



NSW Department of Education

# Rewarding Excellence in Teaching – Options Paper

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# Introduction and background

The NSW Government’s Rewarding Excellence in Teaching (REIT) reform, announced by Premier Dominic Perrottet and Minister for Education and Early Learning Sarah Mitchell in August 2022, seeks to create a stronger teaching career pathway by creating new, higher-paid, roles for highly effective classroom teachers in NSW public schools.

The Rewarding Excellence in Teaching reform has two aims, as set out in **The Case for Change: A briefing on rewarding excellence in teaching**:

- 1) To leverage the skills of highly effective teachers to strengthen teaching practice across our system, for the benefit of every student.
- 2) To create a more attractive career path for classroom teachers, while raising the status of the profession. We want to attract more people into teaching, and we want our students to have continued access to quality teaching from great teachers who might otherwise leave the classroom.

In fulfilling these aims, the Rewarding Excellence in Teaching reform will align with another key government commitment: the accreditation of 2,500 Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALTs) by 2025.

## 4 out of 5

of survey respondents agreed that there is a need to provide additional career pathways for excellent teachers who wish to spend the majority of their time in the classroom.

## 3 out of 4

of classroom teachers who responded agreed that if there was an alternate career pathway for teachers, they would potentially be interested in undertaking one of these roles (or would have been at a different stage of their career).

During September and October 2022, the NSW Department of Education (the department) conducted a survey seeking feedback on this initiative. Over 1350 staff including teachers, school leaders and other school staff in NSW public schools responded.

The department engaged in substantial research and consultation with key stakeholders to develop **The Case for Change: A briefing on rewarding excellence in teaching**, released by the Premier on 28 September 2022. That paper summarised the academic research and the experiences of other jurisdictions in identifying

and engaging with excellent teachers, and was developed with expert advice from Professor John Hattie, a world-leading expert on educational research. It also set out the recommendations of both the NSW Productivity Commission and the Grattan Institute, which each recommend classroom teacher career progression models that involve objective assessment, the opportunity to mentor colleagues and support the broader school system, and additional pay (NSW Productivity Commission 2021; Grattan 2020).

Evidence from **The Case for Change** shows that teaching quality is the most important factor in schools for student achievement (Hattie 2003). This means that a more attractive option for highly effective teachers to stay in classrooms has the potential to lift student outcomes. Evidence also shows that sharing teachers’ expertise more consistently would raise student achievement (Hattie 2003). ‘Collective teacher efficacy’ - a group of teachers’ shared belief in their joint ability to lift student outcomes (Eells 2011) - has a significant influence on student achievement. Building more dedicated support for collaboration and effective sharing of practice could help to improve teaching quality across NSW public schools.

The **Case for Change** prompted discussions with stakeholders across the sector, including teachers, school leaders, professional associations, Initial Teacher Education students, academics, and other jurisdictions’ education departments. The department consulted extensively from the very early stages of policy development to allow input from the profession to shape the design principles set out in this paper. The data gathered from this consultation, as well as the academic evidence base; lessons from past projects and previous positions –including Advanced Skills Teachers, Head Teacher Mentors and Highly Accomplished Teachers (HATs) as part of the Centre for Excellence National Partnership; and the input of a wide range of experts has been incorporated into the options presented in this paper.

Early engagements have confirmed the importance of this work. A survey of over 1300 teachers, school leaders and other school staff found that 79% either agreed or strongly agreed on the need for additional career pathways for excellent teachers who wish to spend most of their time in the classroom. Additional insights from engagement to date are detailed in this paper.

This paper presents key themes from engagement to date. It sets out design principles drawn from the evidence in **The Case for Change** and engagement to

date and sets out options for the practical design of a model. In some cases, it refers to a 'Proposed Option' which the department, at this early stage, considers has most merit. It also sets out 12 'focus' questions for consultation and invites submissions in response. The options set out in this paper will be subject to an extensive consultation process. For this reform to succeed and resonate with educators, they must have an active voice in shaping it.

The consultation process will involve roundtables in every network across the state throughout November 2022 (see Appendix C). This will allow teachers and school leaders from a full range of NSW public schools to contribute to the design of the final reform. The consultation will also include an online survey sent to all departmental school-based staff, focus groups with high school and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students, and briefings for key educational partners and stakeholder groups.

As noted in **The Case for Change**, this reform aims to develop a long-term plan to recognise and build on the great teaching practice that is happening in NSW public schools every day. It would involve a structured career pathway through which larger numbers of highly effective teachers could share their expertise, helping to further scale the impact of effective teaching practice for the benefit of all staff and students.

The reform would create more diverse opportunities for teachers in public schools to progress in their careers; whether on this new pathway, the existing middle leadership pathway and/or through range of retraining programs offered by the department. This flexible

approach offers choice that enables teachers to move between a range of career development opportunities. It creates additional options to retain in the classroom highly effective teachers who do not wish to follow the leadership pathway. While this reform could see these teachers move between schools, with the potential to encourage movement into hard to staff schools, the NSW Teacher Supply Strategy has a range of other initiatives designed to bolster the overall number of qualified and experienced teachers in NSW public schools.

For the NSW public school system, this approach provides an opportunity to use our highly effective teachers in support of the department's goal for every student, every teacher, and every school to improve every year. It also provides an opportunity to bring clarity to multiple years of reform efforts that have delivered roles designed to strengthen teaching and learning, including the Mathematics Growth team and primary mathematics specialist teachers; our 'Best in Class' teachers who support best practice in teaching for the HSC; and assistant principals (curriculum & instruction) roles in primary schools. In coming years, these roles will be reviewed and could be aligned into one 'teacher track'.

Following extensive consultation, the design will be finalised for Phase 1. This will include further detailed consideration of industrial arrangements – including the Teachers Award and the Staffing Agreement 2021-2023 – as well as detailed legal review and consideration of practical and funding questions to be resolved. Implementation is proposed for 2023 with a limited number of schools, to allow a phased approach to evaluate and refine the design.

## A potential model

### What could 'Rewarding Excellence in Teaching' look like in future?



Phase 1 would focus on a limited number of schools who opt in, allowing us to evaluate and refine our approach.



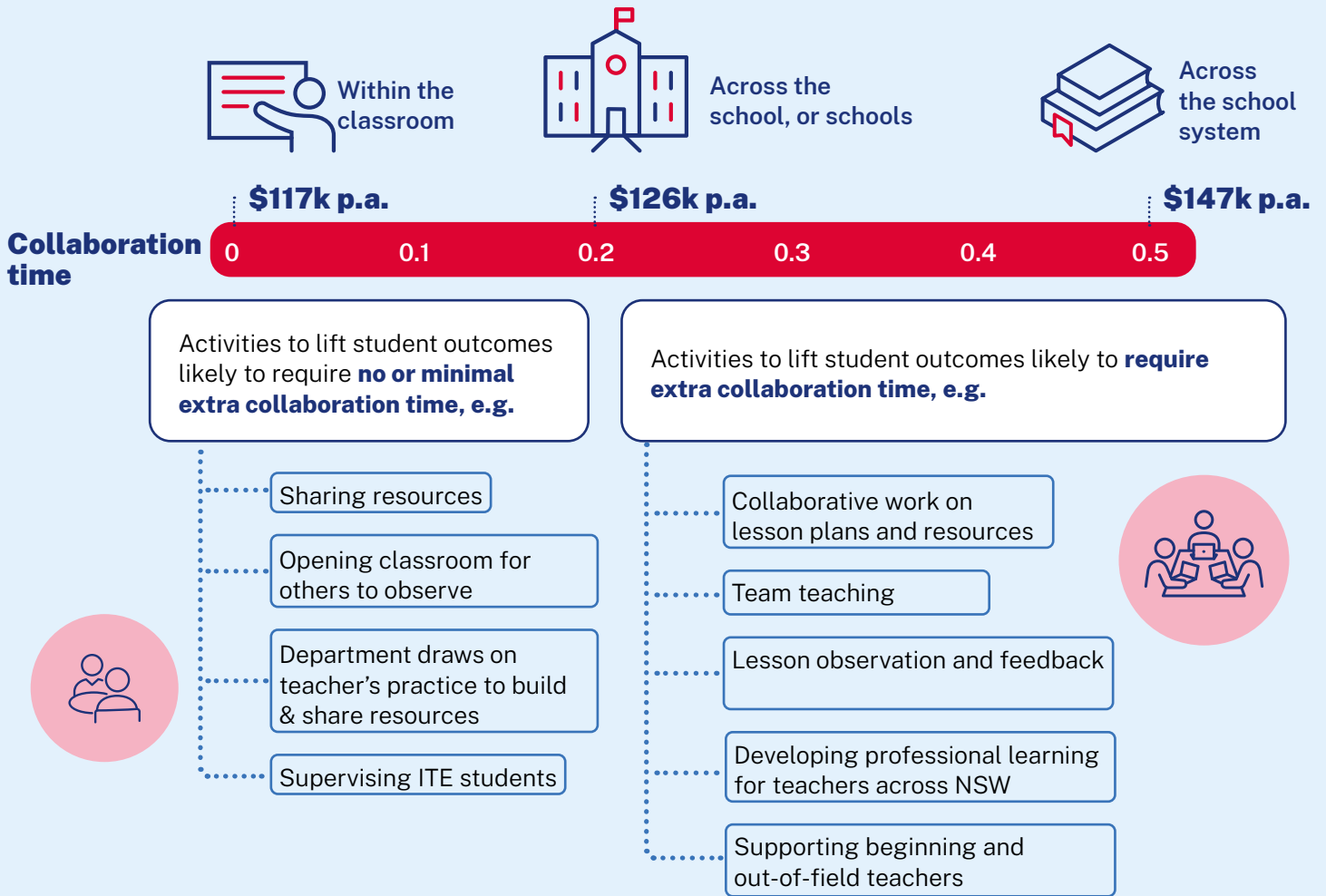
Subject to a positive evaluation, in the long term a larger number of roles would be created: it is anticipated that ultimately every school would benefit from access to teachers occupying these roles.



## The role, pay and conditions

We propose a range of options for these roles, ranging from a full classroom load where the department uses these teachers' skills to strengthen practice across the system, to roles with 0.1 to 0.5 'collaboration time' and an increasing range of additional responsibilities to help strengthen teaching and learning within and beyond the teacher's school.

### Positions focused on strengthening practice:



### System supports

System supports to harness and share exemplary teaching practice; continuing to build the evidence repository; and continuing to link all teachers to professional learning and resources.

Central multidisciplinary teams with education and other expertise -for example digital and evaluation skills -to support and leverage highly effective practice.

Central coordination to target delivery of professional learning; school access to specialist teachers within or across school networks.

Professional learning for teachers in these roles in effective sharing of practice & building collaborative cultures.

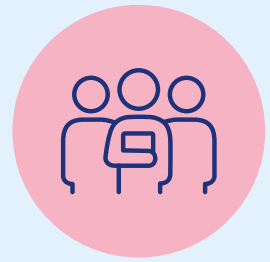
Note: see Figure 7 below for a comparison of potential salaries for these teachers with salaries of assistant principals, head teachers, principals, and teaching principals.

