Excellence cycle

1.2 School Planning and Reporting Online (SPaRO)

All schools will use the School Planning and Reporting Online (SPaRO) software to develop their Strategic Improvement Plan, implementation and progress monitoring, self-assessment, annual reporting and external validation.

All schools will undertake a situational analysis, which they may complete in SPaRO. To guide schools in this, section 2.1 outlines a best-practice process for schools to follow, which the School Excellence in Action resource supports. Schools may follow the process mapped out in section 2.1 and in the resource, or they may follow their own process.

SPaRO is accessed through My Applications in the staff portal. Principals will manage SPaRO access levels for staff in their school within the Access Management Utility. Principals can assign contributor access (editing rights) or staff access (read-only rights). It is suggested that principals review staff access levels regularly.

The principal is the only user with rights to publish the school's Strategic Improvement Plan, School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey (SEF S-aS) and annual report.

System requirements for viewing the SPaRO software are Microsoft Edge, Chrome, Safari or Internet Explorer 11, with Chrome the recommended browser. Schools should ensure that they are using the Department of Education's Standard Operating Environment. Schools that do not have the latest operating system and its associated software are advised to use the department's software catalogue to bring their machine/s into line with department standards. Schools should contact their field services IT team or [EDConnect 1300 32 32 32](tel:1300323232) for assistance.

For further information or advice on using SPaRO please use the following contacts:

E: sparo@det.nsw.edu.au

T: 02 7814 3853

1.3 School Excellence cycle cohorts

All NSW public schools have been assigned to one of four cohorts (A, B, C and D), for the purpose of external validation during the four-year School Excellence cycle. Each year, one cohort, a representative sample of approximately 25% of all schools, will participate in the external validation process. Informed by findings from this process and subsequent situational analysis, each school will develop a new four-year Strategic Improvement Plan for implementation in the following year.

The allocation of schools to each group will determine:

- each school's year of participation in external validation
- the timeline for developing and publishing the Strategic Improvement Plan.

Variations to the allocated school group cohorts may be considered due to:

- implementation and management challenges associated with individual schools
- schools participating in other system processes and initiatives
- individual school lifecycle circumstances.

2 Situational analysis

A situational analysis is an authentic and rigorous assessment of a school's current state and is used to inform the school's Strategic Improvement Plan. It is a key component of the School Excellence cycle and is an essential step in developing a Strategic Improvement Plan that will effectively prioritise the school's identified areas for growth. It includes information to inform each school's future directions towards improved student outcomes.

Section 2.1 provides a best-practice process. This is supported by the [School Excellence in Action resource](#), which schools can use for additional support and guidance as they undertake their situational analysis. Schools may follow the process mapped out here and in the resource, or they may follow their own process.

2.1 Completing the situational analysis

The best-practice process below (Table 1) is aligned to SPaRO. Schools may use a different process but will need to ensure that they have undertaken an authentic situational analysis that informs their Strategic Improvement Plan.

Schools may complete all aspects of the situational analysis in SPaRO, which will inform their Strategic Improvement Plan. For more detailed information and samples see the [School Excellence in Action website](#) and [Supporting you with your situational analysis](#).

Table 1 Best-practice process

Aspect	Description	Action required
School Dashboard in Scout	The data from the School Dashboard in Scout is used to provide a snapshot of the current status of the school for each of the five focus areas.	Complete a review and analysis for each focus area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing • Student performance • Human resources • Finance • Enrolment. Schools consider their system-negotiated targets in this section.
School Excellence Framework	The data from the previous School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Surveys (SEF S-aS) including the latest external validation panel report (from 2018 onwards) is populated. Schools use this data to inform the focus areas for improvement.	Add a theme/s against elements of the SEF identifying the main focus areas for improvement. An optional description can be included.
Reflections on SEF S-aS and external validation	The SEF S-aS and external validation findings are considered to determine related themes across elements that can be drawn together to determine future directions.	Complete reflection.
Internal school data, research and literature	A review and analysis of valid and reliable data sources. This includes internal performance and wellbeing data that cannot be accessed through Scout, the current plan and the annual report.	Complete the review of data.

