



**ABORIGINAL
EDUCATION**

「 Guiding principles in
Leading Aboriginal Education 」

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Acknowledgement of Country</u>	<u>...3</u>
<u>Glossary</u>	<u>...4</u>
<u>Introduction</u>	<u>...4</u>
<u>How to use this document</u>	<u>...5</u>
<u>Implementation and Impact</u>	<u>...5</u>
<u>Educational Leadership – Leading teaching and learning</u>	<u>...6</u>
<u>Educational Leadership – High expectations culture</u>	<u>...9</u>
<u>Educational Leadership – Performance management and development</u>	<u>...11</u>
<u>Educational Leadership – Community engagement</u>	<u>...14</u>
<u>School planning, implementation and reporting – Continuous improvement</u>	<u>...17</u>
<u>School planning, implementation and reporting – School Excellence Plan</u>	<u>...20</u>
<u>School planning, implementation and reporting – Evaluative practice</u>	<u>...22</u>
<u>School resources – Staff deployment</u>	<u>...24</u>
<u>School resources – Financial management</u>	<u>...26</u>
<u>Management practices and processes – Administrative systems and process</u>	<u>...28</u>
<u>Management practices and processes – Community satisfaction</u>	<u>...30</u>
<u>Bibliography</u>	<u>...33</u>
<u>Professional Learning</u>	<u>...33</u>
<u>Resources</u>	<u>...34</u>
<u>Appendix 1 – The SEF: what it looks like in Aboriginal Education</u>	<u>...35</u>



Anywhere you see this icon Ctrl + click will return you to the Table of contents page



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our students live, learn and play and we recognise the lands and waterways where we work and live in NSW as always being and always will be, Aboriginal land.

We acknowledge parents, families and communities as the first educators of their children. Aboriginal people were this country's first teachers - through the tradition of teaching and learning through sharing connections with the land, waterways and sea and through their stories and lived experiences passed on. We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities, and we celebrate this knowledge in our classrooms.

GLOSSARY

AEC	Aboriginal Education and Communities Directorate
AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teachers and School Leaders
CESE	Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation
CTG	Closing the Gap
EAL/D	English as an additional language/dialect
IPM	Implementation and Progress Monitoring
OCHRE	Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDP	Performance and Development Plan
PL	Professional Learning
PLP	Personalised Learning Pathways
SAE	Standard Australian English
SEF	School Excellence Framework
School Excellence Plan	School Excellence Plan
SLCE	Senior Leader, Community Engagement
SPaRO	School Planning and Reporting Online
URH	Universal Resource Hub

Note

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used in this document it may refer to both Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander students, staff and communities in NSW, for brevity and readability.

Reference to AECG infers Local, Regional and State groups as applicable.

INTRODUCTION

Together, we can ensure that every student, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive and succeed. Let us commit to making Aboriginal Education a shared responsibility and a priority in all our schools.



The Aboriginal Education and Communities Directorate (AEC) is pleased to present this crucial work on enhancing the leadership capability of NSW Public School principals and school leaders.

The department is committed to fostering a culture that values diversity, advances reconciliation, and ensures equitable outcomes, opportunities, and experiences for Aboriginal students. This commitment is central to 'Our Plan for NSW Public Education,' which emphasises these principles in shaping a thriving educational environment and is foundational to the AEC Directorate's Strategic Plan.

Principals and school leaders have a moral imperative to play a vital role in shaping school culture and improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. School leadership is instrumental in creating inclusive environments where every student can succeed.

By embedding practices referenced in this Guiding Principles paper, school leaders can drive meaningful change and ensure that Aboriginal

Education is everyone's business; all of the time. This work aligns these themes with the Leading Domain of the School Excellence Framework. Key actions such as collaborative leadership, cultural responsiveness, high expectations, place-based decision-making, and localised, high-impact professional learning are crucial for ensuring schools excel in driving positive outcomes for Aboriginal students.

When school leaders embrace their pivotal role in fostering diversity and eliminating barriers, they create a more equitable educational landscape. Their leadership is key to ensuring Aboriginal students have the support they need to realise their aspirations.

The AEC Directorate calls on all school leaders and principals to recognise the importance of their role in advancing outcomes for Aboriginal students. By championing and making a commitment to action the principles in this document, they can make a significant difference and contribute to a more inclusive education system.

Foundational Documents:

[Aboriginal Education Policy](#)

[Anti-Racism Strategy and Anti-Racism Implementation Plan \(2024-2025\)](#)

[CESE: Strong strides together](#) and [Strong strides together. Illustrations of practice](#)

[NSW Department of Education and NSW AECG Incorporated Partnership Agreement](#)

[Re-imagining Evaluation Framework](#)

[Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#)

[The AITSL Building a culturally responsive Australian teaching workforce](#)

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The **Guiding Principles in Leading Aboriginal Education** has been created to support the complexity and competing priorities within schools and the need for Aboriginal education to have its footprints in the School Excellence Framework (SEF).

The document focuses on the expected observable practices of principals and school leaders who are committed to focusing on an Aboriginal educational perspective within the SEF's *Leading Domain*. It encourages school leaders to self-assess their school's status through an Aboriginal education perspective of the SEF and to also reflect on their personal capability to effectively lead Aboriginal education within their school community. Through leadership that is equitable, relational, and responsive, schools can drive positive changes in practices, school culture, and student outcomes, benefiting the entire school community.

By understanding the observable behaviours and key drivers for success in leading Aboriginal education, school leaders can deepen relationships, foster meaningful connections, and reinforce shared responsibilities. These actions will enhance the credibility of schools and empower change, focusing on students' success.

IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

Step 1: Review the document to build an understanding of the Key Drivers for Success. Review the observable practices outlined in this document to foster a school environment where Aboriginal education is a shared responsibility.

Step 2: In partnership, confirm area/s for improvement.

Assess your school's standing within the SEF's Leading Domain, focusing on collaborative leadership, cultural responsiveness, high expectations, place-based decision-making, and high-impact professional learning.

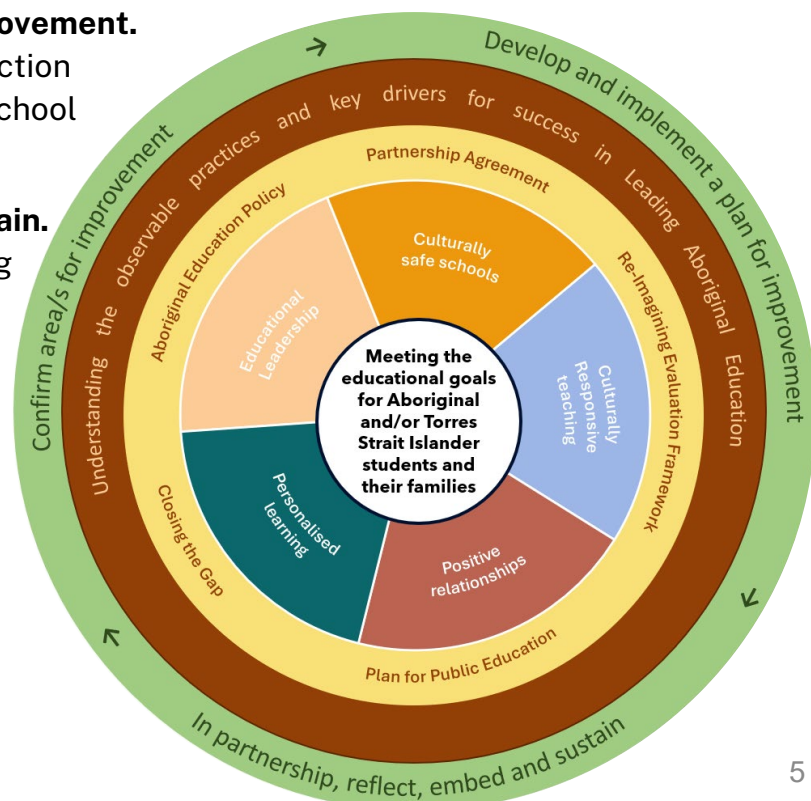
Step 3: Develop and implement a plan for improvement.

Work with the Aboriginal community to create action plans, engage staff and students, and foster a school culture that prioritises Aboriginal education.

Step 4: In partnership, reflect, embed and sustain.

Continuously monitor and adjust strategies using the Re-Imagining Evaluation Framework, centring the experiences of Aboriginal students, their families, and communities.

By using this document, school leaders can assess their practices, identify improvements, and implement strategies aligned with the key drivers for success in Aboriginal education.



Leading teaching and learning

Leading teaching and learning – SEF v3

Delivering

The leadership team ensures curriculum and assessment implementation through planning, monitoring, and reviewing teaching and learning programs. They also manage assessment and reporting of student achievement in line with NESAs and Department of Education requirements.

Sustaining and Growing

Professional learning in the school emphasises the development of effective learning and leadership practices focused on whole school improvement. New and aspiring leaders are supported, and staff demonstrate a shared responsibility for student achievement.

Excelling

The leadership team maintains a focus on distributed educational leadership to support collective efficacy and aspiration. This sustains a culture of effective, evidence-informed teaching and ongoing improvement, ensuring every student is engaged and achieves measurable learning progress and closing of equity gaps.

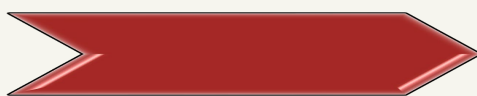
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

- Establishing an Aboriginal Education Committee and empower staff to lead specific initiatives or projects related to Aboriginal education, providing them with the necessary resources and support.
- Leading the school in embedding Aboriginal Histories and Cultures into the curriculum across all key learning areas.

- Establishing professional learning teams focused on culturally responsive teaching practices, where staff can yarn and learn from each other.
- Supporting aspiring leaders to lead Aboriginal education as a whole school focus.
- Sharing responsibility across staff for the success of Aboriginal students.

- Utilising Aboriginal student voice alongside data and research findings to inform decisions about teaching strategies, curriculum design, and student support.
- Embedding culturally inclusive teaching ensuring every Aboriginal student is engaged and makes measurable progress, helping to close equity gaps.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



Schools are aware of the differences of individual Aboriginal students and the impact teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices have on learning outcomes.