Figure 1

## How could it work for schools?

### Supporting talent

The department would continue to build the people management skills of school leaders in identifying and developing talent; and in helping highly effective teachers plan their best career pathway. The department could support school leaders to collect evidence of daily practice to help highly effective teachers to apply for these roles. School leaders would play an important role in supporting entry into any talent pool, with central support.



### For schools

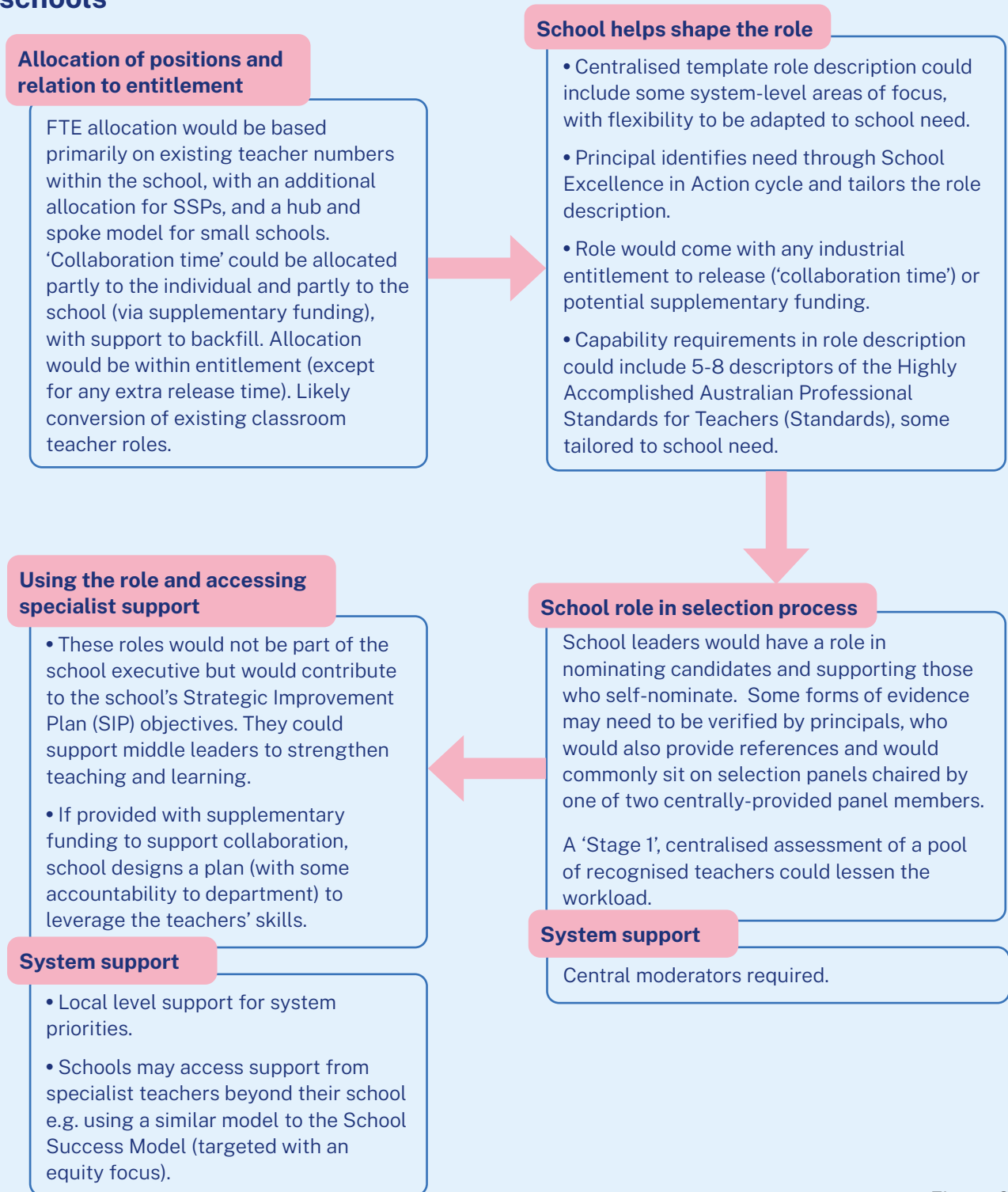
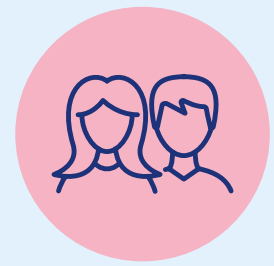


Figure 2

# How could it work for teachers?

## For teachers



### Defining excellence:

Standard descriptors for Highly Accomplished teachers would define 'excellence' in teaching. Teachers would only need to show impact against selected Standards, using evidence aligned to their school context.

### Eligibility / pre-conditions

- Proficient accreditation
- Phase 1: Requirement to complete Module 1 of HALT accreditation within one year (cost of \$245 could be offset by a professional development allowance on completion); evidence could include work done in this new role.
- For future phases, potential requirement for HALT accreditation to accept a role.

### One-stage process

#### Preparing and applying for a role

- A teacher could self-nominate or be nominated by school leadership.
- Teacher addresses selection criteria for the role (including specified Highly Accomplished Standards) and includes evidence based on NESA's evidence guide of impact in their context (likely overlap with any HALT Module 1 application).

#### Selection process for a role

Mix of local and central input; e.g. selection panel chaired by one of two members provided centrally by the department, with principal and/or DEL also on panel.

#### System support

Centrally-provided panel members required.

#### Impact in the role

Impact in the role subject to periodic reappraisal/ performance evaluation.

#### System support

- The department creates and shares resources based on teacher practice.
- Professional learning support to effectively share practice.
- Coordination of communities of practice & collaborative teams of teachers to collaborate.

### Two-stage process

#### Option: Apply to be recognised through Stage 1 of a two-stage process

Option: To build a pipeline of talent and to recognise the skills and impact of a larger group of teachers, we could identify a larger cohort. Teachers could enter a 'pool' on completing Module 1 of Highly Accomplished accreditation. These teachers could become part of a community of practice with access to professional learning. Teachers would be drawn from this pool to apply for roles. Teachers could be paid a small one-off recognition payment or professional development allowance on completion of each module of HALT accreditation; and on full completion of HALT accreditation, would move to Band 3 salary (\$117k p.a.).

#### System support

Significant central support required to assess and maintain the pool.

Figure 3

# Roles and functions

## What we've heard

Sixty per cent of survey respondents – especially teachers and middle leaders – agreed that these roles should not have supervisory or formal leadership responsibilities, indicating overall support for a new pathway to support great teachers to stay in the classroom.

Our other engagements to date raised the following key themes:

- The importance of collaboration between teachers as a way to improve teaching practice and, in doing so, lift the performance of all students.

“Public education is all about service and commitment to others and that depends on a collegial, collaborative, culture.”

### REIT Survey response

- Many participants thought that HALTs needed a clearer role in schools, which could be related to helping strengthen others’ practice, and stronger guidance for school leaders about how best to use HALTs.
- There were mixed views about whether extra pay should come with extra responsibilities, or whether highly effective classroom teachers should be paid more for the work they currently do.

“I think the only expectation that should be placed on excellent teachers who may be paid at a higher rate is that they have an open door (or even webcam!!) to their classroom where others (within limits) can come and observe what it is that they do that led them to be identified as excellent.”

### REIT Survey response

- There was consensus that if these teachers have any additional responsibilities, they will need additional time off-class to fulfil those responsibilities, and that other teachers may also need time to benefit from shared expertise and resources.

“It is more about time and feeling that I could contribute. I was a good teacher but I did not see my work was more valuable than anyone else’s. I did realise that my work was more effective than others and would have liked the time to work with them. This is more about making a person available to help others.”

### REIT Survey response

- We heard that some schools are designing their own roles to support teaching and learning, including ‘teacher mentor’ or learning support roles for highly skilled teachers who do not aspire to formal leadership.

“I’m creating teacher mentor roles for staff members who don’t want promotions but want to be recognised as experts, coaches, and mentors. I’m excited we have more flexibility – I create positions where you can be off-class and be the mentor. It’s working well – it rejuvenates those teachers; helps keep late career teachers in the classroom. It’s improving practice across the school, and it’s helpful to beginning teachers.”

### Principal of a metropolitan school, Roundtable

“Before I finish my career I want to go back to the classroom, I want to be a mentor teacher on class, so I’m thinking I want to be an AP in a school that will do things flexibly, open my room for people to come and visit to see how I run it every day, no special classes, but just how I program, with my programming available online. I think that would be good for me because I’m doing my passion, good for others because they’re seeing how it works.”

### Current AP(C&I), Regional Roundtable

- There were varied responses from teachers on the question of pay with many respondents arguing all teachers should be paid more. Some participants said that pay was not a significant driver for them, while others found the prospect of a higher-paid classroom teacher role attractive.

“Many of us do not teach for the money. Pay does not affect my decision to teach.”

### REIT Survey response

“I am a great classroom operator, but the only way to get a pay rise is to leave the classroom. I don’t want to be a non-teaching AP. All my skills and experience is wasted if I go into [leadership].”

### REIT Survey response

- A strong theme from many teachers was the importance of intrinsic rewards to the teaching profession. While many teachers agreed that opportunities to progress financially were important, for some, recognition and acknowledgment of their contribution mattered more.



- Significant central support and coordination would be required to help these teachers lift teaching and learning across the system.

“There should also be opportunities for teachers to exchange across different schools and roles as the opportunities arise (similar to an exchange) with the right of return.”

**REIT Survey response**

## Design principles

The following principles will be incorporated into the design process for the roles.

- Teachers in these roles should continue to spend most of their time in the classroom.
- Teachers in these roles should be supported individually and as a collective to share their practice, so it scales across the NSW public school system.
- A significant portion of these roles should include activities that will, on a peer-to-peer basis, help strengthen highly effective teaching in the NSW public school system to improve outcomes for all students.
- These roles should not be responsible for people management or supervision and should not be part of the school executive.
- Role design should support and enhance collaboration between teachers.
- Salaries should provide an attractive incentive to stay in the classroom, balanced with the need to continue attracting high-quality candidates to school leadership roles.
- Principals should help to shape the role according to their schools’ needs, balanced against system priorities.
- While these roles are primarily aimed at those who intend to stay in the classroom, there should be flexible pathways that give teachers choice between these roles and formal leadership roles.
- In the longer term, there will need to be effective interaction/alignment between new roles and current roles, including middle leadership, assistant principals (curriculum & instruction), Best in Class, non-school based teachers, and head teachers.

## Creating positions or rewarding the individual

Some 'expert teacher' approaches create roles which would be filled via recruitment (as is the approach, for example, for Singapore's teacher track and Victoria's Learning Specialist roles). Other schemes focus on rewarding individuals in their current positions. The latter approach has been adopted in the program for Western Australia's Level III teachers. NSW's mechanism for the recognition of individuals is HALT accreditation. A comparison of the two approaches is set out below.