Aspect	Description	Action required
Consideration of all the evidence	All evidence from the situational analysis is considered by the school to make judgements as to which areas need improvement.	Make judgements and identify the areas for school improvement.
Preparation for community consultation	Summarise data, evidence and suggestions gathered during the situational analysis to support the process of formulating the school vision and context statements, and the strategic directions, in consultation with the community.	Summarise the relevant data that will inform the development of both your vision and context statements. Formulate up to three draft strategic directions aligned to the school context and school vision for community consultation. For all schools with an ongoing cohort of students, the first strategic direction will be titled 'Student growth and attainment'.

3 Strategic Improvement Plan

All NSW government schools will develop and publish a Strategic Improvement Plan. This is a school-owned working document that details the steps a school will take to improve the learning outcomes, and the achievement and growth of all students. The School Excellence policy requires schools to develop:

- a four-year Strategic Improvement Plan in consultation with their community
- up to three strategic directions, with a minimum of two high-impact improvement measures for each direction
- system-negotiated and school-determined targets, which will be included as improvement measures in the public-facing or published part of the plan
- initiatives, success criteria and evaluation plan for each strategic direction.

While all schools self-assess against every element of the School Excellence Framework, and external validation considers each school's self-assessment against every element of the framework, schools are not required to have improvement measures or initiatives for every element.

For schools with an ongoing cohort of students (the majority of NSW public schools), Strategic Direction 1 in the Strategic Improvement Plan will be 'Student growth and attainment'. The remaining strategic directions are chosen by each school to reflect and respond to their unique context.

Schools without an ongoing cohort of students (that is: Environmental Education Centres, Taronga Institute of Science and Learning, hospital schools, Stewart House, Royal Far West School, Education and Training Units (Youth Justice NSW centres) will develop at least two strategic directions related to the broad educational delivery to a range of students within a short time frame rather than a set point in time.

3.1 Completing the Strategic Improvement Plan

Each aspect of the Strategic Improvement Plan is informed by the situational analysis (Section 2) and completed in SPaRO. For more detailed information and samples see the [Strategic Improvement Plan on the School Excellence in Action website](#).

Aspect	Description	Action required
School vision statement	A school vision statement is short and precise, describing the school's shared values and high level aspirations for ongoing school improvement.	Following community consultation as part of the situational analysis, finalise and complete the school vision statement.
School context	The school context describes the school's unique features and includes information that reflects on the educational, geographic and social characteristics of the school. It clearly states the school's high level areas for improvement or further development established from the findings of the situational analysis.	Following community consultation as part of the situational analysis, finalise and complete the school context statement.
Strategic direction	A short and meaningful statement that articulates the transformation to be achieved through the Strategic Improvement Plan. Strategic directions provide a strong indication of the priorities that engage the school community in a common goal and are underpinned by the School Excellence Framework domains of learning, teaching and leading.	Following community consultation as part of the situational analysis, finalise and complete the strategic directions.
Purpose statement	The purpose statement is clear and succinct, explaining why a strategic direction was chosen as a focus.	Develop a purpose statement for each strategic direction.
Improvement measures	A statement of the impact that will be achieved by the expected year of the School Excellence cycle through your Strategic Improvement Plan.	Develop a minimum of two high impact improvement measures for each strategic direction against which the school's Strategic Improvement Plan will be monitored and evaluated using annual progress measures. System-negotiated targets and school-determined targets will be included as improvement measures in the published part of the Strategic Improvement Plan.
Initiatives	Initiatives are high-level projects and/or processes that schools undertake in order to achieve the improvement measures. They describe how the strategic direction purpose statement is going to be achieved.	Develop quality initiatives to support the realisation of each strategic direction and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.
Success criteria	The success criteria articulates observable characteristics of the intended future state for the school once the improvement measures in the Strategic Improvement Plan have been achieved.	Develop the success criteria for each improvement measure.
Evaluation plan	The evaluation plan outlines the strategies that will be used in self-assessment processes to determine the progress and impact of the strategic direction.	Identify and develop the plan for measuring achievement of each strategic direction. The data and evidence identified in this section provides information to assist in decision-making.