Demonstrated interest in establishing partnerships with the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community organisations & knowledge holders to ensure contextualised learning opportunities.

Schools value, understand and critically reflect on the impact they have on Aboriginal education and, through appropriate PL, develop the knowledge and capability of staff to promote student learning.

Aboriginal Education Committee developed, supported & empowered to enhance community connections & relationships, student aspirations, and student success factors.

Whole school systems embed team approaches to enrich evidence-informed, localised, culturally responsive teaching and learning opportunities for Aboriginal students.

School processes ensure every Aboriginal student is engaged.

Local community knowledge and perspectives are valued and inform learning, teaching & leading decisions.



Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Create time to develop relationships that allow for conversations for all staff to convey their strengths and interests in Aboriginal education.
- Establish an Aboriginal Education Committee and empower staff to lead specific initiatives or projects related to Aboriginal education, providing them with the necessary resources and support.
- Establish professional learning teams focused on culturally responsive teaching practices, where staff can yarn and learn from each other.



Have you sat with yourself to reflect on your own assumptions and biases? How could this help you to understand your capability to lead Aboriginal education in your school?

What is your journey in Aboriginal education that enables you to lead in this space?

Have you used AITSL's Indigenous cultural responsiveness self-reflection tool to reflect on your assumptions and attitudes in relation to personal identity and culture?

Are you willing to learn from your Aboriginal students to learn about their culture, knowledges and histories? How might you do this?

How to establish an effective Aboriginal Education Committee?

Strong strides together. Illustrations of practice

Cultural responsiveness

- Lead the school in embedding Aboriginal Histories and Cultures into the curriculum across all key learning areas.
- Provide opportunities for staff to engage in localised, on-Country professional learning opportunities to strengthen teaching and learning programs and develop further understanding and respect of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and cultures.
- Build or strengthen strong partnerships with the local Aboriginal community, the AECG and relationships with families, through listening, learning and growing together.

How do you challenge the assumptions and biases of your staff to help their progression from a culturally aware teacher to one who is culturally responsive?

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

High expectations

- Implement systems to conduct regular reviews of progress towards goals and aspirations, using student voice alongside place-based data to assess effectiveness.
- Promote reflective practices among staff, encouraging them to regularly assess their teaching practice.
- Foster a teaching and learning environment where feedback is valued and used constructively for continuous improvement.

How and why will your teaching staff be willing to reflect inwards to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching practices?

How will you be fair and firm in your expectations of the ability in your school's teachers to be culturally responsive?

Place based decision making

- Utilise Aboriginal student voice alongside data and research findings to inform decisions about teaching strategies, curriculum design, and student support.
- Make necessary adjustments based on evidence and feedback to better support Aboriginal students.
- Involve staff and community members in the decision-making process to ensure their voices are valued and respected.

How will you co-create expectations for Aboriginal student success with your Aboriginal community?



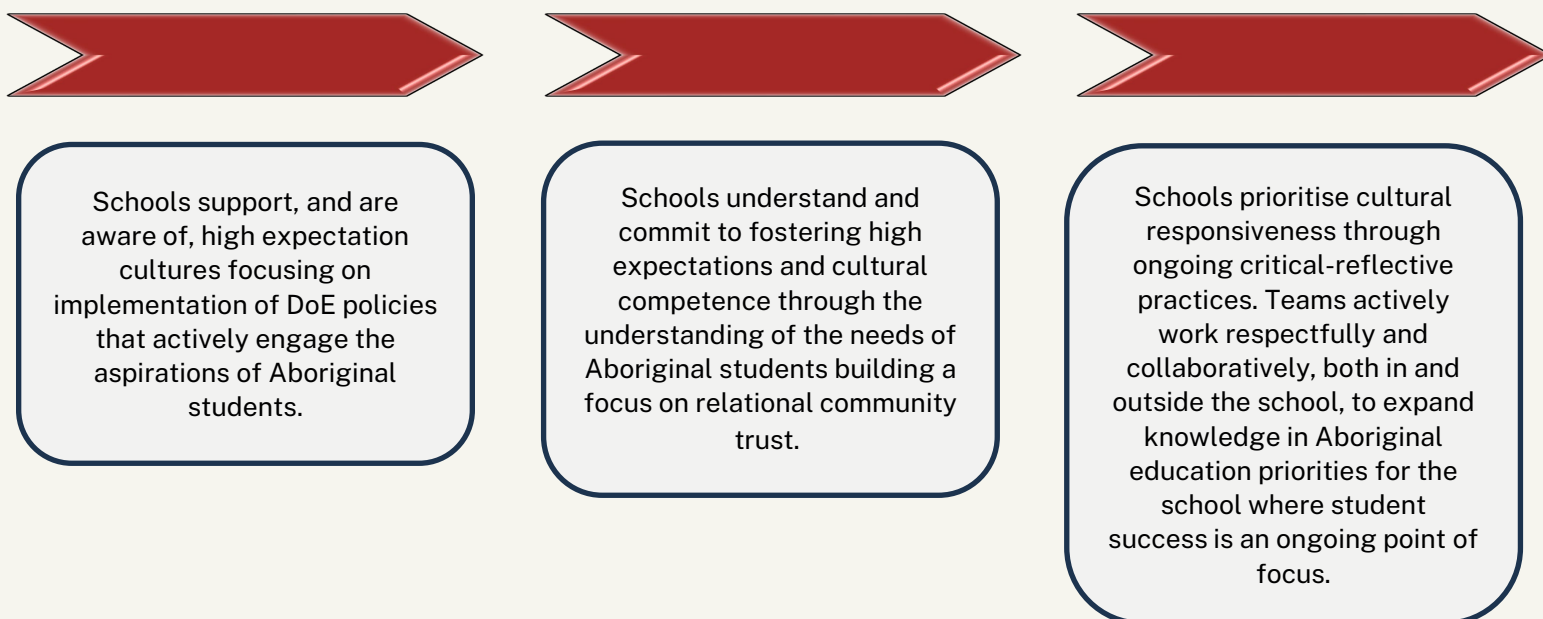
As a result of this, schools:

- Yarn with colleagues to share best practices and develop innovative approaches to teaching and engaging Aboriginal students.
- Actively participate in professional learning communities focused on culturally responsive teaching.
- Integrate Aboriginal Histories and Cultures into the curriculum in meaningful ways.
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to have a voice in their learning to strengthen student engagement and sense of belonging at school.
- Continuously seek to improve teaching practice based on feedback and evidence of Aboriginal student learning.
- Use Aboriginal student voice alongside data to inform instructional strategies and assess their impact on student learning.
- Regularly assess student progress and adjust teaching methods to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.

High expectations culture

High expectations culture – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The leadership team oversees the provision of support and professional development for every staff member to ensure the implementation of relevant department policies within a culture of high expectations.	The leadership team promotes a culture of high expectations through the development of processes to collaboratively review teaching practices to affirm quality and challenge and address underperformance.	The leadership team has established a strong professional learning community with a sustained focus on evidence-informed teaching, wellbeing, and leadership practices. There is a collaborative culture of high expectations and continuous improvement across the school, underpinned by high staff wellbeing.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulating the vision and goals for professional learning teams, emphasising culturally responsive, evidence-informed practices. Providing resources such as research, training materials, and specialists and create opportunities for teachers to share successful strategies and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing cultural competence through deepening staff understanding of Aboriginal histories, culture, and languages. Encouraging and modelling reflective practices by yarning about what’s working, what’s not, and how to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing culturally responsive, evidence-informed practices to foster collaboration, high expectations, and continuous improvement in Aboriginal education.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



High expectations culture cont.

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

High expectations

- Build high expectation relationships with staff that models that all staff must be culturally competent.
- Provide support and resources to help staff meet these expectations, including culturally appropriate resources and professional learning opportunities focused on Aboriginal education.
- Collect and analyse data and insights about Aboriginal student performance, attendance, engagement, and wellbeing and allow platforms for capturing Aboriginal student and family voice for the sharing of stories relating to schooling success.

Having high expectations is more than a belief. Its power lies in how you demonstrate the belief to students so that they know you have no doubt that they can do something. (Perso and Hayward, 2015)

How do you demonstrate your belief that Aboriginal students can achieve equally as high, if not higher, than non-Aboriginal students at your school?

Place based decision making

- Integrate the themes from CESE's Strong strides together paper into school-wide teaching practices and procedures.
- Involve Aboriginal students, families, AECG and community members in the development and evaluation of key initiatives to ensure they are culturally inclusive and effective.

Universal Resource Hub



What metaphor would best describe your classrooms? For instance, do your teachers plant seeds, nurture growth, or harvest results? Explain your metaphor. This will reflect your values and expectations of your teachers.

Have you considered what success might look like or feel like for Aboriginal people in your school? Who decides this?

Localised, high impact professional learning

- Clearly articulate the vision and goals for professional learning teams, emphasising culturally responsive, evidence-informed teaching, wellbeing, and leadership.
- Supply necessary resources, such as access to research articles and specialists, to support staff progression from cultural awareness to cultural inclusiveness and sustainability.
- Create opportunities for teachers to share successful strategies and resources.
- Attend professional learning team meetings to demonstrate commitment and support.
- Encourage and model reflective practices by yarning about what's working, what's not, and how to improve.

How do you know what the most powerful next professional learning opportunity is needed for your staff?



As a result of this, schools:

- Actively participate in Aboriginal education professional learning, sharing insights and strategies for culturally responsive teaching.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to develop and implement innovative teaching practices to support Aboriginal student engagement.

Performance management and development

Performance management and development – SEF v3

Delivering

The leadership team ensures that annual performance and development processes are implemented for all staff. Performance and development needs are identified and addressed respectfully, promptly, and effectively.

Sustaining and Growing

Staff proactively seek to improve their performance in a positive culture of challenge and support. The capabilities of all staff are developed by evidence-informed, collaborative professional learning and feedback practices focused on improvement. Future leaders are identified, supported, and developed.

Excelling

A high-performance culture and strong relational trust enable professional growth and a collaborative feedback culture to flourish. All students are taught by high performing teachers. Leadership capability is developed by identifying, inspiring and enabling potential leaders. The leadership team monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of leadership practices and develops strategies for greater whole school impact.