Creating positions and filling via recruitment (Proposed option)	Rewarding individual teachers based on skill/ impact without recruitment to roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design of position tailored to school need [in accordance with the school's Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of excellence could include criteria relating to meeting the evolving needs of their school context.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caters more strongly to differing school-by-school needs when defining excellence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for greater standardisation of the definition of excellence.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment based on both the teacher's skill/impact and their 'fit' for a specific role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reward based on skill and impact, not assessed against 'fit' for a role.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows allocation of these positions to schools on an equitable basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would treat teachers equitably but could result in a clustering of these roles in some schools while other schools miss out.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a potential role for HALTs and clearer role for leaders to deploy HALTs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closely overlaps with the HALT process, rewarding individual skill, but doesn't create a specific role for teachers in schools.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would ultimately result in a significant recruitment exercise over a number of years, with significant implications for resourcing and workload of school leaders. This could be mitigated, for example, by creating a larger, centrally recognised group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of excellence likely to require central resourcing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May see significant movement of teachers between schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More teachers likely to stay in their school initially. Allows teachers to transfer schools without losing salary and additional (non-management) responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applications could see successful candidates change schools, creating transient demand pressures. There could also be benefits e.g., movement of some highly effective teachers to locations where they are needed most.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Without recruitment to positions, recognising and rewarding individual teachers would not itself be a mechanism by which teachers would move schools.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>This is the approach adopted in Washington D.C. and Singapore. The approach in these jurisdictions is underpinned by a rigorous, universally applied performance assessment framework where all teachers are independently assessed and graded. In contrast, NSW's Performance Development Framework requires that assessment against professional goals be agreed between the teacher and school leadership, and there is no grading or ranking involved.

**Proposed option: A hybrid approach:**

- Stage 1: recognising a larger number of teachers by creating a recognised pool of highly effective teachers
- Stage 2: recruiting to specific roles, which would not attach to the person but to the school.

A breakdown of these two stages is below.

**Stage 1: Creating the pipeline**

There is an option to recognise a larger group of teachers, and to build a pipeline of future recruits to these positions, through a Stage 1 process to create a ‘pool’ of recognised teachers. In the early phases of this reform, it is proposed that these teachers would have successfully completed Module 1 of the Highly Accomplished accreditation. Once a teacher was identified for the pipeline, the teacher could receive:

- a small recognition payment, or professional development allowance to offset HALT fees and acknowledge the time required to collate evidence.
- membership of a community of practice focused on teaching and learning –either within the school, within the local area, or across the system, depending on the teacher’s expertise and interests.
- additional professional learning which could support the teacher in achieving additional HALT modules; and in building collective efficacy in their school.
- once a teacher has received HALT accreditation, they might immediately go to the 3.0 salary band, rather than needing to wait, as is currently the case in some circumstances –noting, however that this would require a change to the Award.

In future stages of the reform, subject to resolving workload and cost considerations, remaining in the ‘pool’ could require full HALT accreditation. NESA is looking at streamlined and alternative pathways which could lead to teachers achieving HALT accreditation more quickly.

Creating a larger ‘pool’ of recognised teachers would require significant resourcing to support large-scale

training and time commitment for HALT assessors, many of whom are teachers who would need time off-class to assess applicants. These and other practical and funding considerations will be considered in detail during the next stage of designing this reform.

**Stage 2: Creation of and recruitment to positions**

Recruitment to roles would ensure these teachers could be allocated equitably across the system; that role design can be aligned to school need as well as system-level priorities; and that selection processes would take into account both the teacher’s skill level and the requirements of a role.

In the detailed design stage, and during Phase 1, consideration will be given to addressing the challenges associated with large-scale creation of roles and recruitment over a number of years. This includes the resource burden of recruitment on school leadership and how central support can mitigate this. It will also be important to balance the benefits of some movement of teachers between schools with the risks. This question is considered further in ‘Allocation of roles and movement in the system’ below.

**Option:** A one-stage approach with recruitment to roles only. This approach would not include a ‘pool’ that any teacher could join on demonstrating their expertise. Recruitment to roles only would mean a smaller group of teachers would be recognised, assessed partly against the requirements of the role.

**Focus questions**

1 (a) Do you prefer a one-stage approach (recruitment to roles only), or a two-stage approach (recognise a larger pool of teachers, as well as recruit to roles)? Can you recommend improvements, changes, or alternative approaches?

1 (b) How might we develop people to take on these roles?

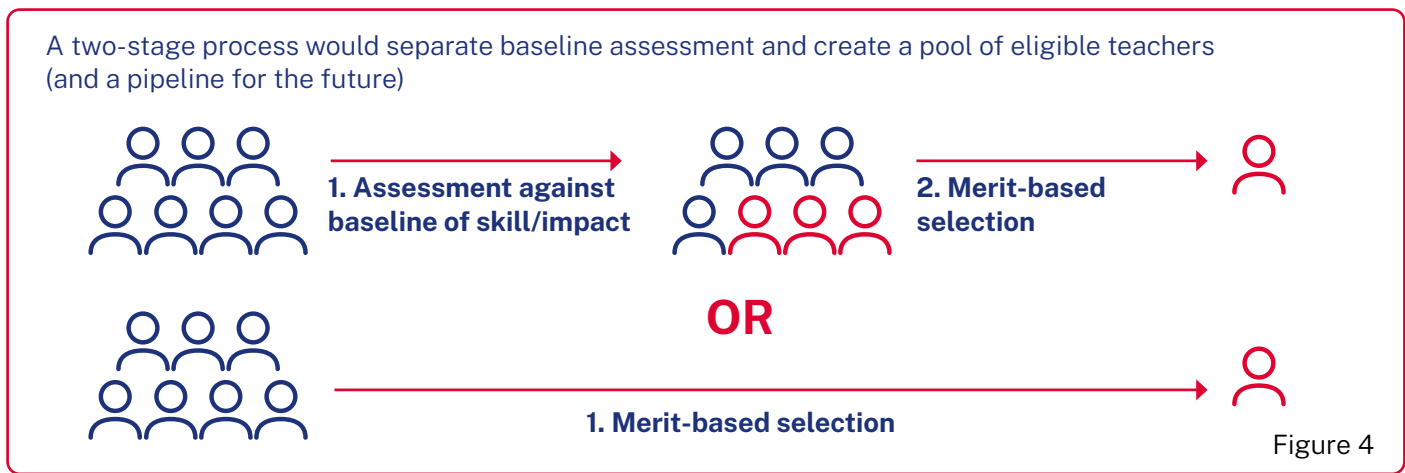


Figure 4

## Nature of the role, collaboration time and system supports

The design of this new career pathway could include a mix of roles. We are keen to hear the profession's views as we develop role descriptions for Phase 1. The experience of past initiatives shows that, whatever the role design, there would need to be a strong central function to support teachers in these roles and to ensure all our public schools and students can

achieve maximum benefit from their work. **The Case for Change** noted that high-performing education systems identify highly effective teachers and deliberately organise the sharing of their expertise among teachers within and across schools (Burns & McIntyre 2017). How best to amplify the expertise of our highly effective teachers is a key design issue.

### Best in Class

The NSW 'Best in Class' initiative draws on the skills of outstanding public school teachers to build a collective understanding of research and evidence-based practices, develop resources, and deliver quality professional learning – to date to over 5,200 teachers across almost 500 schools. The initiative has an unrelenting focus on supporting teachers and students at scale in the pursuit of excellence and equality in student outcomes across all contexts.

'Best in Class' teachers are recruited through a two-stage process: first, they are identified using a rigorous data methodology based on leading academic research (Ayres, Dinham & Sawyer 1999) about teachers of high performing students. That methodology draws on HSC results – filtered to eliminate variables other than the teacher as the reason for this success – and is validated by speaking with school leaders. Secondly, the identified teachers are invited to apply for 'Best in Class' roles via a closed Expression of Interest and an interview.

The 'Best in Class' role involves 0.5FTE within a teacher's school, teaching students and supporting colleagues, and 0.5FTE delivering state-wide professional learning. These teachers are remunerated at 0.5 FTE Senior Education Officer 2 classification during term time (so might earn up to approx. \$129,000 p.a.) and retain school-based conditions. Their schools are funded for 1.0 FTE backfill at the 'Best in Class' teacher's substantive salary to ensure continuity of staffing and student learning.

The HSC Strategy uses 'Best in Class' teachers work to support ongoing improvement of teaching in the HSC across the system. 'Best in Class' teachers:

- deliver professional learning which supports their colleagues to identify the discriminating features of high achievement in their students' work in the 12 HSC subjects that cover ~70% of NSW public school HSC examination candidates;
- understand, implement, and adapt the research-based teaching methods taught in the HSC Strategy professional learning; and
- lead state-wide action learning and school-based implementation of subject-specific stage 6 teaching pedagogy to improve HSC outcomes for all students.

Best in Class teachers in the HSC strategy are supported by a multi-disciplinary team including Non-School Based Teachers, and staff with expertise in evaluation, digital delivery, and project management. A responsive, embedded, and participatory evaluation guides teams of qualified teachers to refine the programs, and improve professional learning.

From 2019–2021, schools that were highly engaged in HSC professional learning had increased numbers of students achieving the top two Bands 5 and 6 in the HSC.

A range of potential responsibilities for these roles is set out in Figure A below. These responsibilities have been developed by drawing on the evidence base set out in **The Case for Change** (for example Ann McIntyre’s (2013) work on the professional learning teachers find most useful) and taking into account feedback from early engagements. For example, a consistent theme in engagement to date has been that a high impact area of potential focus for teachers in these roles could be providing support to pre-service and early-career teachers. Evidence shows that mentoring and supporting early career teachers can sustain their motivation for long term classroom careers (DeClercq, Watt, & Richardson, 2022).

**Option:** At one end of the spectrum, teachers would remain in the classroom without additional responsibilities or collaboration time. On this approach, the system would need to provide significant central support to leverage the skills of those teachers. The teacher would have minimal extra workload. For

example, a centralised team could build case studies on pedagogical practices or create resources from these teachers’ work – such as videos, guides, and professional learning programs. The department could share those resources and practices, with all teachers, or targeted to need. Other examples of potential responsibilities that may require minimal, or no release time are laid out in Figure 5 below.

**Option:** Further along the spectrum of roles, teachers could be given ‘collaboration time’ ranging from 0.1 to 0.5 to carry out additional responsibilities. A maximum of 0.5 collaboration time has been chosen to reflect the design principle that most of these teachers’ time should be spent in the classroom. These teachers could focus on strengthening teaching and learning within their school, or beyond. For example, those with significant collaboration time might be specialist teachers who schools can access for support, either centrally or through a network. Other potential roles for those with release time are set out in Figure 6 below.

