



Department of
Education

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DIRECTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

FOCUS 2019

AN INITIATIVE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S CLASSROOM FIRST STRATEGY



FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

I am pleased to provide Focus 2019 to help you shape the directions for your school for next year.

As we enter into the final year of our current strategic plan for public schools, Focus 2019 prioritises actions that continue to support our commitment to a culture of high performance and high care.

An imperative of our strategic plan is strengthening the role of school leadership in creating and maintaining a culture in which high quality teaching is developed and growth in student achievement is always central to decision making. We will support this endeavour through the school review process by placing school self-assessment as the foundation for school improvement. In addition, our leadership strategy aims to increase the support provided to both current and future leaders.

At the same time our moral imperative is demonstrated through the care and development of each and every student. By ensuring student wellbeing and a sense of belonging, all our Focus actions are designed to set conditions for successful learning for our students from the beginning of their schooling to their transition to adult life.

We will also maintain, as a priority, the wellbeing of our school leaders and staff and you will see in Focus the actions to provide support, training and resources.

I acknowledge your efforts and achievements over the past three years and encourage you to draw on Focus 2019 as you work with your school community in planning for the year ahead.

Jennifer McGrath
Acting Director General

September 2018

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our students live and are educated.

We acknowledge parents, families and communities as the first educators of their children. Aboriginal people have a long tradition of teaching and learning through sharing their connections with the land and sea, and through their stories and lived experiences that are passed from generation to generation. We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.

“The moral purpose of public education is embodied in the leaders, teachers and support staff who have at their heart a commitment to the care and development of each and every student.”

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SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

High expectations of success for every student in every school.

Schools

- Emphasise the role of play-based learning in a balanced curriculum for Kindergarten and Pre-primary students.
- Have all Year 3 and 4 students learning languages and prepare for Year 5 students in 2020.
- Have every senior secondary student, regardless of WACE eligibility, on a learning pathway that explicitly connects to further training or higher education.
- Provide information regarding VET pathways and career prospects in consultation with Department of Training and Workforce Development.
- Implement shared strategies for upper primary and lower secondary teachers to improve Year 7 writing achievement.

Statewide Services and regions

- Exemplify to schools the role of play-based learning in the early years.
- Implement a program for low socio-economic schools to build student interest, aspiration and capability in STEM.
- Design strategies for teachers to extend and challenge their most academically able primary students.
- Publish materials and planning guides for schools and their communities to use to counter bullying.
- Evaluate and promote a range of drug and alcohol education programs to support students, families and communities most at risk.
- Provide resources to support VET course selection aligned with future employment opportunities.
- Conduct planning and moderation workshops to support upper primary and lower secondary teachers develop shared approaches to improve student writing.

Central services

- Expand access to online primary languages programs and facilitate delivery of languages programs in small primary schools.
- Trial program options for the most academically able primary students.
- Pilot alternative program provision for students exhibiting extremely violent behaviour.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

A renewed and relentless focus on the best possible teaching practices.

Schools

- Increase the capacity of teachers to use their knowledge of the history, culture and experiences of Aboriginal people, and explicitly use this in classroom practice.
- Focus on growth in student achievement in addition to attainment.
- Increase beginning teacher expertise in developing positive student behaviour.
- Use evidence-based instruction tailored to the education needs of students with specific learning disorders.
- Provide deliberate opportunities through the Western Australian Curriculum for students to develop general capabilities of critical thinking, creativity and entrepreneurship, including through STEM.

Statewide Services and regions

- Deliver online workshops for teachers to embed Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages into their classroom practice.
- Incorporate de-escalation training in the Graduate Teacher Induction Program and explore alternative delivery options for all staff.
- Provide workshops for teachers on effective instruction for students with specific learning disorders.
- Give teachers internship opportunities through the new centre for excellence to strengthen and expand their explicit teaching of literacy.
- Conduct professional development programs to assist staff in implementing new guidelines on physical contact with students.

Central services

- Enhance tools that schools use to understand, analyse and act on both student achievement growth and attainment.
- Build a web-based resource for schools to assist students with complex learning needs associated with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
- Develop updated guidelines for all staff to manage situations of physical contact with students.
- Engage in consultation to develop performance management strategies that deliver improved teaching practice.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Strong and empowering leadership in every school and across the whole system.

Schools

- Use the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to make improving outcomes for Aboriginal students the role of the entire school community.
- Identify and support the development of staff with strong leadership potential.
- Implement policy requirements to address violence in schools.
- Self-assess development needs using the Principal Performance Improvement Tool.

Statewide Services, Leadership Institute and regions

- Partner with selected schools to use the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to drive change in their local contexts.
- Create and implement development programs for staff identified as having strong leadership potential.
- Provide practical strategies and materials to support principals to implement new policy requirements to address violence in schools.
- Develop and implement a program for building cultures of teaching excellence through school leadership teams.
- Implement strategies for principals to work alongside colleagues to provide support, feedback and development.
- Develop resources for community members to effectively participate in principal selection.
- Consult and develop strategies to support beginning principals to successfully build and maintain positive relationships with their communities.

Central services

- Pilot a new school leadership talent identification process.
- Review and improve processes for selecting principals.
- Increase the level of mentoring support for the professional growth and personal wellbeing of principals.
- Develop a new approach to performance development and management for all principals with a focus on self-assessment.



STRONG GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT

A capable and responsive organisation for now and into the future.

Schools

- Include implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework as part of school self-assessment and report this to the school community.
- Ensure school planning captures the views of students and facilitates involvement where appropriate.
- Consider how the Child Safe Standards proposed by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse can be addressed.
- Ensure school readiness for increased participation in online NAPLAN assessment.

Statewide Services and regions

- Appoint staff to support schools prepare for and manage student exclusion processes.
- Develop a strategy to implement the Child Safe Standards proposed by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Pilot a functional needs assessment for students with disability.

Central services

- Implement the new school reviews.
- Include the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework in the new school reviews.
- Implement the relevant recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Formulate responses to the findings of the student-centred funding model review.
- Engage schools in piloting webSIS.
- Ensure technology capacity to accommodate increased school participation in online NAPLAN assessment.
- Develop and implement a simpler and more efficient process for recording and reporting school incidents, including incidents of violence.