3.2 Needs-based funding

Needs-based funding is the recurrent resourcing targeted to students and schools based on characteristics of demonstrated educational disadvantage, and provided to lift student outcomes. Accountability for the effective use of the funds to improve student outcomes occurs through each school's:

- Strategic Improvement Plan – the identification of resources relating to initiatives that are implemented to support achievement of system-negotiated targets and school-determined targets
- Annual Report – the evaluation of the annual progress measure/s, including resources allocated.

Needs-based funding is distributed directly to schools through the School Budget Allocation Report and includes:

- targeted funding (Refugee student support, New Arrivals Program, Integration Funding Support)
- equity loadings (Socio-economic background, Aboriginal background, English language proficiency, Low level adjustment for disability)
- base school allocation (Location).

Schools will identify the funding sources they receive in SPaRO on the funding sources page of the Strategic Improvement Plan – the SBAR allocations are automatically uploaded on release.

Schools will monitor and report on the use of needs-based funding to implement initiatives within the school's strategic directions. They will also identify the improvement measures and resources required to support the learning needs of students from identified equity groups as appropriate to the school context. Through research and evidence-informed decision-making, schools will ensure that students benefit from the funding in the year it is allocated. This will embed sustainable models of effective teaching and learning from year to year for students.

Schools will enter the budget allocation/s required for each activity in SPaRO, in the Implementation and progress monitoring table. This ensures that schools can track, monitor, reflect and report on the learning outcomes of projects and activities resourced through needs-based funding and the improvement measures implemented for equity groups.

Funding allocations not linked to strategic directions are tracked and reported on in SPaRO through the 'Activities with additional funding sources' section of the Strategic Improvement Plan.

3.3 Finalisation, endorsement and approval of the Strategic Improvement Plan

Following ongoing conversations between the principal and the Director, Educational Leadership, using the conversation guide in SPaRO, each key aspect of the Strategic Improvement Plan is endorsed by both the principal and the Director, Educational Leadership. Once all aspects have been endorsed, the overall Strategic Improvement Plan is approved by the Director, Educational leadership and the Strategic Improvement Plan is published.

3.4 Publication of the Strategic Improvement Plan

Once approved, schools publish their Strategic Improvement Plan in SPaRO. All schools will publish their plan to their school website by the end of Term 1 at the start of their School Excellence cycle. The plan will auto-populate on the 'School planning and reporting' page of school websites. Schools with websites not supported by School Website Service will need to extract a PDF of the school plan and manually upload it to their website.

Any significant updates to the Strategic Improvement Plan will be endorsed, approved and published in line with the above process. Schools will publish updated plans as soon as they are approved.

4 Implementation and progress monitoring

Implementation and progress monitoring is an ongoing process. Schools will monitor the progress of their Strategic Improvement Plan in SPaRO. It is best practice for schools to review their activities at least twice a term in SPaRO. All schools will annually evaluate against their progress measures. Effective implementation and progress monitoring ensure that schools successfully implement the initiatives aligned to the strategic directions within their Strategic Improvement Plan.

The annual progress measures for each improvement measure in the Strategic Improvement Plan indicate the estimated annual level of achievement against the baseline considered necessary to reach the final improvement objectives of the four-year plan.

Annual progress measures:

- show progression towards the improvement measures
- highlight the improvement the school is aiming for each year of the plan to reach the improvement measures
- are achievable in the one-year timeframe
- are measurable against contextual qualitative or quantitative baseline data
- are aligned to the initiatives
- identify processes that support schools to achieve the improvement measures.

Evaluating annual progress measures is an important tool for tracking progress towards achieving the Strategic Improvement Plan improvement measures. The annual progress measures will be evaluated at the end of each year to reflect on the impact of the initiatives and resources allocated. These evaluations are communicated to the school community as a key component of the annual report.