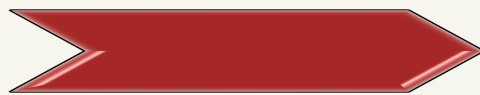
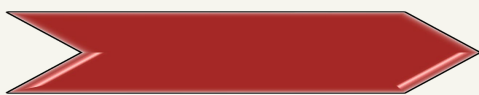
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

- Annual performance and development processes are supportive of all staff and are culturally responsive by design.
- Fostering a shared vision and collective responsibility for Aboriginal student aspirations by setting goals and celebrating achievements.

- Staff enhancing skills through collaborative, evidence-informed learning to ensure culturally responsive teaching for Aboriginal students.
- Aspiring leaders receiving development opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal perspectives in whole school culture.

- Promoting professional growth and collaborative feedback focused on Aboriginal education.
- Fostering a high-performance culture by encouraging staff to provide feedback on leadership practices.
- Developing ongoing evaluative practices to measure the impact on leadership in Aboriginal education and cultural responsiveness.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



The leadership team ensure Aboriginal education is discussed with staff in PDP cycles. Staff cultural awareness is reflected upon to support capacity building.

School staff strengthen their cultural competence through the ability to understand, interact and communicate with Aboriginal students and community. Staff establish trusting relationships and connections to support community aspirations.

Schools demonstrate a commitment to Aboriginal education through respectful and collaborative processes that are culturally inclusive and responsive. Staff are empowered to strengthen their skills, attitude and practice through ongoing reflective learning opportunities.

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Through developing a strong collegial relationship with staff, understand those who are committed to enhancing educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and provide opportunities for them to develop their skills in leading Aboriginal education or to take on leadership roles in school initiatives.
- Conduct regular reviews of leadership effectiveness, using data and feedback from staff, students and families; consider utilising the Re-imagining Framework to conduct this review process.
- Encourage leaders to engage in self-reflection, assessing their own practices and identifying areas for improvement.

The OECD reports that in schools where Aboriginal students are achieving well, there is generally a highly effective school principal who has done 'whatever it takes' to ensure students are at school, engaged in learning and making sound progress. What will you do to enact this?

Cultural responsiveness

- Maintain open lines of communication with staff, encouraging honest and respectful dialogue.
- Encourage staff to provide feedback on leadership practices as well, promoting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Foster a shared vision and collective responsibility for Aboriginal student aspirations by setting goals and celebrating achievements.

How does the leadership team share responsibility and build capacity across the school and community in Aboriginal education whilst staying visible and connected?

High expectations

- Collaborate with staff to set specific, measurable and relevant improvement measures for teaching and learning outcomes, with a particular focus on Aboriginal students. Regularly review and document progress towards these improvement measures and adjust strategies as needed.
- Recognise and celebrate culturally responsive teaching practices and resulting student achievements in staff meetings, newsletters, and other forums.
- Link performance management to professional development opportunities to support staff progression from cultural awareness to cultural responsiveness.

Do the actions of all school staff demonstrate the belief that improvement can be achieved in Aboriginal education?

Do staff understand that they are critical in achieving improved Aboriginal student outcomes?



Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Localised, high impact professional learning

- Provide professional development opportunities focused on culturally responsive teaching and leadership practices.
- Hold regular reflection sessions where staff can discuss observations and take action to improve their teaching practice.
- Use clear, objective criteria for providing feedback, linked to Aboriginal student outcomes.
- Normalise the practice of giving and receiving feedback as a routine part of professional practice, framing feedback as a tool for growth and improvement, not as criticism.

As a result of this, schools:

- Demonstrate a commitment to growth and excellence in teaching, for Aboriginal students.
- Set high expectations for Aboriginal student achievement and engagement and work diligently to meet them.
- Participate actively in performance management processes, using feedback to improve practice.
- Encourage staff to take responsibility for their own professional development, seeking out opportunities to learn and grow.
- Apply new knowledge and skills in the classroom to improve Aboriginal student outcomes with strong links to family aspirations.
- Use the AITSL Cultural Responsiveness Self-reflection Tool to reflect on self-awareness of assumptions, attitudes and biases, to set professional goals and develop action plans for improvement.
- Engage in continuous learning and self-improvement to ensure progress from cultural awareness to culturally responsive teaching.

Performance and development: support resources for principals

AITSL Cultural Responsiveness Self-reflection Tool



Community engagement

Community engagement – SEF v3

Delivering

Parents/carers and community members have the opportunity to engage in a range of school related activities which help build a cohesive educational community and enhanced sense of belonging.

Sustaining and Growing

The school understands the diversity of their broader community by regularly engaging in a range of school and community-based activities. Feedback on school performance is solicited and addressed from students, staff, parents/ carers and the broader school community.

Excelling

The school is recognised for its strong culture of inclusion that reflects the richness and diversity of the wider school community. There is a shared commitment to school priorities which enable the success of every child. The school partners with the community to support equitable outcomes.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

- Inviting the Aboriginal community to engage in school related activities on a regular basis.
- Regularly reviewing and updating school policies, actions and practices to ensure they are culturally responsive and respectful of Aboriginal cultures.

- Ensuring school leaders and staff are visible in their local community and actively participate in community events to show commitment, learn about local Aboriginal cultures, build relational connections and develop trust.
- An inclusive Aboriginal Education Committee led by the principal and/or exec that guides decision making about Aboriginal education within the school inclusive of student and family voice.

- Engaging regularly with the [AECG](#) and/or other community groups to develop structured consultation processes to gather input from Aboriginal communities on key school decisions, policies, and programs.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



School staff have an awareness of the importance of Aboriginal community and/or AECG partnerships and understand the importance of liaising with community members and organisations.

Schools have developed reliable connections with the local Aboriginal community, which value community knowledge, feedback and culturally responsive practices.

School staff seek regular opportunities to create places to yarn that respects all voices to ensure mutual trust around student learning & aspirations.

Schools and communities have shared commitments and responsibilities to strengthen life-long opportunities for Aboriginal students.

Schools routinely engage with local Aboriginal community and draw on the cultural knowledge and expertise of the community.

The [Narragunnawali reconciliation toolkits](#) contain comprehensive guides and core resources to support conversations with community.



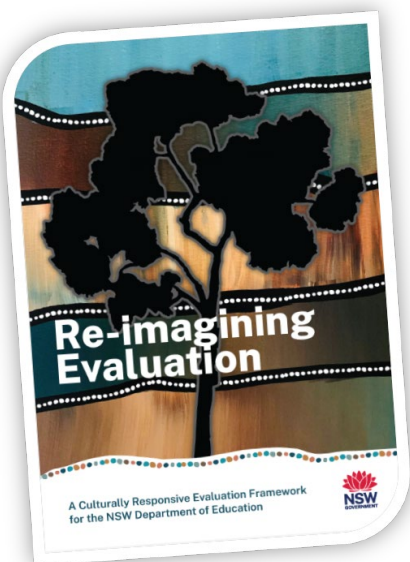
Community engagement cont.

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Aboriginal community members and the AECG are included in school governance, including consultation and employment panels, to ensure their perspectives are valued and integral to decision-making.
- Engage regularly with the AECG and/or other Aboriginal community groups to develop structured consultation processes to gather input from communities on key school decisions, policies, and programs.
- Ensure school leaders and staff are visible in their local community and actively participate in community events to show commitment, learn about local Aboriginal cultures, build relational connections and develop trust.

Traditionally, schools have thought of community engagement as being controlled by the school, inviting parents and community members into the school to support existing structures, programs and decisions that have already been made. Is this the case in your school and is it working?



Cultural responsiveness

- Regularly review and update school policies, actions and practices to ensure they are culturally responsive and respectful of Aboriginal cultures.
- Conduct regular professional development sessions on cultural responsiveness for all staff, aimed at enhancing relationships and fostering opportunities for meaningful change.
- Ensure the school environment reflects and respects Aboriginal cultures through artwork, signage, and dedicated cultural spaces.

Why should school processes only reflect Western assumptions?
What alternatives can you think of?

High expectations

- Consider contextualising success factors to align with student and family aspirations and expectations. Utilising the principles within the Re-imagining Evaluation Framework allow the Aboriginal community to self-determine school success measures and factors.
- Conduct regular progress check-ins with students, parents, and teachers to monitor aspirations, academic and personal development.
- Implement recognition programs to celebrate the achievements of Aboriginal students in all areas of their schooling.

Do you plan for Aboriginal people or plan with them?



Community engagement cont.

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Localised, high impact professional learning

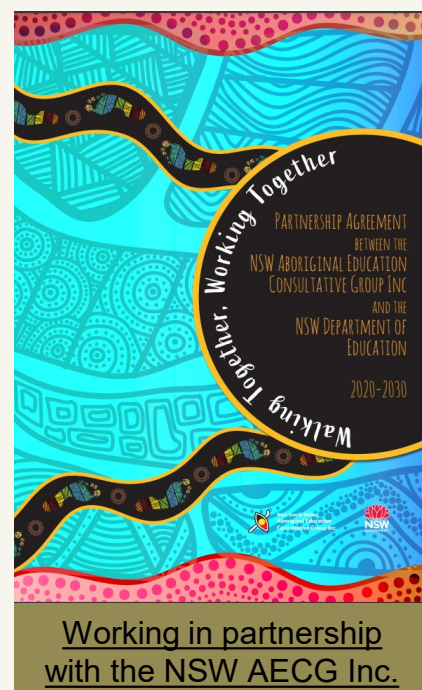
- In partnership with the local Aboriginal community and/or the Aboriginal Education Committee, design professional learning that addresses specific cultural and educational needs relevant to the local Aboriginal community.
- Support staff in developing their skills and understanding of Aboriginal cultures through mentoring, coaching, and collaborative learning.
- Create opportunities for staff to network and collaborate with Aboriginal educators and community members.

How do you support your staff to build their relationships with families and partnerships with the Aboriginal community, to co-create a culturally responsive school?

As a result of this, schools:

- Build and/or strengthen, respectful relationships with Aboriginal community members and families.
- Seek input and feedback from the Aboriginal community to inform teaching practices and school policies.
- Ensure that the school environment creates a sense of belonging for Aboriginal students and is respectful of Aboriginal students' cultural identities.
- School staff reflect on their own practices and seek feedback to improve their cultural competence and culturally responsive teaching.