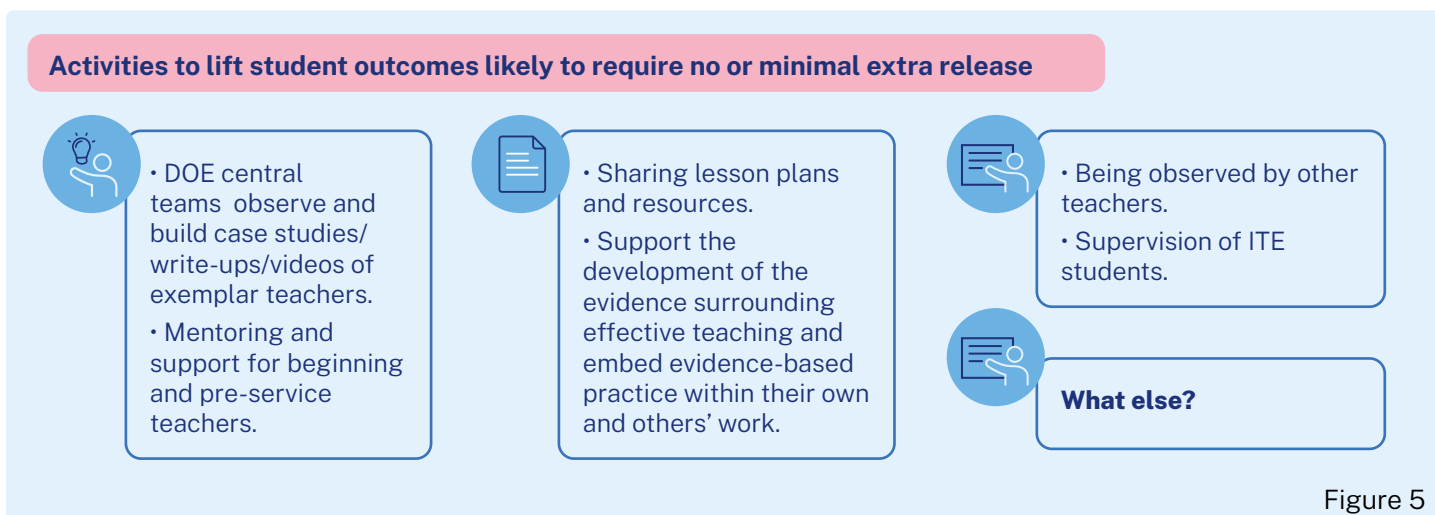


Figure 5

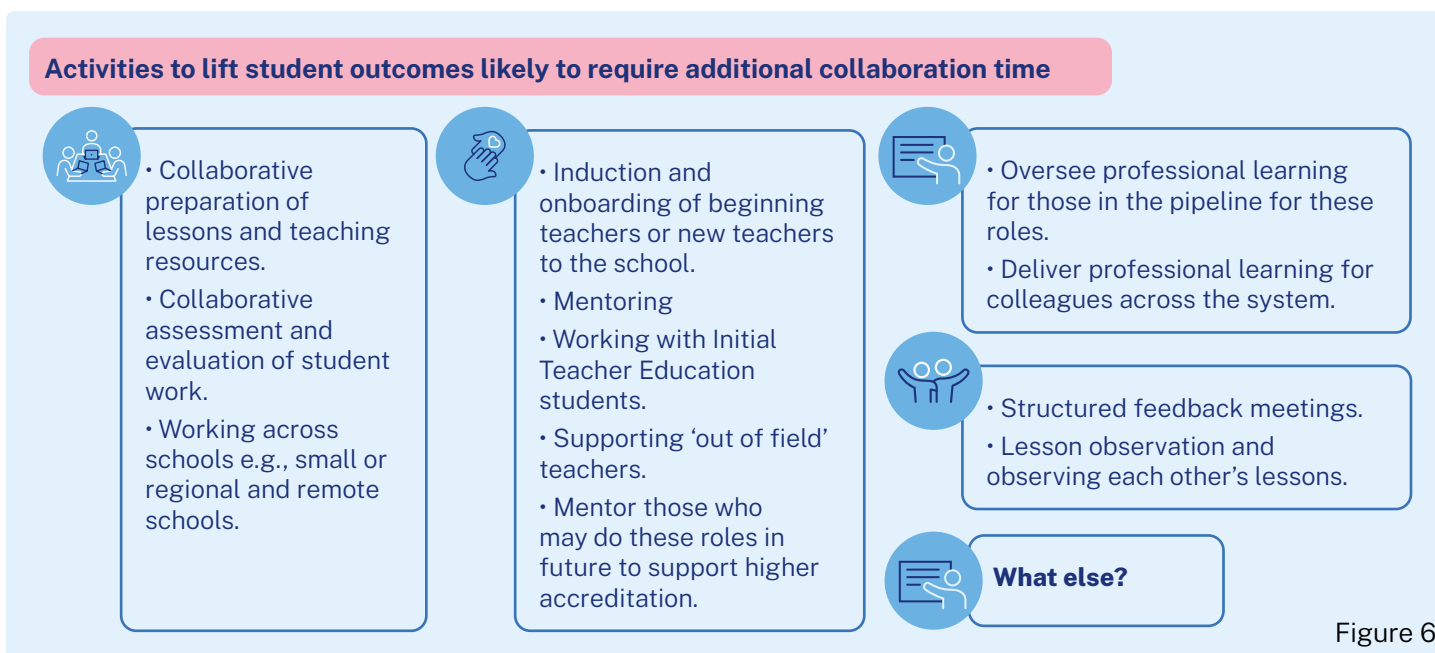


Figure 6



The potential relationship between these roles and other roles in schools is explained in the Summary for Teachers and Schools.

In a model where these teachers have additional responsibilities, system supports required to scale up their practice could include:

- professional learning for teachers in these roles on effective sharing of practice and building collaborative cultures.
- support to prepare and share professional learning delivered by these teachers (or teams of teachers), that helps to upskill teachers across the system .
- a team of non-school-based teachers with specialist skills to guide and advise teachers in these roles, including on effective ways to scale expertise.
- supporting these teachers to work in teams. For example, a central team could coordinate communities of practice with a balance of focus between system-level priorities and supporting local needs.
- a coordination function could help manage the potentially complex logistics and timetabling of these teachers' time to support other teachers within their own schools and beyond. This could draw on the hub-and-spoke model adopted in the Centres for Excellence program (which successfully improved the quality of teaching in hub and spoke schools) (SiMERR National Research Centre 2015). Alternatively it could involve centralised support for schools to access specialist teachers, building on the approach currently used in the School Success Model to provide Guided and/or Strategic support to schools.

At either of the spectrum of roles, leveraging the skills of these teachers will strengthen teaching practice and lift teaching and learning across the system. To enable this system-wide uplift, other supports could include:

- departmental staff working with academic partners to gather insights on how highly effective teachers teach and the impacts they have on student learning, with evaluation to turn these insights into robust, repeatable lessons that can be used in public schools across NSW.

- a multidisciplinary team which could include educational and other expertise (e.g., digital communications) to provide centralised support for teams of teachers to develop and share resources and professional learning programs; and evaluation to ensure ongoing improvement and refinement of the initiative.
- Because a key aim of this reform is to strengthen teaching and learning for the benefit of all students, the department could target support provided by these teachers, such as professional learning, to teachers in small schools, rural and remote schools, or schools with specific equity needs.

This system architecture, which would include both central and regional components, would require significant investment but would help to ensure that these teachers' expertise is effectively deployed to achieve maximum impact. This support would need to be more intensive in the early phases of the reform when it will be critical to evaluate and refine the design.

### Focus questions

2 (a) What roles, or combination of roles, would be best for these teachers to undertake to strengthen teaching and learning within and beyond their school (considering the needs of schools, as well as the need to create an attractive career path)?

2 (b) How much collaboration time would be needed for these roles?

2 (c) What support could these teachers provide to other teachers in public schools across NSW to improve learning outcomes for all students?

2 (d) What would the department need to do to effectively scale up the knowledge and expertise of these teachers to improve learning outcomes for all students?

### **Mathematics Growth team**

The Mathematics Growth team (MGT) is an example of school-based expert mathematics secondary teachers who are embedded in schools to support and improve the teaching and assessment practices of mathematics educators in both primary and secondary contexts.

Team members (who are called trainers) each support a base school and its surrounding network of schools. Team members were selected through a rigorous merit selection process. The trainers are currently paid via the NSW Mathematics Strategy by their school at a deputy principal level and are supported by a centralised executive support team to ensure the consistent implementation of evidence-based teaching practices.

These expert teachers work with colleagues to strengthen curriculum knowledge and support the implementation of evidence-based teaching practices in mathematics classrooms. They work with school principals, school leaders and classroom teachers. They remain within their base schools with a 0.2 teaching load, while also working across schools to build teacher capacity (especially focused on classroom pedagogy) for the remaining 0.8 load.

An interim impact study conducted by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) has demonstrated a significant impact on mathematical teaching practice, through an increased frequency of engaging in curriculum-focused professional learning following the MGT's work in a school.

### **Primary mathematics specialist teachers**

Primary mathematics specialist teachers (PMSTs) are school-based expert primary teachers who are embedded in schools to support and improve the teaching and assessment practices of mathematics educators in the primary context.

The initiative is an innovative, two-year longitudinal program of learning for teachers who aspire to develop specialisation in the teaching, learning, and leading of primary mathematics run by a centralised executive support team.

Thirty schools were selected through a broad merit selection process including a collaborative culture and readiness of broader school team, openness to deep reflection/challenge and need for support. The schools then were given the opportunity to recruit a PMST in their schools that best suited their context.

The PMSTs, paid via the NSW Mathematics Strategy by their school at Classroom Teacher Band 2.2 level, remain in their school with a 0.5 teaching load and participate in the initiative and build teacher capacity (especially focused on classroom pedagogy) for the remaining 0.5 load.

Initial data suggests that the initiative has led to profound changes in schools including staff feeling confident and enjoying teaching mathematics, compared to two years ago when many staff indicated they felt isolated and unsure about teaching mathematics. Teachers from K-6 are now asking the PMST to support them in improving their teaching, leading to a growth in student engagement, perceptions and learning.

## Process for role design

**Proposed option:** The department could design a template role description which strikes a balance between system-level priorities and local school needs. On this approach, schools would tailor the role description to align with specific needs under the school's SIP, over a 4-year cycle, balanced against system priorities. In doing so, a principal would consider their allocation of these roles and the amount of release time, if any. The job description could include (for the purposes of the selection process) some Highly Accomplished Standards that might be common across these roles (such as Standard 6.3, 'Engage with colleagues and improve practice'), and some selected by the principal. There could be flexibility in how principals use these positions, including pooling resources to create cross-school roles.

This approach would allow roles that include a focus on system-level priorities with 'bespoke' elements designed to build on each school's goals for continuous improvement. It also reflects the insight from **The Case for Change** that, as the experience of past initiatives suggests, it is important for principals to help decide how roles might best be used to support their school's needs.

**Option:** Centrally created role descriptions that are consistent across schools. This would create a consistent understanding across the system of the role of these teachers but would not permit principals to tailor a role description according to school need. (Although principals could in practice adapt the ways in which a generic role description best applies at a local level to their school).

### Focus question

3. How should principals be involved in tailoring roles to local school need?

## Mechanism for collaboration time

**Option:** In addition to any industrial entitlements to release time, the position could come with supplementary funding for the school, to be used in a manner similar to the beginning teacher funding allocated under the Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) staffing allocation. This could be spent with the purpose of leveraging the teachers' skills in support of the school's SIP, with accountability to the department for how funds are spent. For example, supplementary funding could be spent on release time for the teacher who occupies one of these roles, and other teachers to collaborate in preparing lessons and resources or to support team teaching.