4.1 Completing implementation and progress monitoring

Schools will identify those activities required to implement initiatives in the Strategic Improvement Plan, and to achieve the annual progress measures (Table 2). These activities are recorded in SPaRO, in the implementation and progress monitoring section, with details supporting each activity's implementation and evaluation.

Each aspect of the implementation and progress monitoring process will be informed by the Strategic Improvement Plan and completed in SPaRO. For more detailed information see [Implementation and progress monitoring](#) on the School Excellence in Action website.

Table 2 Implementation and progress monitoring

Aspect	Description	Action required
Activity	Key steps developed to support the implementation of each initiative identified in the Strategic Improvement Plan.	Develop the activities required to achieve each initiative. These can be flexibly added to the table as needed.
Initiatives	Initiatives identified in the Strategic Improvement Plan are selected and linked to each activity.	Link an initiative to the activity. This list is auto-populated from the initiatives entered in the Strategic Improvement Plan.
School Excellence Framework (SEF) element	The elements from the SEF can be selected and linked to each activity.	Link SEF elements to the activity.
Team	School teams or individual staff can be selected and linked to each activity to	Link a team or individual to the activity (where relevant).

Aspect	Description	Action required
	delegate or share responsibility and to track those leading each initiative.	
When	The date for initiating the activity is selected, enabling schools to sort and view the table in sequential order.	Assign the date when the activity is initiated.
Tracking	The traffic light system is used to monitor the progress of the activity.	Select a traffic light to show the progress status of activities.
Resources	Resources are allocated to support the delivery of the strategic directions identified in the Strategic Improvement Plan to best meet student needs.	Assign and/or describe resources required to implement the activity. Please refer to SPaRO help menu for details about how to do this.
Evaluation	Evaluation of activities informs next steps.	Evaluate and record the impact of activities on a regular basis.
Evidence	Evidence can be uploaded and linked to each activity. This process aligns school planning with self-assessment and the SEF.	Use the paperclip to upload and save the evidence related to progress or achievement of the activity. Collected evidence can be tagged to the SEF elements, annotated and saved in the SPaRO evidence bank.

5 Self-assessment

School self-assessment is a key component of the School Excellence cycle and is embedded in the situational analysis, development of the Strategic Improvement Plan, implementation and progress monitoring and annual reflection. As a reflective process, each school regularly collects, analyses and evaluates a range of qualitative and quantitative data and evidence to inform decisions about impact and progress. All schools self-assess their practices using all the elements of the School Excellence Framework. Self-assessment informs future directions to support school improvement and strategic improvement planning.

5.1 Evidence

It is best practice for schools to use the evidence bank in SPaRO to store and organise their evidence for self-assessment. The sourcing and use of evidence underpin the self-assessment process. Schools collect and analyse evidence and engage in authentic self-assessment and evaluation processes. Using SPaRO for this task will make it simpler for each school to prepare their external validation evidence.

A list of possible evidence sources is available on the [School Excellence Framework evidence guide](#) website to assist schools with self-assessment using each element of the School Excellence Framework.

5.2 School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey

All schools will complete and submit the School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey (SEF S-aS) in SPaRO before completing their annual report. It is recommended that schools complete the SEF-as at least a week before the annual report due date, so that schools can reflect and report on findings

from the survey in their annual reports – which will also be completed and published by the end of Term 1 each year.

The SEF S-aS captures a point-in-time judgement using all elements of the School Excellence Framework. The statements of excellence in the framework are central to guiding the school’s reflection on each element.

Schools consider the evidence in light of the statements of excellence and make an on-balance judgement of the stage of excellence for each theme within the element and the statement of excellence for each element.

6 External validation

The external validation process supports excellence in NSW public schools. Once during a School Excellence cycle, schools undergo an external validation of their school self-assessment, and of the evidence that supports this self-assessment. The cycle aligns external validation with school planning to enable schools to use the knowledge and feedback from the external panel to develop or further refine strategies to target identified areas for improvement. As part of this process, each school engages in discussions with an external panel and has their self-assessment against each element of the School Excellence Framework validated by the panel.