Click for links



Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement – SEF v3

Delivering

The school engages in an exclusive, ongoing process of self-assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation to collaboratively develop evidence-informed School Excellence Plans.

Sustaining and Growing

The school’s regular and cyclical strategic planning actively enables change that leads to improvement, ensuring that school-wide processes are responsive to feedback and evidence.

Excelling

A school-wide culture of collaboration and continuous improvement exists, where strategic planning and implementation lead to an impact on learning progress and enhanced teaching and leadership practices. Embedded and iterative processes and practices evolve with the changing context of the school community.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

- Actively participating in a responsive and continuous process of self-assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation specifically tailored to enhance Aboriginal education. This collaborative approach aims to develop School Excellence Plans that are informed by evidence and focused on achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal students.

- Regular and cyclical strategic planning actively promotes change aimed at improving Aboriginal education.
- All school-wide processes are responsive to feedback and evidence, fostering continuous improvement in support of Aboriginal students' educational outcomes.

- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement in Aboriginal education, with strategic planning focused on enhancing learning progress and refining teaching and leadership practices.
- Adaptable and iterative processes ensure responsiveness to the evolving needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness](#) to [Cultural responsiveness](#)



Schools value collaboration, critical self-reflection as well as equitable relationship building with Aboriginal people in the community across improvement cycles. Schools’ Excellence plans recognise diversity and Aboriginal student aspirations, strengths and areas of development.

Schools embed conditions and processes that support staff to examine their practices and commit to making appropriate changes for improvement for Aboriginal students.

School practices are considered genuine and authentic by local Aboriginal community where their voices are visible in improvement measures.

Schools invest in opportunities where the local Aboriginal community has formalised leadership roles within the school to strengthen improvement enablers.

School systems are in place that ensure continuous reflection and learning for staff about how Aboriginal students receive a meaningful, quality education.

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

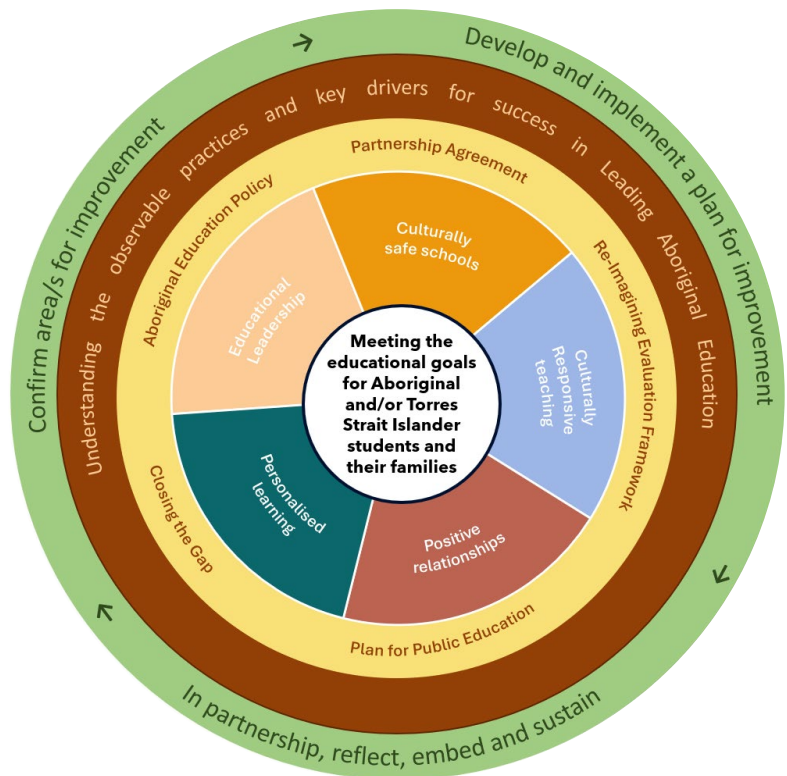
- Collaborative leadership**
- Create a School Excellence Plan and subsequent IPMs, that emphasises the importance of relationships, student aspirations and continuous improvement in Aboriginal education.
 - Conduct annual reviews of the School Excellence Plan to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. Feedback from Aboriginal students, families, and community members guide and drive future planning.
 - Develop leadership opportunities for both staff and students, particularly those from Aboriginal backgrounds. Provide mentoring and coaching to help them develop their skills and attributes.
 - Know your school environment and community to identify emerging needs and trends. Be proactive in addressing these changes through a culturally responsive lens.

How has your leadership influenced shifts in teaching practices for Aboriginal students? What specific changes have you observed in teachers' approaches to supporting Aboriginal learners?

Based on the progress made so far, what further actions or leadership initiatives do you believe are necessary to deepen the impact on teaching practices, school culture and outcomes for Aboriginal students? How will you support ongoing teacher development and cultural competency?

What evidence is there of a culture of high expectations and collective teaching responsibility and accountability for Aboriginal students?

Centring Aboriginal students, their families, and their communities at the heart of the school's culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.



What evidence is there of a culture of high expectations and collective teaching responsibility and accountability for Aboriginal students?

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

High expectations

- Embed a culture of flexibility where staff and students feel comfortable adapting to new challenges and opportunities.
- Foster collaborative innovation in Aboriginal education initiatives by implementing pilot programs, learning sprints or other key initiatives. Collect feedback and make necessary adjustments prior to full-scale implementation.
- Establish a continuous improvement cycle where strategies are regularly evaluated, refined, and enhanced based on feedback and outcomes to ensure student progress and engagement.

Cultural responsiveness

- Hold regular yarn-ups with key school community members, including AECG and/or local Aboriginal community representatives, to discuss updates and ensure the plan remains relevant to their needs and aspirations.
- Hold regular consultations with Aboriginal families and community members to gather their perspectives and ensure their voices are heard, valued and actioned.

Do you have an understanding of deficit discourse? If you think it is common in the conversations of your staff, how will you shift mindsets to a strength-based approach?

Place based decision making

- Evaluate data about Aboriginal student outcomes, including academic performance, attendance, and engagement. Use both quantitative and qualitative data to get a comprehensive understanding and plan collaboratively for future success.
- Reflect on Aboriginal student data regularly and provide insights that highlight trends, successes, and areas needing improvement. Share these insights with staff, families and the community to maintain responsibility and credibility.
- Ensure the use of a feedback cycle where data insights are used to inform and adjust teaching practices and school plans. Ensure that changes are communicated clearly to staff and the community.
- Consider contextualising the evolving needs of Aboriginal students and families. Utilising the principles within the Re-imagining Evaluation Framework allow Aboriginal students and families to self-determine these needs and empower change.

As a result of this, schools:

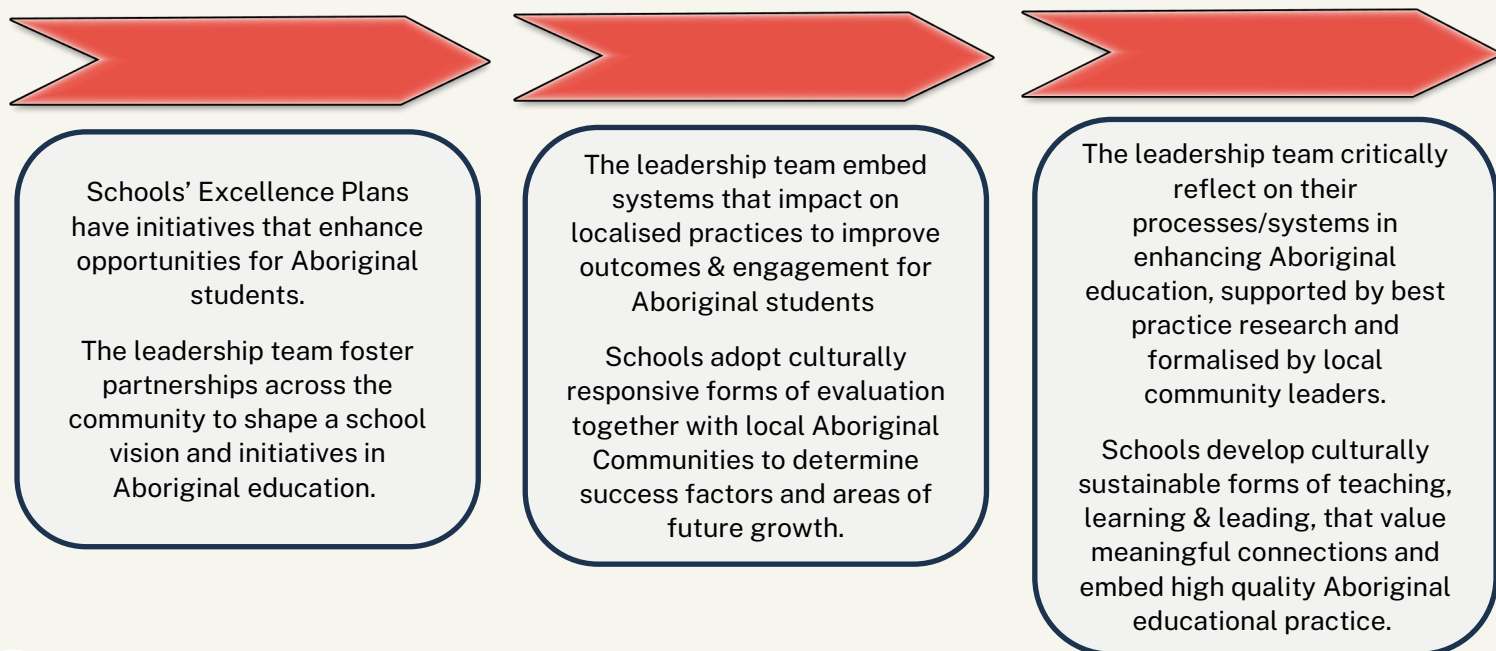
- Engage in collaborative professional learning communities focused on sharing best practices and strategies for teaching and engaging with Aboriginal students.
- Use culturally inclusive and responsive pedagogies to meet the diverse needs of Aboriginal students, ensuring all students are supported and challenged.
- Build strong, supportive relationships with students, recognising and valuing their cultural backgrounds.
- Be open to trying new approaches and strategies to enhance learning outcomes for Aboriginal students.
- Participate in action research or other initiatives aimed at improving educational practices that enhance opportunities for all students.