To help ensure that public schools right across NSW are benefiting from the skills of highly effective teachers, the collaboration time of these teachers could be 'split': with some collaboration time being directed by the individual teacher, the school or the principal network (so that a teacher's expertise may be deployed either at a system level or in other schools), and with some collaboration time centrally supported e.g. for the delivery of professional learning or participation in communities of practice.

### Focus questions

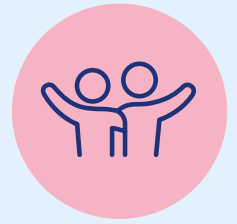
4 (a) How should collaboration time be allocated to best support these teachers to help strengthen teaching and learning within their school and beyond?

4 (b) Through what mechanism is this best achieved?

## Pay

**The Case for Change** set out the evidence that talented teachers often move into formal leadership roles to secure higher pay (Burns & McIntyre 2017); and that the relatively flat pay scale for classroom teachers is a key reason more people do not enter the profession (Goss, Sonnemann & Nolan 2019). The Quality Initial Teacher Education Review found that increasing the top salary to \$130,000 would increase the probability of young high achievers choosing teaching by approximately 13% (Department of Education, Skills and Employment 2022). Similarly, the Grattan Institute recommends that 'Instructional Specialists' (who work to improve teaching within their schools) should be paid \$140,000 p.a., while Master Teachers (who would support instructional specialists across networks) should be paid \$180,000 p.a. (Goss & Sonneman 2019).

**Proposed option:** The salary for these roles should start with a salary similar to HALT pay for those with a full classroom load (see 'Eligibility and relationship to HALT' below). Pay should increase on a sliding scale – within existing industrial classifications – with increased responsibility for these teachers to strengthen teaching and learning practice beyond their own classroom (see Figure 1). This would mean some teachers in these roles could be paid at a similar level to assistant principals, deputy principals and teaching principals. In the short term, existing industrial arrangements would be used to create positions. Figure 7 below shows how salaries might compare.



## NSW teacher career pathways

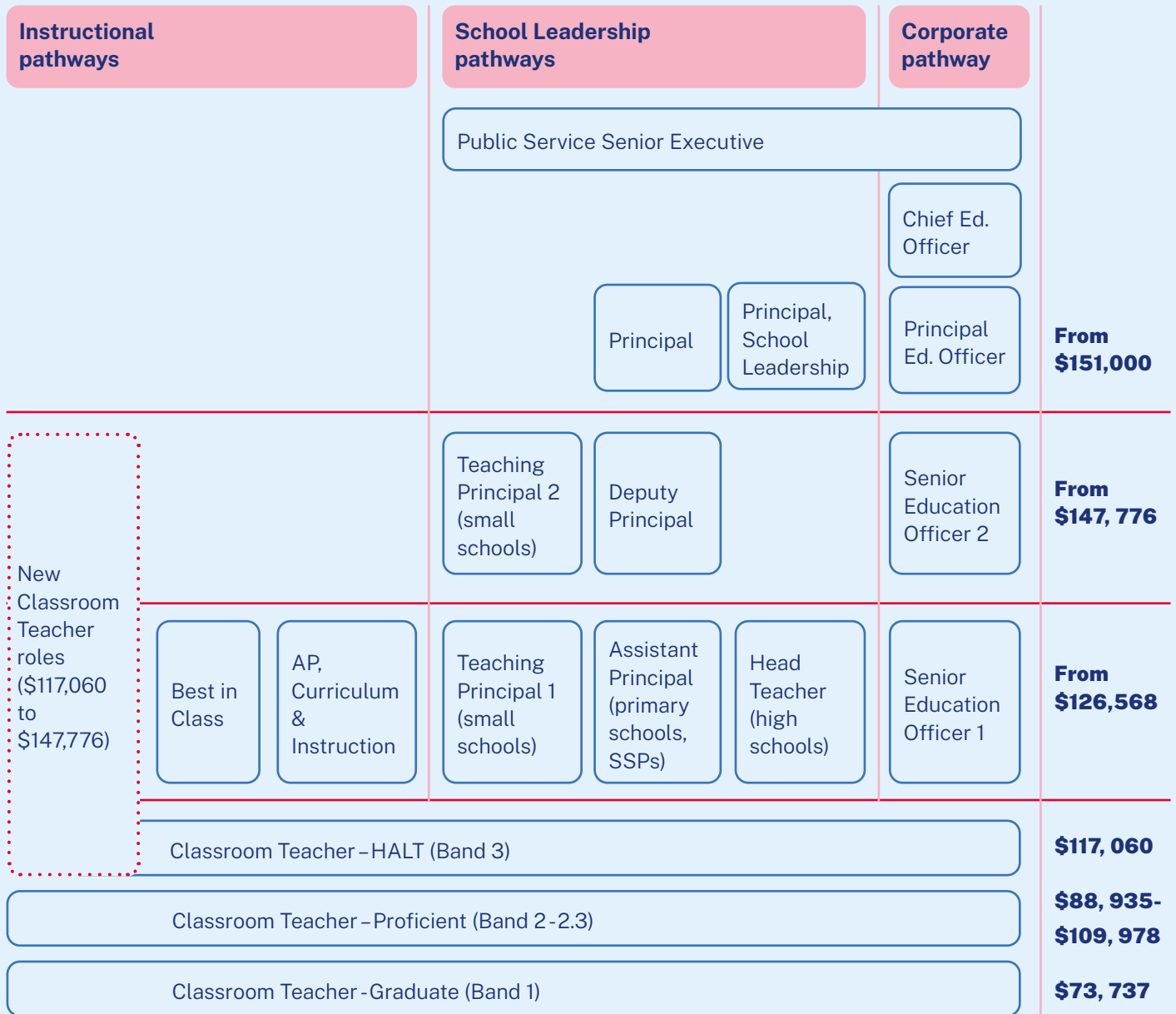


Figure 7: salary classifications for school-based roles

This approach privileges classroom teaching and the proposed role of these teachers in strengthening practice beyond their classroom, on par with the critically important role of school leaders. It reflects a philosophy that highly effective teaching, and sharing of practice, is as valuable and important to our education system as school leadership. And it would reward, on par with some leadership roles, the value of the work done by some of our most talented teachers who do not wish to manage teams. This departs from the traditional ‘ladder’ approach to career progression.

In many professions, it is recognised that where progression is limited to leadership roles, this can disincentivise personal career development, should individuals wish to remain in a role with a delivery focus, rather than be promoted to a role with greater management responsibilities (Weer & Greenhaus 2015). A career path that limits career and income growth opportunities to the leadership pathway does not allow NSW public school teachers a sufficient choice of avenues to make their best and highest contribution. Increasingly, this approach is reflected in the movement seen in many other professions towards a dual career path (e.g., academia, engineering, nursing, management consulting and medicine).

A consistent theme raised in early engagements was the need to ensure that formal leadership roles remain attractive. There was a concern that if highly effective teachers could achieve the same pay as an assistant principal, head teacher, deputy principal or teaching principal, this would impact on the attractiveness of those roles and make them more difficult to recruit. This will be carefully considered during the small-scale Phase 1. Role clarity may assist – for example, it is anticipated that in many cases these teachers may support the work of middle leaders but would not be on the school’s formal leadership team or supervise other teachers.

The creation of a stronger trajectory for classroom teachers will help to build more diverse opportunities for NSW public school teachers to progress in their careers; whether that is on a classroom or instructional pathway; a leadership pathway or a corporate pathway (Figure 7).

### Focus questions

5 (a) What should teachers in these roles be paid, noting their potential range of additional responsibilities?

5 (b) How might we help ensure leadership roles remain attractive, if there are non-leadership roles for teachers with a similar salary?

## Tenure

**Proposed option:** While schools would receive permanent allocations of these roles (likely converted from existing classroom teacher roles), appointments to the role could be fixed-term for the life of a school’s SIP – up to 4 years. This approach means teachers in these roles may periodically re-apply for these roles or other roles and / or move between roles in different schools. The roles would ‘attach’ to the school, not the individual teacher, and would not ‘travel with’ the teacher. The advantage of this approach is that it allows a school to periodically re-shape the role(s) in accordance with the school’s needs, as identified under the SIP. In many cases, the teacher might continue in their role beyond 4 years. If a teacher did not continue in any one of these roles but had HALT accreditation, they would revert to being paid at Band 3.

The **Staffing Agreement 2021-2023** provides in detail the circumstances in which roles are to be filled on a permanent basis. Beyond the small-scale implementation anticipated for 2023, industrial arrangements would need to be considered in detail.

**Option:** These roles could be filled permanently. This would support highly effective teachers to stay in their school context in the long term and provide security and stability. To ensure these teachers have their intended impact, there could be periodic reappraisal of their effectiveness in the role. One limitation to this approach is that, if these roles are tailored to support a school’s needs under the SIP, school needs may change, and the role description may need to be updated to align with those needs.

### Focus question

6. How might these roles be designed to cater to the changing needs of a school?



## Reporting arrangements

**Proposed option:** A consistent theme from the engagements was that these teachers should not have administrative and supervisory responsibilities, and the bulk of their time should still be spent in the classroom. As such, these roles would not be part of the school executive: they would report to a member of the leadership team, at the principal's discretion.

**Option:** As leaders within the school, these teachers could have a role on the school executive.

### Focus question

7. How could these roles best fit within current school structures?

## Job title

In early engagements, participants frequently raised the job title for these roles. Many participants felt that the job title should closely align to the objectives of the reform: that is, strengthening teaching and learning practice for the benefit of all students; and creating a more attractive career pathway. Because it is envisaged that a core part of these teachers' roles would be working collaboratively and collectively – with others in their school and beyond, and in teams to harness the collective power of their teaching practice – this could also be a focus of the job title.

Some options for the job title include:

- Expert Teachers
- Highly Effective Teachers
- Collective Learning Teachers
- Collaborative Learning Teachers
- Collective Excellence Teachers
- Learning Specialists
- Mastery Level Teachers
- Instructional Specialists.

In time, if HALT accreditation ultimately became a requirement for these roles (see below re interaction with HALT accreditation), these could become Highly Accomplished Teacher roles.

### Focus question

8. What should these teachers be called?

# Allocation of roles and movement in the system

## What we've heard

Key themes from early engagements have included:

- The concern that an open merit process might lead to very substantial movement across the system, including the loss of contextual knowledge in schools, as well as the potential for rural, remote, and regional schools to lose highly effective teachers who may seek opportunities in urban areas.

“It will create division and further exacerbate the teacher shortage especially in rural and remote schools.”

**REIT Survey response**

- The suggestion that new roles might provide encouragement for highly effective teachers to move to schools or areas of greater need.

“We should look to reward those excellent teachers who are prepared to teach in hard to staff areas.”

**REIT Survey response**

“Teachers at complex schools deal with high welfare & behaviour issues all day, every day & attracting & retaining teachers at these schools is more difficult than other schools. Therefore, higher pay rates for hard to staff schools is a more equitable solution.”

**REIT Survey response**

- The importance of considering different allocation approaches between schools in different locations, with varying size and with particular needs, such as Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs).

“These roles also need to be allocated for SSPs, Hospital schools, Support units in mainstream and others that do not fit into the mainstream category.”