External validation provides an assurance to the school and to the system that the progress being made aligns with the expectations articulated in the framework.

6.1 Completing external validation

Schools complete all aspects of the external validation process in SPaRO (Table 3). For more detailed information see the [School Excellence and accountability](#).

Table 3 External validation

Aspect	Description	Action required
Executive summary	The executive summary provides a brief narrative of the school’s point-in-time judgements in the three School Excellence framework (SEF) domains – learning, teaching and leading. It is a synthesis of the school’s self-assessment.	Complete and finalise the executive summary a minimum of two weeks before the panel meeting.
School-determined next steps in the self-assessment process	This identifies how the school will refine their self-assessment practices using the School Excellence Framework to support continuous school improvement.	The school-determined next steps in the self-assessment process can be edited before and are finalised during the panel meeting.
Future directions to inform school improvement	Future directions to inform school improvement identifies specific elements of the SEF and opportunities for improvement for school planning.	The future directions to inform school improvement can be edited before and are finalised during the panel meeting.
External validation evidence	Schools develop evidence sets as part of the external validation submission. Evidence is annotated and analysed to clearly show the panel how the school arrived at their judgements.	Upload evidence set to the relevant external validation folder in SPaRO. It can be accessed at any time and should be finalised/locked two weeks before the panel meeting.

Aspect	Description	Action required
		The panel is also provided with evidence that is centrally available.
Panel report	An external validation panel report will be prepared as a record of the panel meeting and includes on-balance judgements using the SEF, next steps and future directions.	<p>The external validation panel thoroughly considers information provided by the school including the on-balance judgements. The panel determines whether the school's on-balance judgements, supported by evidence, align with the expectations articulated in the SEF.</p> <p>The school and the panel collaboratively formulate the next steps and future directions.</p>
Director affirmation	The Director, Educational Leadership reviews and affirms the external validation submission is an accurate representation of the school's processes in planning, self-assessment and reporting.	Complete in SPaRO.

6.2 External validation evidence sets

Schools should review the evidence gathered through ongoing self-assessment against all elements of the School Excellence Framework for their external validation submission. Schools need to select high-level, robust examples of evidence supporting school practice. Annotation and analysis of the each of the evidence sets need to clearly show the panel how the school arrived at their judgements.

It is not necessary to include all evidence used for self-assessment in the external validation submission. Schools should consider a range of data types to demonstrate implementation and progress. Evidence should be strong, clearly analysed and well-annotated to sufficiently support the school's on-balance judgement using the framework.

SPaRO allows schools to upload and annotate evidence and link this evidence to elements of the School Excellence Framework, as it is collected throughout the four-year School Excellence cycle. It also allows schools to generate the external validation evidence sets. Using this functionality in SPaRO is recommended best practice and will simplify preparation for external validation.

6.3 Variation to scheduling external validation panel meeting

Panel meeting dates are not able to be changed except for exceptional circumstances. The process for requesting a change of date is:

1. The school contacts their Director, Educational Leadership who will consider the merits of the request.
 - a. If the Director, Educational Leadership concurs that a change of date is warranted, the Director, Educational Leadership advances the request to the Executive Director, School Performance for the operational directorate.
 - b. If the Director, Educational Leadership does not support the request the school is advised.
2. The Executive Director, School Performance will consider the merits of changing the date.
 - a. If endorsed, the Executive Director, School Performance forwards the request to the Director, Principal School Leadership.
 - b. If not endorsed, the school is advised through the Director, Educational Leadership.

- c. The Director, Principal School Leadership considers the merits of the request.
- d. If the Director, Principal School Leadership concurs, a change of date will be arranged and the school will be advised.
- e. If the Director, Principal School Leadership does not concur, the Director, Educational Leadership and the school will be advised.

7 Annual reflection

Each school will evaluate and reflect annually on the impact of initiatives to ensure the Strategic Improvement Plan is on track for achieving the improvement measures. The annual reflection supports the evaluation of school practices using all elements of the School Excellence Framework, adjustment to future planning and completing the annual report.