School Excellence Plan

School Excellence Plan – SEF v3

Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The strategic directions of the School Excellence Plan align to student and system priorities and ensure responsiveness to identified needs. The school leadership team welcome and engage staff, students, parents/carers and the school community in the development of the vision and priorities of the school.	The leadership team embeds planning processes to direct school improvement through initiatives and activities aligned to student needs. Staff are provided opportunities to engage with the strategic directions of the School Excellence Plan to work towards the achievement of the improvement measures.	The school collaboratively uses research, evidence-informed initiatives and innovative thinking in designing and implementing a School Excellence Plan that successfully delivers ongoing, measured improvement in student progress and achievement.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence in the School Excellence Plan of designed initiatives to align closely with the educational needs of Aboriginal students. • The school leadership team actively encourages and involves staff, students, parents/carers, and the Aboriginal community in shaping the vision and priorities of educational initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students are prioritised by the leadership team, which integrates planning processes that guide school improvement through focused initiatives and tailored activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-informed and innovative approaches are used to develop Aboriginal education initiatives, aiming to consistently achieve and measure improvements in Aboriginal students' progress and academic success

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Identify, allocate and document the use of funds specifically for innovation in teaching Aboriginal education.
- Involve staff and community members in setting clear, measurable goals for Aboriginal education.
- Allocate a specific percentage of the budget for professional development on culturally responsive and evidence-informed practices.
- Strategically allocate funds for opportunities to engage in Aboriginal community activities to ensure the school is developing strong partnerships with the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community.

What initiatives or activities in your School Excellence Plan are being funded by the Aboriginal background equity loading?

[Planning for success in Aboriginal Education](#) [Our Reconciliation Action Plan](#)



Cultural responsiveness

- Use student, family and community voice to gain deeper insights into community needs and perspectives.
- Create an Aboriginal Education Committee, that includes the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community members to participate in decision-making processes.
- Ensure that these committees meet regularly, and their input is actively considered and reflected in school procedures and practices.

Place based decision making

- Schedule monthly or quarterly data review meetings focused on Aboriginal students' progress.
- Host information sessions or community yarn-ups to connect and discuss progress, insights and where to next from the information gathered.

“You’re not just putting plans on paper and putting that in the file, you’re actually following through with actions with students and listening to them.” Principal

Do your actions reflect this?

Localised, high impact professional learning

- Allocate staff, faculty and stage groups to facilitate professional learning and showcase how they have embedded Aboriginal Histories and Cultures in key learning areas.
- Offer professional learning focused on leadership skills relevant to Aboriginal education initiatives and empower Aboriginal staff to seek these opportunities.

As a result of this, schools:

- Regularly use data and Aboriginal student voice to inform and refine teaching practices, aiming to improve Aboriginal students' academic achievements.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to share insights and best practices related to innovative approaches in Aboriginal education, including considering establishing a [Reconciliation Action Plan](#)
- Actively participate in professional development opportunities focused on culturally responsive teaching and evidence-based practices.
- Integrate culturally relevant content and perspectives into the curriculum, ensuring it is responsive and respectful of Aboriginal cultures.
- Develop and maintain a high level of cultural competence. moving toward cultural responsiveness, showing respect and understanding for Aboriginal cultures in all interactions.

Evaluative practice

Evaluative practice – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The school engages in ongoing evaluation of activities in the School Excellence Plan by examining process quality and impact to determine the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives.	Evaluation is implemented in a collaborative and systematic way to inform considered adjustments and modifications to whole school areas of focus, programs and initiatives.	There is a culture of evaluative practice which supports the school to efficiently and effectively deliver their strategic priorities and demonstrate improvements in student learning outcomes.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership team report to local Aboriginal community about the school's performance and the implementation of Aboriginal education programs and initiatives. This is reflected in the School Excellence Plan and determine effectiveness of embedded Improvement Progress Measures (IPM's). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation of Aboriginal education programs and initiatives involves engagement with local Aboriginal community, in a collaborative and consultative way to inform considered adjustments and modifications to areas of focus, programs and initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders, in the development and evaluation of Aboriginal education curriculum, programs and initiatives, engage with Aboriginal students, their families and communities, utilising a culturally responsive framework.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Host public yarn-ups and information sessions to discuss Aboriginal education initiatives and gather further insights of community perception of school initiatives.
- Utilise the Re-imagining Evaluation Framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of programs and initiatives.
- Develop a flexible approach that allows for continuous improvements based on data, insights and community feedback.

How would Aboriginal students, their families and community describe success?

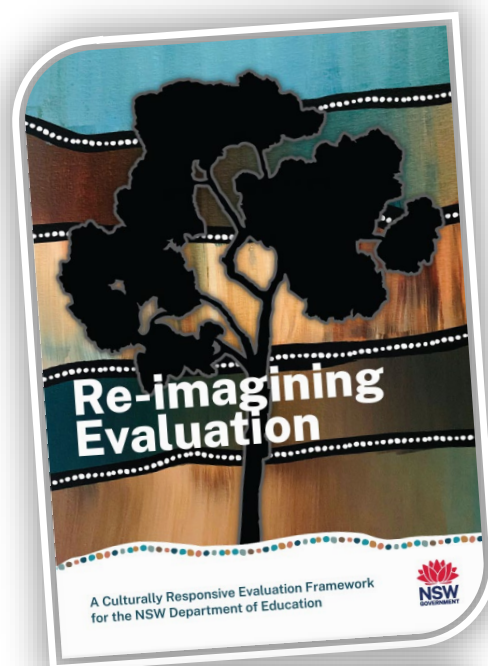
Do you look for ways to partner with local Aboriginal controlled organisations?

Cultural responsiveness

- Develop processes to document community feedback and integrate it into initiative planning and evaluation.
- Make a commitment to attend community events, cultural activities, and celebrations to ensure visibility and that informal conversations occur inside and outside the school gate.
- Conduct regular training/workshops on the Re-imagining Evaluation Framework and CESE: Strong strides together paper for all staff and allocate time and resources for them to implement and reflect on it in their practice.
- Regularly review school procedures to ensure they promote cultural responsiveness and inclusivity.

Localised, high impact professional learning

- Evaluate the impact of professional learning and its ability to improve culturally responsive teaching, aligned to key documents and resources.
- School leaders demonstrate culturally responsive behaviours and practices in their daily interactions.



Click image for link to resource

Do you encourage and engage in On-Country learning?

As a result of this, schools:

- Engage in high impact professional learning opportunities focused on leading culturally responsive teaching.
- Share insights and best practices with colleagues to promote a collective approach to leading culturally responsive teaching.
- Adjust teaching methods and curriculum based on feedback and evaluation outcomes.
- Develop strong, respectful relationships with Aboriginal students, their families and community.
- Actively seek and incorporate feedback from the community into classroom practices and curriculum development.

Staff deployment

Staff deployment – SEF v3

Delivering

The school's staffing is organised and managed to ensure an effective learning environment. The leadership team allocates staff resources to support the achievement of the school's strategic priorities, including non-educational administrative tasks to appropriate non-teaching staff.

Sustaining and Growing

The school's staffing is organised and managed to maximise time spent on teaching, learning and leading. The leadership team regularly considers and acts on opportunities to optimise non-educational administrative tasks with appropriate non-teaching staff and ensures that adequate support is provided to enable non-teaching staff to take on these tasks.

Excelling

The leadership team plans for and strategically deploys teaching and non-teaching staff to improve student outcomes. The leadership team uses data to evaluate the effectiveness of staff deployment decisions and creates a culture of shared accountability to achieve organisational best practice.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

- The leadership team acknowledge the significance of student demographics in determining the staffing composition.
- The leadership team appreciate the valuable contributions of local Aboriginal people to the school community and employ local Aboriginal people whenever feasible.

- The leadership team recognise the importance of staff experience and expertise in working with Aboriginal students to optimise teaching and learning opportunities and are aware of the cultural load experienced by staff.
- The leadership team actively foster opportunities for local Aboriginal people to adequately support roles within the school.

- The leadership team align the educational needs of Aboriginal students with the skills and experience of staff members.
- The leadership team engage local Aboriginal community members, whenever feasible, in the selection and recruitment of staff and in the employment of local Aboriginal people.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



Staff are aware of the roles and responsibilities of all colleagues, including Aboriginal staff.

The leadership team value the contributions of local Aboriginal people and employ local Aboriginal people where appropriate to do so.

The leadership team value staff knowledge and responsiveness in teaching and working with Aboriginal students. School leaders create opportunities for local Aboriginal people to explore roles within the school, while school staff respect the experiences of Aboriginal colleagues.

The leadership team pair the educational needs of Aboriginal students with staff skills and experience, engaging local Aboriginal community members in staff recruitment and hiring.

Staff support the expertise of Aboriginal colleagues to enhance their own skills and knowledge, supporting all students, including Aboriginal students.

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Know your staff to build and strengthen collegial relationships, in order to understand their skills, aspirations and experiences related to Aboriginal education.
- Identify strengths and areas for development and align staff members with roles and responsibilities that best suit their skills and the educational needs of Aboriginal students.
- Be flexible in role assignments to ensure the best support for students, adjusting as needed and based on ongoing student and family voice/feedback.
- Consider a position, such as a Senior Leader, Community Engagement (SLCE), from the Connected Communities Strategy to support school and community priorities.

How do you support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?



Cultural responsiveness

- Include AECG members and/or local Aboriginal community representatives in recruitment panels, ensuring they play a significant role in the selection process to reflect community values and expectations.
- Establish criteria that prioritise candidates with a demonstrated commitment to and experience in culturally responsive teaching.
- Regularly update the school community on the progress and outcomes of recruitment initiatives and professional development programs.

Do your teachers seek out the advice of Aboriginal staff members in planning and decision-making, using questions such as:

- What is the Aboriginal perspective on this topic?
- How do you suggest I could teach this?
- For this activity, do you think the students should work together or individually?
- Are there any cultural protocols or practices I need to consider before I start to teach this topic?