**REIT Survey response**

## Design principles

- Allocation of roles should be linked to school need.
- Equity should be a consideration in the allocation of roles.
- All schools should benefit from the skills of teachers in these roles.

## Movement of teachers within and between schools

The process of recruiting teachers to these roles would result in some movement of teachers between schools. This could be helpful in some circumstances – for example if highly effective teachers could be attracted to rural and regional locations. But the movement of teachers also creates some risks of vacancies, particularly in hard-to-staff locations. Furthermore, when a teacher moves contexts, there is a significant lag time for them to establish credibility and new relationships; and to work effectively in a new context (Fullan 2018). Any recruitment approach needs to strike the right balance between movement in the system that creates fresh perspectives and a wider range of opportunities for teachers; and movement that could adversely affect student outcomes and staffing in high-demand schools.

On a system-wide basis, careful staggering of recruitment could help to mitigate disruptive impacts. For rural and regional schools, it will be important to explore possibilities to ensure continuing supply in hard-to-staff locations, considering the current rural and remote benefits and incentives, and how the reform might interact with the transfer points system. Further work on this question will be conducted throughout the consultation period and during the next stage of design.

**Option:** One way to mitigate concerns about significant movement across the system could be to set an expectation that, once appointed to a role, the teacher would occupy that role for a minimum period. This might reduce disruption from staff movement and help ensure these teachers are more effective by staying in a school long enough to be embedded in its culture and context.

## Options: allocating roles to schools

**Proposed option:** Beyond the small-scale implementation planned for 2023, these positions would be allocated within existing school staffing entitlement, particularly as teachers in these roles would continue to have a teaching load. Additional staffing above entitlement may be needed to enable

collaboration time. In practice, to create thousands of these roles would mean converting a significant number of classroom teacher roles.

Allocation to schools would be based primarily on existing teaching numbers within the school, with an additional allocation for SSPs, and a hub and spoke model so that smaller schools share positions with other nearby schools. One model could apply a different methodology depending on the school type, with additional criteria applied for other aspects of need such as Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI), Rural and Remote locations, vacancies or staffing profile, or student outcomes. For example:

- a. Primary, secondary, central / community or infant school allocations could be on a per capita basis based on the number of teachers e.g., 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) position for a certain number of teachers, plus associated release time.
- b. Teaching Principal 1 or Teaching Principal 2 schools, or schools with less than 5 teachers, could be allocated these teachers via a hub and spoke model e.g., 1 FTE teacher allocated for every hub servicing

all schools in that hub, or several teachers across multiple hubs servicing all schools in a network.

- c. SSP allocations could be centrally determined based on the classes, cohorts of students, and need in the school.

The **Staffing Agreement 2021-2023** currently sets out detailed procedures for appointments of teachers to schools. Implementation, particularly beyond the small scale anticipated for 2023, would require further detailed consideration of industrial arrangements.

### Focus questions

- 9 (a) How should we consider student need in the allocation of these positions to schools?
- 9 (b) What mechanisms could support ongoing teacher supply in hard-to-staff locations?
- 9 (c) Should these positions come with a minimum expected tenure?

## Eligibility and relationship to HALT

### What we've heard

Key themes from engagement included:

- A concern from some participants that an entirely separate pathway could undermine HALT accreditation.
  - A concern that, if access to higher paid roles were tied to HALT accreditation, this would deter many teachers from applying due to the time and cost involved in HALT accreditation, as well as creating extra workload for principals to support HALT applications.
- “Please don’t make it like another accreditation process. Any form of collecting evidence and writing reports will just turn off people from doing it.”  
**REIT Survey response**
- A concern that if these roles were linked to HALT accreditation, this would exclude some teachers such as teacher librarians, whose work was not perceived as aligning closely to the HALT Standards (although it is noted that some librarians have successfully completed the HALT process). There was also a view from some participants that the Standards, being general in nature, are more

difficult for a secondary teacher of particular subjects to evidence their impact. A contrary view was that the HALT Standards, while general, are designed to apply to all teachers.

- Some participants saw an opportunity to create a stronger role for HALTs in schools.

### Design principles

- Any additional work required to become eligible or to apply should be kept as streamlined and low-cost as possible, when balanced against the need to effectively identify the right candidates.
- This reform should align with the government’s commitment to accredit 2,500 HALTs by 2025.
- The work required of teachers and school leaders to support alignment with the HALT process should not be unduly onerous or deter quiet achievers.
- Where possible, the work involved in applying for these roles should be able to be re-used in a HALT application or part of a HALT application.

## Options: Interaction with HALT and accreditation

### Proposed option:

- Phase 1: Completion of Highly Accomplished Module 1 required within 12 months as a condition of accepting an offer in one of these roles.
- HALT fees to be reimbursed as part of professional learning.
- Potential future requirement after 2023 to complete HALT accreditation to be eligible for one of these roles.
- Proficient accreditation required

Lessons from past initiatives show it is important to consider how burdensome and intensive the process is for teachers to access any new career path. NESA launched a streamlined Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher policy in May 2022 and continues to look at streamlined and alternative pathways which could lead to teachers achieving HALT accreditation. While this is occurring, in Phase 1 of the Rewarding Excellence in Teaching Reform, a balanced approach could involve the completion of Module 1, which requires a teacher to submit 3 to 10 items of annotated evidence relating to 10 to 15 descriptors under the Highly Accomplished Standards. There is a fee of \$245 (for Module 1 only) and the design process will explore whether HALT fees could be reimbursed as professional learning.

The work done in preparing for the accreditation may (in some part) closely mirror the work submitted in an application for these roles; or alternatively, work done in these roles could form the basis for a Module 1 application.

If Module 1 was not completed within 12 months, or if a teacher was not successful in proceeding past Module 1, a supported process could be put in place to help the teacher complete or re-apply over the following 6 months. If, after that time, the teacher had

still not passed Module 1, one option could be for the director, educational leadership (DEL) and principal to jointly agree a plan, in consultation with the teacher, to reassign the teacher to another role within a reasonable timeframe.

Subject to resolving cost and workload considerations, in future phases of the reform beyond 2023, HALT accreditation could become a prerequisite to applying for these roles.

**Option:** No requirement to engage with HALT accreditation

The NSW Government has committed to a target of 2,500 HALT-accredited teachers by 2025. Alignment is needed between that commitment and this reform, to avoid creating a pathway that may compete with and decrease the attractiveness of HALT accreditation.

**Option:** Highly Accomplished accreditation required to apply.

Strong feedback from early engagements indicated that requiring HALT accreditation as a pre-requisite to accessing these roles at present (before further streamlining) would create a significant deterrent, due to the perceived cost barriers of applying for HALT and a perception that the accreditation process is time-consuming.

### Focus questions

10 (a) If it were a condition for Phase 1 that to accept one of these roles, a teacher must complete HALT Module 1 within 12 months, what impact, if any, would this have on the attractiveness of the roles?

10 (b) Should there be exceptions to the recommended requirement that module 1 of HALT be completed within 12 months of accepting one of these roles?

# Defining and demonstrating excellence

## What we've heard

Survey respondents had mixed views about using the Highly Accomplished Standards as the main tool for identifying our classroom teacher experts: 50% agreed that the Standards should play the main role, 19% were neutral, and 31% disagreed. Those in leadership roles were significantly more likely to support the use of the Standards than teachers, who showed no preference for or against the use of the Standards.

Throughout the consultation process, the issue of how to define excellence in teaching arose frequently, and there were varying conceptions of how to define excellence. The key concerns were:

- Excellent teaching is highly contextual, requiring different practices in different schools. The type and location of the school, demographics of the students, and subjects being taught all impacted on how high-quality teaching might be demonstrated. Many participants felt that any definition of 'excellence' should be context-specific, reflecting the unique realities of each classroom.

"I don't think you can define excellent teaching across the Department of Education as a whole, it varies a lot school to school, and class to class."

**Anonymous, regional roundtable**

"I work in a remote SSP, and my area of expertise is working with students who are non-verbal. In my school, a real moment of excellence for us was when one of his students wrote his full name, which is really different from what it would look like in other settings."

**Anonymous, regional roundtable**

- External observers were raised as one way to assess excellence in the classroom. Teachers talked about the potential to use observations to define and recognise excellent teaching practice in the classroom, in addition to other evidence.

"If someone wanted to come and observe me for a few days, a principal identified a few of us, and I had to gather a little bit of evidence and they can see me working like the 'good old days', maybe; but I really worry about who makes the decisions about the people who get to that level and what it means for other staff who may not be in the position to do the extra work needed."

**Anonymous, regional roundtable**

- The perspectives and feedback of students could be a useful piece of evidence for excellent teaching. Teachers also suggested that focusing on improvements in student learning and experience were essential for defining excellence in teaching.

"We need to reward the people who are demonstrating the best pedagogical practices every day. Student voice could be used to identify the best teachers. Student engagement, individual student growth, celebrating that success. Think it comes back to the students."

**Anonymous, regional roundtable**

- There was feedback about the workload for teachers involved in applying for roles, and many participants argued that the process to demonstrate excellence should let teachers use existing evidence of their daily work.

Some past projects resulted in a lack of confidence in how candidates were chosen, which affected how teachers in these roles were perceived by their peers.

## Design principles

- In order to build trust and confidence in the process, selection criteria need to be transparent and defensible. (Noting some past initiatives resulted in a lack of confidence in how candidates were chosen, which affected how teachers in these roles were perceived by their peers.)
- Assessment of teaching quality should be developed from existing standards and frameworks where possible.
- The definition of teaching excellence should be broad enough to recognise the many different contexts in which our teachers do great work and should adopt a broad conception of student outcomes.
- One component of teaching excellence should be the ability to work effectively with others, and to support collaboration among colleagues.
- The identification of teachers for higher-paid roles should encourage a diverse range of candidates, including quiet achievers, from diverse school settings.



- Any additional work to apply should be kept as streamlined and low-cost as possible, for applicants and others (principals, students) when balanced against the need to effectively identify the right candidates.
- The application/selection method must be scalable to large numbers of roles and appropriately resourced. (**The Case for Change** noted lessons from past projects which underestimated the time and resources required to evaluate applicants).

## Options: defining and demonstrating excellence

**Proposed option:** The standard by which highly effective teaching is measured should be based on the Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers. These Standards provide a comparable baseline across the system, are widely accepted by the teaching profession, and are used as part of the accreditation process in the current system.

Schools could use the Standards as a baseline for measurement. However, the teacher need only demonstrate excellence against a limited number of standard descriptors (for example 5 to 8), rather than

all 37. This could include the use of local and system level data, and the types of evidence set out in NESAs evidence guide. This would allow teachers to draw on evidence relevant to their context. Evidence could include:

- case studies of impact
- observations (plus documented notes of observations)
- documentary evidence as per HALT application (e.g., student records or work samples)
- student surveys
- peer review reports
- NAPLAN growth data
- referee reports.

An example of how a typical primary and high school teacher might demonstrate excellence is set out below. Each example assumes the preferred model of role design, where the school tailors a template role description to the needs identified within the school's SIP – balanced with system-level priorities. Additional examples relevant to specific contexts are at Appendix B.