7.1 Evaluation of the progress measures

Schools complete an evaluation of the annual progress measure/s to reflect on the impact of the initiatives and resources allocated. The evaluation, including resources allocated, will be completed by end Term 1 following the reporting period. This evaluation is completed in SPaRO and is a necessary aspect of the process that auto-populates the annual report.

7.2 Evaluation of funding sources

Schools evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the activities associated with funding expenditure and implementation and provide evidence of impact. Schools will complete an annual evaluation and impact assessment for each identified funding source, including resources allocated, the activities or initiatives funded, and the impact of these activities and initiatives. Schools will then finalise and publish the annual report by end Term 1 following the reporting period. This evaluation will auto-populate fields in the annual report.

7.3 Annual report

The school annual report is a statutory requirement. Its primary focus is to provide the community with information on the school's progress towards achieving the strategic directions in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools report to their community on their school context, findings from self-assessment, implementation and impact of the Strategic Improvement Plan, including the impact of all needs-based funding, resource management, staff and student information, policy requirements and student learning outcomes.

7.3.1 Completing the annual report

Most mandatory elements of the annual report are auto-populated using information the department holds.

To finalise the annual report, principals complete:

- the annual SEF S-aS
- an annual evaluation of the progress measure for each strategic direction
- an annual evaluation and impact assessment for each identified key initiative funding source
- post-school destinations table (secondary schools only)
- parent/teacher/student satisfaction (all schools).

Schools may include optional commentary or analysis and images in the annual report to provide context for and explanation of the auto-populated data.

The overview table (Table 4) outlines the sections of the annual report and describes the mandatory and optional actions.

Table 4 Annual report actions

Aspect	Description	Action required
Cover page	Annual report year, school name, code and logo.	No action required Optional – Upload an image. The school logo will be used if an alternate image is not selected.
Introduction	School contact details. Data source – CESE master dataset	No action required Optional – Include messages from the principal, school community and students.
School background	School vision statement and school context. Data source – Strategic Improvement Plan	No action required
Self-assessment and school achievement	Statement regarding the School Excellence Framework (SEF) and an option to publish the School Excellence Survey (SEF S-aS) Data source – SEF S-aS	Complete the annual SEF S-aS in the self-assessment section in SPaRO. Optional – Include commentary to support the auto-populated SEF S-aS table. Select 'Do not publish' to exclude the SEF S-aS table from the printed report.
Strategic Improvement Plan – Strategic directions	Evaluation of the annual progress measures for each strategic direction including needs-based funding and other resources allocated. Data source – Strategic Improvement Plan	Complete an evaluation of the annual progress measures for each strategic direction in SPaRO. Optional – Include commentary on the overall progress and the next steps for each strategic direction.
Initiatives and funding sources identified in the Strategic Improvement Plan	Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the activities associated with funding expenditure including evidence of impact Data source – Strategic Improvement Plan	Complete an evaluation for each funding source identified in the Strategic Improvement Plan in SPaRO.
Student information	Data sources Enrolment profile – Scout data Attendance profile – Scout data Class sizes (primary) – Scout data Year 12 undertaking VET – NESA subject enrolment data HSC attainment – Scout data	Secondary schools ascertain the post school destinations of their school leavers from Years 10, 11 and 12. This is included in the post-school destinations table as a percentage of the student body. Optional – Include commentary to support the auto-populated student information.
Workforce information	Data sources Workforce composition – Human Resources (HR) data	No action required Optional – Include commentary to support the auto-populated workforce information.