Localised, high impact professional learning

- Embed ongoing professional development opportunities focused on culturally responsive teaching practices, Aboriginal Histories and Cultures, and understanding the educational needs of Aboriginal students.
- Implement mentorship programs pairing new staff with experienced educators engaged in Aboriginal education, providing ongoing support and resources to ensure effective knowledge sharing and professional growth.



Spotlight on Lake Cargelligo - Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud

As a result of this, schools:

- Build and maintain strong partnerships with Aboriginal community members and involve them in decision making and school activities.
- Foster strong, supportive relationships with Aboriginal students and staff understanding their unique cultural and educational backgrounds.

Financial management

Financial management – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The priorities in the School Excellence Plan drive financial decisions.	Strategic financial management is driven by the School Excellence Plan and is used efficiently, including environmental consideration, to maximise resources.	Longer-term financial planning is integrated with school planning and implementation processes to address school strategic priorities and meet identified improvement goals and sustainability practices.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal education initiatives, activities and priorities in school plans, drive financial decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic financial management, efficiently guides the allocation of resourcing to Aboriginal education initiatives and programs, including environmental consideration, to maximise resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal education initiatives and programs are prioritised in longer-term financial planning, integrated with school planning and implementation processes to address strategic priorities, meet identified improvement goals, and uphold sustainability practices

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



Schools utilise equity funding to drive Aboriginal education initiatives to improve Aboriginal student outcomes.

Schools strategically plan, document and report on equity funds to support targeted initiatives for Aboriginal student improvement.

Schools utilise equity funding to support long term goals and aspirations of Aboriginal students, informed by and with families, to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal students.



Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Empower an Aboriginal Education Committee to review and prioritise funding for programs based on their impact on Aboriginal students and allocate resources specifically for those that directly enhance their academic and cultural success.
- Integrate long-term financial planning within the school's excellence plan to ensure sustainable support for Aboriginal education initiatives.
- Ensure allocated resources are strategically used to implement effective professional learning, programs and initiatives for Aboriginal students, providing a detailed breakdown of fund allocation to maximise impact and support sustainability.

Cultural responsiveness

- Create an Aboriginal Education Committee to guide resource allocation and program development, hold regular meetings for input and feedback, and foster partnerships with local organisations, businesses, and government agencies to enhance support and resources for Aboriginal education initiatives.

How does your school use equity funding to advance equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences?

Does your financial management demonstrate that you value Aboriginal education?

As a result of this, schools:

- Use allocated resources to drive and deliver the greatest impact for the school community.
- Participate in high impact, professional learning opportunities to advance educational outcomes for students.
- Actively participate in the development and delivery of Aboriginal education programs and initiatives.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to optimise the use of resources and share best practices.
- Engage with the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community to ensure programs are culturally responsive and impactful.



LEADING DOMAIN

Management practices and processes

Administrative systems and processes

Administrative systems and processes – SEF v3

Delivering

Administrative practices and systems are culturally responsive, clearly understood and effectively support school operations and teaching.

Sustaining and Growing

The school makes informed choices about the administrative practices and systems that best support efficient and effective school operations, based on cost effectiveness, sustainability, evidence, and contextual needs. Capabilities and expertise in administrative practices and systems is developed as needed.

Excelling

The school evaluates its administrative systems and processes, ensuring that they are delivering anticipated benefits and sustainable outcomes to the school community efficiently and effectively.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

- Administrative practices and systems are culturally responsive, clearly understood and effectively support school operations and teaching.

- Aboriginal education is a consideration for the school's informed choices about the administrative practices and systems that best support efficient and effective operations, prioritising cost-effectiveness, sustainability, evidence, and cultural and contextual needs. Capabilities and expertise in these practices and systems are developed as needed.

- Aboriginal education and the broader Aboriginal community are central considerations as the school evaluates its administrative systems and processes, ensuring they efficiently and effectively deliver anticipated benefits and sustainable outcomes.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



Schools are aware of local Aboriginal community context, and this is reflected in administration and communication practices to support Aboriginal students.



School administrative systems, show an understanding of local community factors which may affect student engagement and staff have effective monitoring and support plans for Aboriginal students.



Schools' administration is committed to Aboriginal education initiatives that foster a supportive environment for Aboriginal students, families, and the community, ensuring they feel safe, valued, and included in every aspect of school life.

The leadership team consistently promote ongoing reflection and adopt whole-school approaches to communication. They focus on understanding and addressing personal assumptions and biases to positively influence and respect Aboriginal cultural identities.

How can your school best support Aboriginal EAL/D students?

Are all school staff aware of the Anti-Racism and Implementation plan?



Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Clearly and sensitively communicate processes and practices with the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community, ensuring that they are inclusive. Use newsletters, emails, and yarn-ups to provide regular updates, offering information in various formats (for example: printed materials, digital updates) to effectively reach everyone.
- Create opportunities for community input by hosting quarterly meetings for feedback and discussion, and share data about student engagement, participation, and academic achievement to keep the community informed and involved in decision-making processes.

Cultural responsiveness

- Hold yarn-ups with the Aboriginal community to develop and review processes and practices that honour and accommodate cultural practices. Create policies that permit extended student absences for cultural events and protocols, reflecting respect for these practices.
- Embed Aboriginal cultural celebrations into the school calendar and promote participation from all students and staff, collaborating with the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community to display Aboriginal art and language throughout the school, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Place based decision making

- Regularly assess the localised cultural and contextual needs of Aboriginal students through surveys and focus groups with students and their families. Schedule consistent yarn-ups to gather input, better understand experiences, and develop relevant, culturally responsive administrative practices.
- Collaborate with the community to ensure these practices are meaningful and effective, aligning with both community needs and department strategies. Implement sustainable administrative practices based on solid evidence, regularly reviewing and adapting them to fit the cultural context of your school community.

Localised, high impact professional learning

- Provide professional learning about cultural awareness and Aboriginal cultural protocols through workshops or online training. Educate staff about the impact of cultural protocols and significant events on student attendance to foster a more accommodating and understanding environment.
- Implement mentorship programs where experienced staff share their knowledge with newer members and offer continuous professional development on best practices for culturally responsive administrative systems.
- Ensure staff are well-informed about specific cultural protocols and how to integrate them effectively within the local school setting.



[MyPL - Culturally responsive practice: supporting Aboriginal children and families](#)

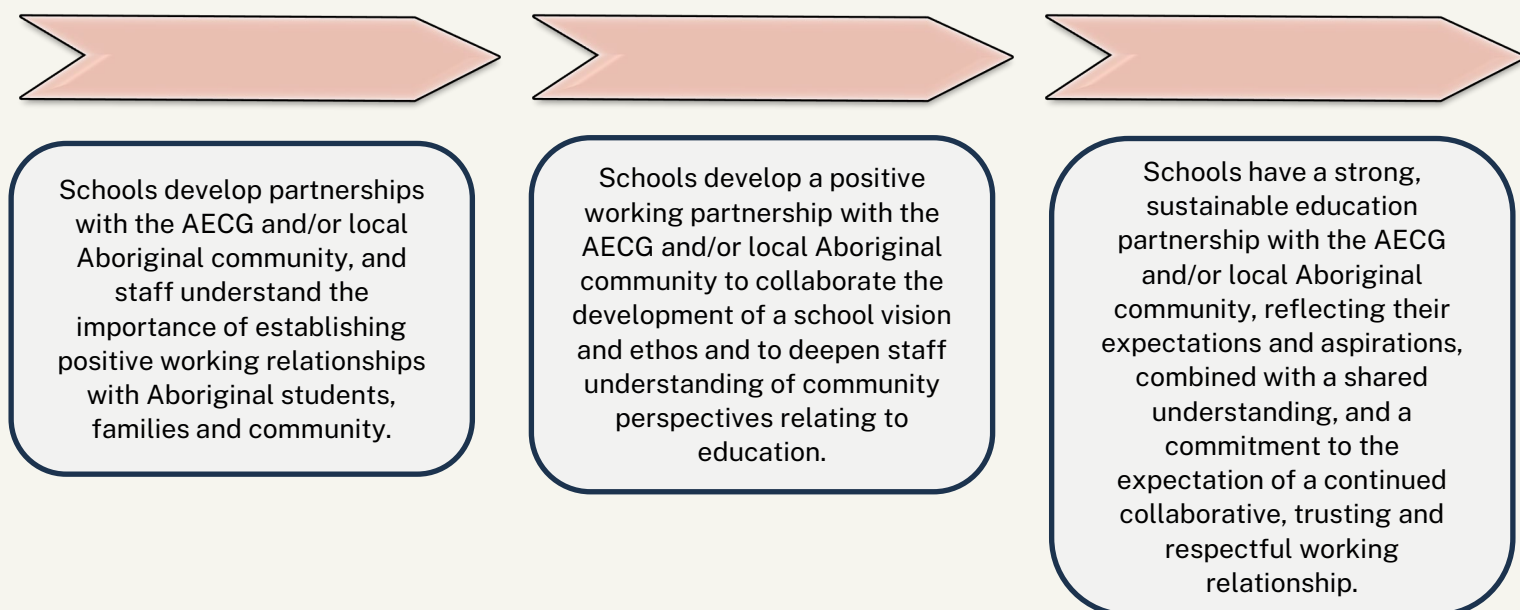
As a result of this, schools:

- Demonstrate a deep understanding of and respect for Aboriginal cultural practices and their impact on students.
- Accommodate and support students during culturally significant events, understanding the importance of cultural protocols.
- Adapt teaching methods and schedules to support students who are absent due to cultural events.
- Provide catch-up opportunities and additional support for students returning from extended absences.

Community satisfaction

Community satisfaction – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The leadership team measures school community satisfaction.	The leadership team analyses responses to school community satisfaction measures, including by student cohorts and equity groups to identify areas for improvement.	The leadership team measures school community satisfaction and shares its analysis and actions in response to the findings in accessible and culturally inclusive ways with its community.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school vision and ethos aligns with the needs and expectations of the local Aboriginal community. The leadership team and staff understand the school's commitment to all students, including Aboriginal students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school vision and ethos is developed in collaboration with local Aboriginal community, families, students and staff. The leadership team and staff demonstrate a commitment to high expectations for Aboriginal students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through collaboration with the local Aboriginal community, a strong, sustainable, education partnership has developed, that reflects the aspirations and expectations of Aboriginal students. The leadership team and staff demonstrate a commitment to high expectations for Aboriginal students in a culture of continuous improvement.