### Role at a primary school in an inner-city Sydney suburb.

- Highly Accomplished descriptors specified in the role description:
  - Standard 1.2.3: Understand how students learn
  - Standard 3.2.3: Plan, structure and sequence learning programs
  - Standard 5.4.3: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning: interpret student data
  - Standard 6.3.3: Engage with colleagues and improve practice.
- The teacher could demonstrate their skills against relevant Standards as appropriate to their context. This could include evidence that demonstrates, for example:
  - Implementation of effective teaching strategies, e.g., that x% of students had improved their fluency in reading, as shown through analysis of school assessment data (verified by the principal).
  - Measure students' learning growth through movement along the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions, using school assessment data or artefacts of students' work.
  - Improvement in students who had previously performed below national minimum standards in NAPLAN, using school assessment data or artefacts of student work.
  - Engagement with colleagues to improve practice e.g., evidenced by staff evaluations of professional learning provided or a statement from the principal.

**Role at a large secondary school in a regional centre of NSW.**

- a. Highly Accomplished descriptors specified in the role description:
- Standard 2.5.3: Literacy and Numeracy strategies
  - Standard 3.6.3: Evaluate and improve teaching programs
  - Standard 5.3.3: Make consistent and comparable judgements
  - Standard 5.4.3: Interpret student data
- b. The teacher could demonstrate their skills against relevant Standards as appropriate to their context. This could include evidence that demonstrates, for example:
- Evidence of team teaching across faculties to show how colleagues have been supported to incorporate more literacy and numeracy strategies into their classroom practice.
  - Pre and post teaching and learning program registrations which demonstrate how faculties have been supported to use student feedback and assessment data to evaluate and refine teaching and learning programs for classes and cohorts.
  - Annotated student work samples which show how faculty colleagues have worked together to ensure consistent and comparable judgements when marking common assessment tasks.
  - Increased incorporation of differentiated tasks within faculty teaching and learning programs relative to the needs of students based on review of individual student NAPLAN data, Best Start data as well as internally collected school assessment data.

**Focus question**

11. Does the preferred approach to defining and demonstrating excellence strike the right balance between rigour and a process that is not overly burdensome? Are there alternative approaches that should be considered?

# Selection processes

## What we've heard

On the question of whether teaching excellence should be determined through a centralised process (rather than based on local assessment), survey respondents were divided: 40% agreed with the proposition, while 39% disagreed. Neither school context nor role had a discernible impact on the views of survey respondents.

Key themes from other engagements on selection process included:

- Some participants raised concerns about how 'quiet achievers' would be effectively recognised, noting that school leaders may lack time to closely observe classroom practice, and that some excellent teachers may lack a 'champion.'
- In determining a suitable selection process for identified roles, a consistent theme was the importance of a balance of local knowledge and system-wide moderation. In particular, feedback indicated that principals and/or DELs should have a role in the selection but should not be the sole decision makers, and that a mechanism is needed to ensure consistency across the system.
- Selection of suitable teachers should be relevant to each school's improvement journey and principals need input to defining how these roles fit into this journey.

"In order for this to work, principals and school leaders need input in both identifying the role and in selecting the suitable candidate. Both [of] these have to be the right 'fit' for a school context. This is where we can see the intersection with our strategic directions." **Quote from Round Table follow up survey**

- The importance of considering how recruitment would impact schools' existing workload. There was strong feedback on the importance of the department leading recruitment processes centrally, with input from school leaders and colleagues.

"Whichever method the department chooses to select staff needs to not increase any of the workload at school level" **REIT Survey response**

## Design principles

- Selection processes should involve a combination of local (principal) knowledge and external assessment, and should include reference to external measures.
- When selecting candidates, there will need to be a balance between the local needs of the school and system-level priorities.
- Selection processes should ensure any change to existing school workload is proportionate and centrally supported.

## Options: The process for nominating and selecting teachers

### Nomination process

**Proposed option:** A flexible model is proposed to identify those teachers who might be suitable for these roles. Teachers would ultimately need to agree to be nominated, but could either nominate themselves for consideration, or be nominated by their principal or a middle leader at their school.

One lesson from past initiatives was that self-nominating processes could be improved using data. In order to encourage nomination of the 'quiet achievers' who are highly effective teachers but do not always see themselves as such, school leadership would be supported to use data from their school's evidence base to help identify teachers who may be suitable to apply for these roles, either immediately or in future years.

### Selection process

Two options for this process would be to either have the department evaluate nominations and centrally appoint teachers to schools, to ensure comparability and objectivity; or for principals to select teachers for roles based on their local context. Based on the feedback already gathered, the proposed approach is a hybrid model.

**Proposed option:** As described above, selection would be determined with reference to the role description (balanced between system-level requirements and local school needs under the SIP). This would include demonstrating impact with reference to selected descriptors of the Highly Accomplished Standards, some of which may be common across all the new positions depending on system needs, and some of which could be selected by the principal.

While the application process may involve a written component and potentially an observation component, it would also provide an opportunity for applicants to discuss with a selection panel how they demonstrate the relevant selection criteria in their everyday practice. This could include sharing existing evidence such as teaching and learning programs, scope and sequences, assessment schedules, professional learning sessions and student/school data.

**The Staffing Agreement 2021-2023** currently sets out detailed procedures for appointments. Implementation, particularly beyond the small scale anticipated for 2023, would require further detailed consideration of industrial arrangements.

## Selection panel composition

**Proposed option:** To ensure the application process balances both local and central perspectives, a selection panel would comprise of the principal and/or DEL, and two centrally provided panel members who would act as the panel convenors.

The two centrally-provided panel members would ensure consistency of all roles across the system and help alleviate some of the administrative impacts of recruitment on a principal and/or DEL. The external panel members would also help protect the principal and/or DEL from any perceptions of favouritism and ensure a consistent set of standards are used to identify teachers for each relevant role.

### Focus question

12. What selection process would best combine local understanding with the need for consistency in approach across the system?

## Impact in the role and continuous improvement

Implementation will be phased, scaling up to a state-wide program over several years. Phase 1 could involve a limited number of schools who opt in for 2023. A gradual rollout would allow evaluation and refining of the design. This would mitigate some of the impacts on teacher supply, allow adequate time to build the teaching workforce and provide adequate support to teachers and schools during the rollout. Phased implementation will be an opportunity to test the design, identify unintended effects, and determine what types of roles work most effectively in the system.

An evaluation approach is being developed, with regular reporting allowing for iterative policy improvement. This evaluation will test the effectiveness of the reform and ensure we can refine it to align with the goal of continuous improvement for every teacher, every school, and every student every year.

## How to provide your feedback

The consultation period runs until 25 November 2022. You can make a submission by emailing the department's project team at [rewardingexcellenceteam@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:rewardingexcellenceteam@det.nsw.edu.au)

Staff of the department can access a survey on the [staff intranet page](#) for this reform. Some staff will also have the opportunity to attend one of the roundtables, which are being held in every principal network in NSW. See Appendix C for information on the roundtables.

Public feedback is being gathered via the [Have Your Say website](#).

## Appendix A – Overview of engagements and survey results

As part of the discovery and research phase, the department conducted a range of initial engagements including:

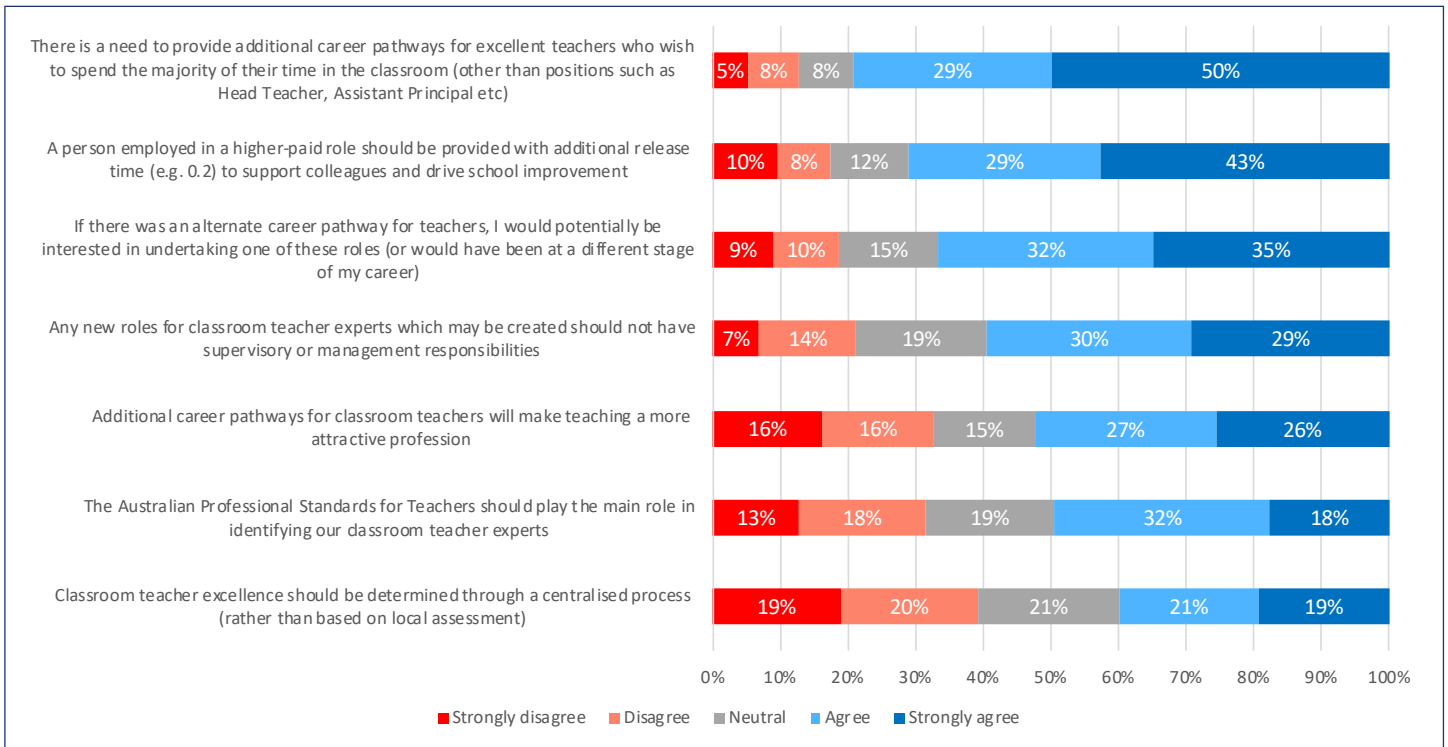
- An online survey of staff to gather their feedback on the case for change. Over 1350 responses were received.
- Interviews with 9 local and international academic experts in education.
- Two focus groups with Initial Teacher Education students
- 10 round table discussions with teachers and school leaders held at metropolitan, rural and regional schools across NSW.
- Information-gathering sessions with a range of educational stakeholders, such as Secondary Principals Council (SPC), Primary Principals Association (PPA), Special Education Principals and Leaders Association (SEPLA), NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), NSW Teachers Federation, Association of Independent Schools NSW, Catholic Schools NSW.