Aspect	Description	Action required
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander composition – HR data Teaching qualifications – HR data	
Financial information	Data sources Financial summary table – Finance Financial summary equity loadings – Strategic Schools Resourcing	Action is required Schools will include –commentary to support the auto-populated financial information, including reference to the impact of these activities funded, not only the activities themselves.
School performance – NAPLAN	Data source – Scout data	No action required Optional – Include commentary to support the auto-populated NAPLAN information
School performance – HSC	Data source – Scout data	No action required Optional – Include commentary to support the auto-populated HSC information.
Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction	Schools will seek the opinions of their school community to gather feedback on school performance and satisfaction.	Complete as a narrative. Optional – Upload images including survey data.
Policy requirements	Data sources Aboriginal Outcomes directorate Multicultural and Anti-racism directorate	No action required Optional – Include commentary on the implementation of the Aboriginal Education, Multicultural Education and Anti-racism policies. Include information on other school programs.
Confirmation	Schools 'Confirm and generate' and 'Affirm and publish' their annual reports in SPaRO.	Confirm that the annual report is complete. Affirm and publish the annual report. Schools that do not have a School Website Service provided website will need to save a PDF of the report and publish it to their school planning and reporting page.

7.3.2 Privacy and personal information

Schools will report information consistently with privacy and personal information and copyright policies and laws. Summary statistics or graphical representation of student performance will not be used for cohorts of fewer than 10 students in a course or subject. Where there are fewer than 10 students, schools need to report in the narrative form.

Principals of small schools may wish to consult with Directors, Educational Leadership regarding the most appropriate reporting strategies applicable to the unique nature of the school and its community.

Further information or advice is available from the department's Legal Services directorate:

E: legal@det.nsw.edu.au

T: 02 7814 3896

8 School development review

The School Excellence policy recognises that some schools may require targeted assistance at any point in the School Excellence cycle. In instances where the Director, Educational Leadership, after consultation with the principal, identifies that a school requires significant assistance in its pursuit of excellence, a school development review may be undertaken. Similarly, a principal may request that a review takes place.

A school development review provides an opportunity to support the school to undertake a more in-depth analysis of an element or elements of their School Excellence cycle outside of the annual process of school self-assessment.

8.1 Initiating a school development review

Following consultation with the principal, the Deputy Secretary, School Performance, Executive Director, School Performance or the Director, Educational Leadership may identify that a school development review is needed for a particular school. Alternatively, a principal may request the initiation of a school development review. The Director, Educational Leadership will provide a written application to the Executive Director, School Performance for approval to conduct the review including:

- details of the school context
- a reflection on the nature and quality of the school's self-assessment
- the reasons for nomination or request for the school development review
- information outlining the strategies already used to support the school, including the outcomes of those strategies, and a clear identification of the way in which a school development review is expected to benefit the school.

Directors, Educational Leadership will provide assurance that:

- the director and principal have consulted on the need for the application
- the application for a school development review is based on criteria appropriate to sustainable school improvement, and undertaken using the School Excellence Framework and a key point of reference
- a comprehensive support strategy for the school has been previously implemented, and that the desired outcome or changes in practice have not been achieved through this comprehensive support
- the principal of the school being considered for a school development review is not the subject of a performance management process
- a performance management process is not warranted at the school, in order to ensure the desired impact of the school development review is achieved
- for Connected Community schools, the Local School Reference Group has been consulted.

8.2 Determining the need for a review

School development review is an appropriate course of action in cases where a school has not achieved sustainable improvement, following significant support or where there are clearly identifiable factors or stressors that are impeding whole-school growth and sustainable improvement.

The decision to review will take into consideration the school's self-assessment and/or external validation along with other available information.

A school development review has significant potential to build on existing school self-assessment activities such as the SEF S-aS, external validation and any school-initiated evaluations, by providing the benefit of 'a fresh set of eyes'.

The Executive Director, School Performance, in consultation with the Director, Educational Leadership, will determine whether the application provides sufficient evidence to initiate a school development review and whether such an approach is likely to identify and guide the implementation of effective actions that will lead to sustainable improvement of the school.

8.3 School development review process

The Director, Educational Leadership with line management responsibility for the principal of the school identified for a school development review, in consultation with the Executive Director, School Performance, will:

- determine the size of the review team based on the school's size and the complexity of the issues
- determine the composition of the review team regarding the expertise required to address the terms of reference
- lead the review team, unless the Executive Director, School Performance determines otherwise.