Key drivers for success - moving from [Cultural awareness to Cultural responsiveness](#)



Community satisfaction cont.

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Collaborative leadership

- Keep all school members informed about goals, progress, and outcomes related to Aboriginal education by providing regular updates through newsletters, school websites, and community yarn-ups. Involve community members in evaluating and refining educational initiatives by establishing evaluation teams with community representation and conducting review sessions to assess program effectiveness.
- Develop educational practices that offer long-term benefits for Aboriginal students and implement sustainable programs to ensure ongoing success. Regularly audit resource allocation to ensure that funds are used effectively and align with long-term goals and aspirations of students and families.

High expectations

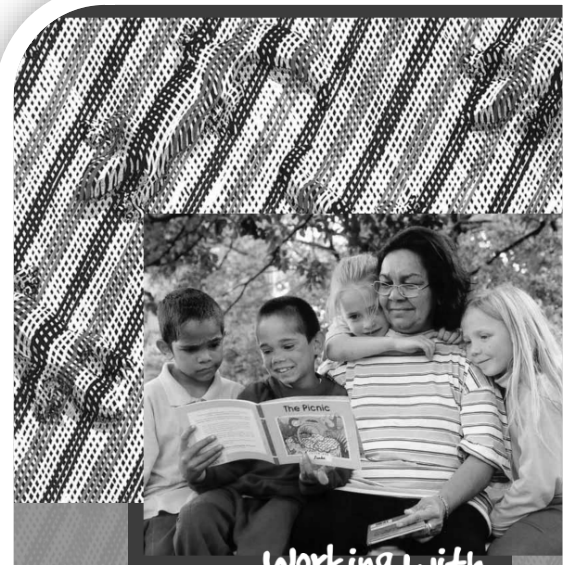
- Clearly articulate high expectations for the academic and personal achievements of Aboriginal students and communicate these expectations regularly through newsletters, assemblies, and meetings with students, families, and staff.
- Allocate resources to programs and initiatives that directly benefit Aboriginal students, ensuring the school budget prioritises funding for culturally relevant programs and support services, continuously evaluating and enhancing educational strategies for effectiveness and cultural relevance on teaching practices and impact on student engagement.

The Aboriginal Education Policy commits to partnering with local Aboriginal communities.

How will you take responsibility for working with your Aboriginal community to co-create school goals and aspirations?



How can you engage with your local Aboriginal Community?



Working With
Aboriginal
Communities

Revised edition 2008
A Guide to Community
Consultation and Protocols

Click image for link to resource

Anticipated observable practices of school leaders:

Cultural responsiveness

- Schedule regular yarn-ups with the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community members to understand their expectations and aspirations for students ensuring an Aboriginal Education Committee meets regularly to discuss school initiatives and policies.
- Align success factors with student and family satisfaction, using principles from the Re-imagining Framework to allow the community to self-determine their level of satisfaction.
- Ensure the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community input is integrated into all major decision-making processes and use feedback from these meetings to shape school policies, valuing and addressing community voices.

As a result of this, schools:

- Maintain high expectations for Aboriginal students' academic performance and provide the necessary support to help them achieve these goals.
- Recognise and celebrate the achievements and milestones of Aboriginal students within the school community.
- Participate in professional learning opportunities focused on cultural responsiveness and evidence-informed teaching practices.
- Engage in professional learning communities to share best practices and learn from colleagues about effective strategies for teaching Aboriginal students in a culturally responsive way.
- Establish and maintain positive, trusting relationships with Aboriginal students and their families.
- Actively participate in community events and cultural activities to strengthen partnerships with the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community and strengthen and maintain positive relationships with Aboriginal students and their families.
- Regularly seek advice and feedback from the AECG and/or local Aboriginal community to inform and improve teaching practices and school initiatives.

Click icon for link to resource



NSW
EDUCATION
STANDARDS
AUTHORITY



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2022) *Strong strides together - Meeting the educational goals for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students*, NSW Department of Education.
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. & NSW Government. (2020). *Walking Together, Working Together: Partnership Agreement between the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc and the NSW Department of Education 2020-2030*. Retrieved from <https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/aec/media/documents/partnershipagreement.pdf>
- Fforde, Cressida & Bamblett, Lawrence & Lovett, Ray & Gorringer, Scott & Fogarty, Bill. (2013). *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*. Media International Australia.
- Griffin, L., & Trudgett, M. (2018). *Everybody's talkin' at me: A review of literature about deficit discourse and deficit thinking in relation to Indigenous Australian learners*. Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues, 21(3), 2–19. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.142803110349297>
- Martin, K., & Mirraboopa, B. (2003). Ways of knowing, being and doing: A theoretical framework and methods for indigenous and indigenist re-search. *Journal of Australian Studies*, 27(76), 203–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443050309387838>
[Ways of knowing, being and doing. A theoretical framework and methods for indigenous and indigenist research.pdf](#)
- Thelma Perso and Colleen Hayward, *Teaching Indigenous Students: Cultural awareness and classroom strategies for improving learning outcomes*, Allen & Unwin: Crows Nest NSW, 2015

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- [MyPL - Aboriginal Histories and Culture Module 1 AC00040](#)
- [MyPL - Aboriginal Histories and Cultures Module 2 \(Leading AC01022 and Teaching AC01021\)](#)
- [MyPL - Aboriginal Pedagogy \(8 ways of Aboriginal learning\)](#)
- [MyPL - Aboriginal Ways of Using English; a professional learning resource for schools](#)
- [MyPL - Connecting with Aboriginal students, families and communities AC00739](#)
- [MyPL - Culturally Inclusive Teaching and Learning](#)
- [MyPL - Deadly Dialects P-2](#)
- [MyPL - Improving Educational Outcomes for Aboriginal Students AC00041](#)
- [MyPL - Leading Aboriginal Education in Schools TPL00045](#)
- [MyPL- Personalised Learning Pathways TPL00187](#)
- [MyPL - Personalised Learning Pathways eLearning AC00221](#)
- [MyPL - Reconciliation - shaping the future through healing, understanding and unity](#)
- [MyPL - Turning Policy into Action eLearning AC00249](#)
- [MyPL - PLNTS Create a positive image NT00664](#)
- [MyPL - PLNTS Welcoming school environment NT01709](#)



[Aboriginal Education policy https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2008-0385](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2008-0385)

[AITSL - Building a culturally responsive Australian teaching workforce. \(n.d.\).AITSL https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/cultural-responsiveness/building-a-culturally-responsive-australian-teaching-workforce](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/cultural-responsiveness/building-a-culturally-responsive-australian-teaching-workforce)

[Leading Evaluation, Evidence and Data \(LEED\) - QDAI factsheet and template](#)

Martin, Karen Lillian. 2008, Please knock before you enter : Aboriginal regulation of outsiders and the implications for researchers / Karen Lillian Martin. Post Pressed Teneriffe, Qld.

[NSW DoE - Universal Resource Hub](#)

[Aboriginal Education and Communities IPM Samples](#)

[IPM Sample: Mentoring for Student Engagement](#)

[IPM Sample: Student Agency and Engagement](#)

[IPM Sample: Authentic Engagement with Partners](#)

[IPM Sample: Culturally Inclusive Curriculum](#)

[IPM Sample: Reconciliation Action Plan](#)

[IPM Sample: School Systems & Processes for Personalised Learning](#)

[IPM Sample: Aboriginal Culturally Safe Schools](#)

[IPM Sample: Strong systems for Engagement & Attendance](#)

[IPM Sample: Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships](#)

[School Leadership Institute: Principal resources](#)

[NSW DoE - Closing the Gap - Closing the gap.](#)

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/closing-the-gap>

[NSW DoE - Our Plan for NSW Public Education:](#)

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/plan-for-nsw-public-education>

[NSW DoE - Our Reconciliation Action Plan - RAP news hub.](#)

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/our-reconciliation-action-plan/reconciliation-action-plan-news-hub>

[NSW DoE – Reconciliation Action Plan and School Excellence Framework v3 -](#)

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/directory-a-z/reconciliation-action-plan#Reconciliation10>

[NSW DoE – School Leadership Institute resources https://education.nsw.gov.au/leadership-pathways](https://education.nsw.gov.au/leadership-pathways)

[NSW DoE – Student Voice Through Yarning](#)

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/universal-resources---aboriginal-education/universal-support---student-voice-through-yarning>

[NSW DoE - What is a dialect?](#)

[Performance and development: support resources for principals](#)

[Re-imagining Evaluation: A Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework](#)

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/re-imagining-evaluation-framework>

[Reconciliation Australia Reports - https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publications/reports](https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publications/reports)



Leading teaching and learning

Leading teaching and learning – SEF v3

Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The leadership team ensures curriculum and assessment implementation through planning, monitoring, and reviewing teaching and learning programs. They also manage assessment and reporting of student achievement in line with NES and Department of Education requirements.	Professional learning in the school emphasises the development of effective learning and leadership practices focused on whole school improvement. New and aspiring leaders are supported, and staff demonstrate a shared responsibility for student achievement.	The leadership team maintains a focus on distributed educational leadership to support collective efficacy and aspiration. This sustains a culture of effective, evidence-informed teaching and ongoing improvement, ensuring every student is engaged and achieves measurable learning progress and closing of equity gaps.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing an Aboriginal Education Committee and empower staff to lead specific initiatives or projects related to Aboriginal education, providing them with the necessary resources and support. Leading the school in embedding Aboriginal Histories and Cultures into the curriculum across all key learning areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing professional learning teams focused on culturally responsive teaching practices, where staff can yarn and learn from each other. Supporting aspiring leaders to lead Aboriginal education as a whole school focus. Sharing responsibility across staff for the success of Aboriginal students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilising Aboriginal student voice alongside data and research findings to inform decisions about teaching strategies, curriculum design, and student support. Embedding culturally inclusive teaching ensuring every Aboriginal student is engaged and makes measurable progress, helping to close equity gaps.
---	---	---