While initial engagements identified a great divergence of views there were some common themes, which we have used to inform the development of design principles and options. These include:

- There is a need to provide an alternative career pathway for teachers who want to remain primarily in the classroom. This view is largely shared by principals, executives and classroom teachers.
- Excellence can be manifested differently in every school and there is a need to consider how the notion of excellence intersects with the higher levels of accreditation process and HALT Standards.
- This work should associate the notion of excellence with a role in a school rather than aligned to an individual (as HALT accreditation currently is).
- If there is additional remuneration for excellence in teaching, this needs to be associated with additional roles and responsibilities. We have consistently heard that teachers should not be paid more for the same role.
- To make best use of our excellent teachers, these roles should focus on mentoring and pedagogical leadership, rather than administrative and managerial tasks.
- In order to perform these additional roles, these teachers will need some amount of release time from the classroom.
- To ensure there is a clear delineation between a teacher career pathway and a leader career pathway, we need to ensure that the teacher career pathway is not associated with school executive roles and responsibilities (including in the naming).
- It is important to work with principals and school leaders in understanding how these roles can be used to build collective efficacy across a school and contribute to school improvement.



## Survey results:



## Appendix B – Additional examples of demonstrating excellence

### Role at a co-educational high school in metropolitan Sydney

- a. Example of Highly Accomplished descriptors specified in the role description:
- Standard 2.1.3: Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area
  - Standard 3.2.3 Plan, structure, and sequence learning programs
  - Standard 4.2.3: Manage classroom activities
  - Standard 6.3.3: Engage with colleagues and improve practice
- b. The teacher could demonstrate their skills against relevant standards as appropriate to their context. This could include evidence that demonstrates, for example:
- Faculty units of work that have been developed by the candidate to ensure teaching and learning programs are relevant to syllabus requirements and are engaging for students based on student exit slips.
  - Pre and post scope and sequences which have been developed with colleagues based on a review of student feedback and RAP HSC data.
  - Observation reports written by colleagues on the candidate about how they use various strategies to manage classroom activities to ensure all students are engaged in purposeful activities.
  - Development of a school's Beginning Teacher Network where early career teachers are provided with an opportunity to engage in professional discussions and share experiences to improve their professional knowledge and practices.

### High school visual arts teacher

- a. Example of Highly Accomplished descriptors specified in the role description:
- Standard 1.2.3: Understand how students learn
  - Standard 2.2.3: Content selection and organisation
  - Standard 5.1.3: Assess student learning
  - Standard 6.3.3: Engage with colleagues and improve practice
- b. Teacher might demonstrate their practice and impact against relevant standards, as appropriate to their context. This could include evidence that demonstrates, for example:
- implementation of evidence-based teaching strategies shared with all Stage 6 colleagues, e.g., x% lift in the quality of Stage 6 students extended written responses, as shown through the analysis of students pre and post intervention data.
  - student work samples and assessment data which shows increased student engagement and achievement across the Stage 5 visual arts course based on the implementation of innovative teaching practices.
  - a Preliminary Assessment Schedule, and sample of assessment tasks, marking criteria and work samples for a Year 11 Visual Arts cohort which has been developed with colleagues and demonstrates the implementation and evaluation of a range of assessment strategies.
  - Colleagues' meeting notes from a recent TeachMeet evidencing professional discussions with candidate in how to improve educational outcomes in Stage 4 visual arts.

### **Small rural primary school with 24 students spread across two multi-stage classes**

- a. Example of Highly Accomplished descriptors specified in the role description:
- Standard 1.2.3: Understand how students learn
  - Standard 3.2.3: Plan, structure, and sequence learning programs
  - Standard 5.2.3: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning: interpret student data
  - Standard 6.3.3: Engage with colleagues and improve practice
- b. The teacher can demonstrate their skills against relevant standards as appropriate to their context. This could include evidence that demonstrates, for example:
- Differentiated tasks across multiple stages and a wide range of ability levels, including providing work samples of those projects/assignments based on research which has been shared with colleagues by the candidate.
  - Units of work that the candidate has developed with colleagues that contain content-based lessons and demonstrate extensive knowledge of the subject.
  - A range of student work samples across stages, assessed by the candidate and annotated using marking criteria to guide student learning.
  - Engagement with colleagues from various learning networks to improve practice e.g., evidenced by staff evaluations of professional learning provided or by a statement from the principal of the school or broader network.

### **Primary school SSP (School for Specific Purposes) in a metropolitan setting**

- a. Example of Highly Accomplished descriptors specified in the role description:
- Standard 3.1.3: Establish challenging learning goals
  - Standard 3.5.3: Use effective classroom communication
  - Standard 3.7.3: Engage parents/carers in the educative process
  - Standard 4.4.3: Maintain student safety
- b. The teacher can demonstrate their skills against relevant standards as appropriate to their context. This could include evidence that demonstrates, for example:
- Lesson observation notes demonstrating how the candidate works with individual students to set challenging learning goals using a series of social stories.
  - Professional learning materials that the candidate has developed and shared with colleagues as to how to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support individual students' understanding, engagement and understanding.
  - Reflection notes from parent/teacher conferences about how candidate has worked with colleagues to identify appropriate opportunities for parents and carers to engage in the educative process.
  - Individual student risk assessments that are shared with colleagues and used as modelled examples to ensure student wellbeing and safety at all school events, including incursions.

**Connected Communities secondary school in a rural, remote, and regional setting**

- a. Example of Highly Accomplished descriptors specified in the role description:
- Standard 1.3.3: Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds
  - Standard 1.4.3: Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
  - Standard 2.4.3: Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
  - Standard 7.4.3: Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities
- b. The teacher can demonstrate their skills against relevant standards as appropriate to their context. This could include evidence that demonstrates, for example:
- Evidence of how the candidate has worked with colleagues to develop and apply creative, effective teaching and inclusive teaching practices based on the individual needs of students outlined in Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs).
  - Professional learning materials that the candidate has developed in consultation with their local Aboriginal community to support and enrich their colleagues teaching and learning capabilities and capacity.
  - Referee reports on how the candidate has worked collaboratively with members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop colleagues' understanding of and respect for Aboriginal histories, cultures and contemporary issues that impact on students' learning and engagement.
  - Meeting notes which show how candidate has worked with the local and/or Regional Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), Local Aboriginal Community Elders and community members to ensure that effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are included in learning and teaching programs and that partnerships with wider community groups continue to play a key role in partnering in the educative process.

## Appendix C – Overview of consultation

Due to the significance of this work in driving system change, we are seeking to capture as many different perspectives and views from the profession as possible and are holding a roundtable in every principal network across NSW. These roundtables will provide an opportunity for school leaders and teachers to discuss the consultation questions and provide their views and insights on issues raised. An overview of the schedule is included below.

School Performance Directorate	Weeks (Term 4, 2022)	No. of roundtables
Connected Communities	Weeks 6 and 7	2 roundtables
Metropolitan North	Weeks 5 and 7	13 roundtables
Metropolitan South	Weeks 4 and 6	15 roundtables
Metropolitan South and West	Weeks 5 and 7	13 roundtables
Regional North	Weeks 4 and 6	15 roundtables
Regional North and West	Weeks 5 and 7	14 roundtables
Metropolitan South	Weeks 4 and 6	13 roundtables
Rural North	Weeks 4 and 6	13 roundtables
Rural South and West	Weeks 5 and 7	15 roundtables

In addition to the roundtables, we are:

- Distributing a survey on the Rewarding Excellence in Teaching intranet page which is open for all departmental staff
- Working with representatives from Professional Associations, including NSW Professional Teachers' Council (PTC) and the NSW HALT Association (when formed)
- Meeting regularly with educational partners: Secondary Principals Council (SPC), Primary Principals Association (PPA) and the Special Education Principals' and Leaders' Association of NSW
- Meeting with representatives from the NSW Teachers Federation
- Working with key teams from NESA
- Engaging with representatives from parental groups including NSW P&C Federation and Isolated Children's Parents Association (ICPA)
- Seeking feedback from members of the public through a 'Have Your Say' consultation process
- Meeting with Initial Teacher Education students from a number of universities including University of Newcastle, University of Sydney, University of Wollongong, Charles Sturt University and Western Sydney University.
- Seeking feedback from students including the Minister's Student Council (known as DOVES) and Stage 6 students who have expressed a possible interest in studying teaching in the future
- Commencing our discussions with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG).
- Discussing the key reform issues with both local and international education experts and academics

Key outputs from all these consultations will be captured and used to inform the development of the reform. A consultation report will also be published to share the views and insights learned as part of this process.

You can also provide feedback by emailing [rewardingexcellenceteam@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:rewardingexcellenceteam@det.nsw.edu.au).



## Appendix D – Focus questions

Options	Focus questions
Roles and functions	
Creating positions or rewarding the individual	<p>1 (a) Do you prefer a one-stage approach (recruitment to REIT roles only), or a two-stage approach (recognise a larger pool of teachers, as well as recruit to REIT roles)? Can you recommend improvements, changes, or alternative approaches?</p> <p>1 (b) How might we develop people to take on these roles?</p>
Nature of the role, collaboration time and system supports	<p>2 (a) What roles, or combination of roles, would be best for these teachers to undertake to strengthen teaching and learning within and beyond their school taking into account the needs of schools, as well as the need to create an attractive career path)?</p> <p>2 (b) How much collaboration time would be needed for these roles?</p> <p>2 (c) What support could these teachers provide to other teachers in public schools across NSW to improve learning outcomes for all students?</p> <p>2 (d) What does the department need to do to effectively scale up the knowledge and expertise of these teachers to improve learning outcomes for all students?</p>
Process for role design	3. How should principals be involved in tailoring roles to local school need?
Mechanism for collaboration time	<p>4 (a) How should collaboration time be allocated to best support these teachers to help strengthen teaching and learning within their school and beyond?</p> <p>4 (b) Through what mechanism is this best achieved?</p>
Pay	<p>5 (a) What should teachers in these roles be paid, noting their potential range of additional responsibilities?</p> <p>5 (b) How might we help ensure leadership roles remain attractive, if there are non-leadership roles for teachers with a similar salary?</p>
Tenure	6. How might these roles be designed to cater to the changing needs of a school?
Reporting arrangements	7. How could these roles best fit within current school structures?
Job title	8. What should these teachers be called?
Allocation of roles and movement in the system	
Allocating roles to schools	<p>9 (a) How should we consider student need in the allocation of these positions to schools?</p> <p>9 (b) What mechanisms could support ongoing teacher supply in hard-to-staff locations?</p> <p>9 (c) Should these positions come with a minimum expected tenure?</p>

Options	Focus questions
Eligibility and relationship to HALT	
Interaction with HALT	<p>10 (a) If it were a condition for Phase 1 that to accept one of these roles, a teacher must complete HALT Module 1 within 12 months, what impact, if any, would this have on the attractiveness of the roles?</p> <p>10 (b) Should there be exceptions to the recommended requirement that module 1 of HALT be completed within 12 months of accepting one of these roles?</p>
Defining and demonstrating excellence	
Defining and demonstrating excellence	11. Does the preferred approach to defining and demonstrating excellence strike the right balance between rigour and a process that is not overly burdensome? Are there alternative approaches that should be considered?
Selection processes	
The process for nominating and selecting teachers	12. What selection process would best combine local understanding with the need for consistency in approach across the system?

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