8.4 The school development review team

The school development review team will consist of three to five members. The team will spend up to five days at the school to determine the issues impacting the school's ability to achieve sustained improvement and determine appropriate strategies to address the identified issues.

8.5 Process following approval

At least five weeks before the school development review

- The Executive Director, School Performance advises that a school development review has been approved and confirms the review team leader.
- The Director, Educational Leadership advises the principal that a school development review has been approved and the name of the review team leader if that person is not the school's Director, Educational Leadership.
- The review team leader consults with the principal to determine the terms of reference, the processes to be used, suggested dates for the review, membership of the review team and nomination of a school contact person. Regarding suitable dates for the review, ensure adequate time for planning (4-5 weeks) and time for validation and report writing immediately following the review (10 days).
- The review team leader enlists appropriate team members.
- A letter of understanding, confirming the agreed terms of reference, processes to be used, membership of the review team and dates for the review is signed by the principal and review team leader.
- The review team leader provides a copy of the above signed letter to the Executive Director, School Performance.
- The Executive Director, School Performance provides advice (including a copy of the signed letter of understanding) to the Deputy Secretary, School Performance (North or South).
- The Deputy Secretary, School Performance (North or South) advises the General Secretary of the NSW Teachers Federation of the approval to proceed with a school development review in the identified school.
- The school community is informed that a school development review will take place and the purpose of the review.

In the two weeks before the school development review

The review team leader:

- negotiates appropriate time to train the review team using the system-developed materials and resources for this purpose
- invites the school principal to the team training if appropriate and relevant
- provides guidelines to the principal regarding what should be included in the briefing to the school staff and community
- provides the principal with a pro forma for parent consent for student interviews.

No later than one week before the school development review

The review team leader meets with the principal to ensure appropriate organisational logistics are in place and that the following requirements have been considered:

- interview spaces are checked for access, suitability and confidentiality
- an additional, appropriate and confidential place is available as a team meeting room and for debriefing throughout the review
- an appropriate introduction of review team members to the school community
- support services are able to be accessed by staff at short notice
- requested documents are available and accessible, and specify what it is expected will be provided to the panel
- a formal briefing is provided to staff members about the purpose and implications of the school development review process. This will include the terms of reference, a timeframe for the review, the methodology to be observed and membership of the review team
- an opportunity will be provided for school community members to attend a formal briefing about the school development review process
- advice regarding the number of interviews and specific personnel to be interviewed
- a timetable of interviews and actions across the review period is provided.

During the week of the school development review

The review team will spend up to five days at the school. The timetable will:

- allocate time at the start for a briefing of the review team by the principal
- remain responsive and flexible to respond to unanticipated and emerging issues
- include interviews with relevant staff and school community members including parents and students
- include observations of lessons and other school activities, as relevant
- include time for analysis of performance data, other evidence and relevant school documentation
- allow for individual reflection, synthesis time, review team discussion and flexibility
- include time to meet separately with the principal each day to discuss emerging issues
- include time for team reflection before debriefing
- allocate time at the end of the review for validation, synthesis and the writing of draft findings, recommendations and strategies
- allocate time for an exit presentation with the principal of draft findings, draft recommendations and possible strategies, and advise that monitoring visits will be conducted over a twelve-month period.

8.6 Outcomes from the school development review

In the two weeks following the school development review

The review team provides a final report to the school which will include time-specific, explicit actions and strategies for mandatory implementation by the school. A variety of support mechanisms will be considered to assist schools to implement the actions and strategies arising from the review process. This can include other business units within the department to provide specialist support where appropriate.

In the 12 months following the school development review

The Director, Educational Leadership (unless otherwise determined by the Executive Director, School Performance) will conduct monitoring visits to the school each term for one year to assess the effectiveness of implementation of the strategies.

The Director, Educational Leadership will update the Executive Director, School Performance each term, and subsequently the Deputy Secretaries, School Performance.

Where strategy implementation and timeframes are not met by the school, further action or support will be considered by the Executive Director, School Performance in consultation with the appropriate Deputy Secretary, School Performance North or Deputy Secretary, School Performance South.