High expectations culture

High expectations culture – SEF v3

Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The leadership team oversees the provision of support and professional development for every staff member to ensure the implementation of relevant department policies within a culture of high expectations.	The leadership team promotes a culture of high expectations through the development of processes to collaboratively review teaching practices to affirm quality and challenge and address underperformance.	The leadership team has established a strong professional learning community with a sustained focus on evidence-informed teaching, wellbeing, and leadership practices. There is a collaborative culture of high expectations and continuous improvement across the school, underpinned by high staff wellbeing.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulating the vision and goals for professional learning teams, emphasising culturally responsive, evidence-informed practices. Providing resources such as research, training materials, and specialists and create opportunities for teachers to share successful strategies and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing cultural competence through deepening staff understanding of Aboriginal histories, culture, and languages. Encouraging and modelling reflective practices by yarning about what's working, what's not, and how to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing culturally responsive, evidence-informed practices to foster collaboration, high expectations, and continuous improvement in Aboriginal education.
---	--	--



Performance management and development

Performance management and development – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The leadership team ensures that annual performance and development processes are implemented for all staff. Performance and development needs are identified and addressed respectfully, promptly, and effectively.	Staff proactively seek to improve their performance in a positive culture of challenge and support. The capabilities of all staff are developed by evidence-informed, collaborative professional learning and feedback practices focused on improvement. Future leaders are identified, supported, and developed.	A high-performance culture and strong relational trust enable professional growth and a collaborative feedback culture to flourish. All students are taught by high performing teachers. Leadership capability is developed by identifying, inspiring and enabling potential leaders. The leadership team monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of leadership practices and develops strategies for greater whole school impact.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual performance and development processes are supportive of all staff and are culturally responsive by design. Fostering a shared vision and collective responsibility for Aboriginal student aspirations by setting goals and celebrating achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff enhancing skills through collaborative, evidence-informed learning to ensure culturally responsive teaching for Aboriginal students. Aspiring leaders receiving development opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal perspectives in whole school culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting professional growth and collaborative feedback focused on Aboriginal education. Fostering a high-performance culture by encouraging staff to provide feedback on leadership practices. Developing ongoing evaluative practices to measure the impact on leadership in Aboriginal education and cultural responsiveness.

Community engagement

Community engagement – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
Parents/carers and community members have the opportunity to engage in a range of school related activities which help build a cohesive educational community and enhanced sense of belonging.	The school understands the diversity of their broader community by regularly engaging in a range of school and community-based activities. Feedback on school performance is solicited and addressed from students, staff, parents/ carers and the broader school community.	The school is recognised for its strong culture of inclusion that reflects the richness and diversity of the wider school community. There is a shared commitment to school priorities which enable the success of every child. The school partners with the community to support equitable outcomes.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inviting the Aboriginal community to engage in school related activities on a regular basis. Regularly reviewing and updating school policies, actions and practices to ensure they are culturally responsive and respectful of Aboriginal cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring school leaders and staff are visible in their local community and actively participate in community events to show commitment, learn about local Aboriginal cultures, build relational connections and develop trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging regularly with the AECG and/or other community groups to develop structured consultation processes to gather input from Aboriginal communities on key school decisions, policies, and programs.

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The school engages in an exclusive, ongoing process of self-assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation to collaboratively develop evidence-informed school excellence plans.	The school's regular and cyclical strategic planning actively enables change that leads to improvement, ensuring that school-wide processes are responsive to feedback and evidence.	A school-wide culture of collaboration and continuous improvement exists, where strategic planning and implementation lead to an impact on learning progress and enhanced teaching and leadership practices. Embedded and iterative processes and practices evolve with the changing context of the school community.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participating in a responsive and continuous process of self-assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation specifically tailored to enhance Aboriginal education. This collaborative approach aims to develop school excellence plans that are informed by evidence and focused on achieving positive outcomes for Aboriginal students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular and cyclical strategic planning actively promotes change aimed at improving Aboriginal education. All school-wide processes are responsive to feedback and evidence, fostering continuous improvement in support of Aboriginal students' educational outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering a culture of continuous improvement in Aboriginal education, with strategic planning focused on enhancing learning progress and refining teaching and leadership practices. Adaptable and iterative processes ensure responsiveness to the evolving needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

School Excellence Plan

School Excellence Plan – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The strategic directions of the school excellence plan align to student and system priorities and ensure responsiveness to identified needs. The school leadership team welcome and engage staff, students, parents/carers and the school community in the development of the vision and priorities of the school.	The leadership team embeds planning processes to direct school improvement through initiatives and activities aligned to student needs. Staff are provided opportunities to engage with the strategic directions of the School Excellence Plan to work towards the achievement of the improvement measures.	The school collaboratively uses research, evidence-informed initiatives and innovative thinking in designing and implementing a School Excellence Plan that successfully delivers ongoing, measured improvement in student progress and achievement.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence in the School Excellence Plan of designed initiatives to align closely with the educational needs of Aboriginal students. The school leadership team actively encourages and involves staff, students, parents/carers, and the Aboriginal community in shaping the vision and priorities of our educational initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specific needs of Aboriginal students are prioritised by the leadership team, which integrates planning processes that guide school improvement through focused initiatives and tailored activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-informed and innovative approaches are used to develop Aboriginal education initiatives, aiming to consistently achieve and measure improvements in Aboriginal students' progress and academic success.

Evaluative practice

Evaluative practice – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The school engages in ongoing evaluation of activities in the School Excellence Plan by examining process quality and impact to determine the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives.	Evaluation is implemented in a collaborative and systematic way to inform considered adjustments and modifications to whole school areas of focus, programs and initiatives.	There is a culture of evaluative practice which supports the school to efficiently and effectively deliver their strategic priorities and demonstrate improvements in student learning outcomes.
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership team report to local Aboriginal community about the school's performance and the implementation of Aboriginal education programs and initiatives. This is reflected in the School Excellence Plan and determine effectiveness of embedded Improvement Progress Measures (IPM's). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation of Aboriginal education programs and initiatives involves engagement with local Aboriginal community, in a collaborative and consultative way to inform considered adjustments and modifications to areas of focus, programs and initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders, in the development and evaluation of Aboriginal education curriculum, programs and initiatives, engage with Aboriginal students, their families and communities, utilising a culturally responsive framework.



Staff deployment

Staff deployment – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
<p>The school’s staffing is organised and managed to ensure an effective learning environment. The leadership team allocates staff resources to support the achievement of the school’s strategic priorities, including non-educational administrative tasks to appropriate non-teaching staff.</p>	<p>The school’s staffing is organised and managed to maximise time spent on teaching, learning and leading. The leadership team regularly considers and acts on opportunities to optimise non-educational administrative tasks with appropriate non-teaching staff and ensures that adequate support is provided to enable non-teaching staff to take on these tasks.</p>	<p>The leadership team plans for and strategically deploys teaching and non-teaching staff to improve student outcomes. The leadership team uses data to evaluate the effectiveness of staff deployment decisions and creates a culture of shared accountability to achieve organisational best practice.</p>
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership team acknowledge the significance of student demographics in determining the staffing composition. • The leadership team appreciate the valuable contributions of local Aboriginal people to the school community and employ local Aboriginal people whenever feasible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership team recognise the importance of staff experience and expertise in working with Aboriginal students to optimise teaching and learning opportunities and are aware of the cultural load experienced by staff. • The leadership team actively foster opportunities for local Aboriginal people to adequately support roles within the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership team align the educational needs of Aboriginal students with the skills and experience of staff members. • The leadership team engage local Aboriginal community members, whenever feasible, in the selection and recruitment of staff and in the employment of local Aboriginal people.

Financial management

Financial management – SEF v3		
Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
<p>The priorities in the School Excellence Plan drive financial decisions.</p>	<p>Strategic financial management is driven by the School Excellence Plan and is used efficiently, including environmental consideration, to maximise resources.</p>	<p>Longer-term financial planning is integrated with school planning and implementation processes to address school strategic priorities and meet identified improvement goals and sustainability practices.</p>
In Aboriginal Education this looks like:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal education initiatives, activities and priorities in the School Excellence Plan drive financial decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic financial management, guided by the School Excellence Plan, efficiently allocates resources to Aboriginal education initiatives and programs, including environmental consideration, to maximise resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal education initiatives and programs are prioritised in longer-term financial planning, integrated with school planning and implementation processes to address strategic priorities, meet identified improvement goals, and uphold sustainability practices

LEADING DOMAIN

Management practices and processes

Administrative systems and processes

Administrative systems and processes – SEF v3

Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
Administrative practices and systems are culturally responsive, clearly understood and effectively support school operations and teaching.	The school makes informed choices about the administrative practices and systems that best support efficient and effective school operations, based on cost effectiveness, sustainability, evidence, and contextual needs. Capabilities and expertise in administrative practices and systems is developed as needed.	The school evaluates its administrative systems and processes, ensuring that they are delivering anticipated benefits and sustainable outcomes to the school community efficiently and effectively.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative practices and systems are culturally responsive, clearly understood and effectively support school operations and teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal education is a consideration for the school's informed choices about the administrative practices and systems that best support efficient and effective operations, prioritising cost-effectiveness, sustainability, evidence, and cultural and contextual needs. Capabilities and expertise in these practices and systems are developed as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal education and the broader Aboriginal community are central considerations as the school evaluates its administrative systems and processes, ensuring they efficiently and effectively deliver anticipated benefits and sustainable outcomes
--	---	--



Community satisfaction

Community satisfaction – SEF v3

Delivering	Sustaining and Growing	Excelling
The leadership team measures school community satisfaction.	The leadership team analyses responses to school community satisfaction measures, including by student cohorts and equity groups to identify areas for improvement.	The leadership team measures school community satisfaction and shares its analysis and actions in response to the findings in accessible and culturally inclusive ways with its community.

In Aboriginal Education this looks like:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's vision and ethos aligns with the needs and expectations of the local Aboriginal community. The leadership team and staff understand the school's commitment to all students, including Aboriginal students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school vision and ethos is developed in collaboration with local Aboriginal community, families, students and staff. The leadership team and staff demonstrate a commitment to high expectations for Aboriginal students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through collaboration with the local Aboriginal community, a strong, sustainable, education partnership has developed, that reflects the aspirations and expectations of Aboriginal students. The leadership team and staff demonstrate a commitment to high expectations for Aboriginal students in a culture of continuous improvement.
---	--	--