Introduction

The nearly 600,000 children and young people in Western Australia account for approximately 26% of our State’s population. Mr Colin Pettit, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, works closely with children, young people – and their families – to ensure they are heard and valued, and kept healthy and safe.

In 2016, the Commissioner consulted with 1,812 Western Australian school students to hear their views about education. This was the largest consultation of students undertaken by the Commissioner’s office since its inception. The Commissioner’s research resulted in the report Speaking out about school and learning (January 2018). In response to this report, the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People have produced a subsequent report: Talking to the experts (September 2018). These are important documents for enhancing the education, safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Both reports provide valuable information about what helps student engagement as well as the difficulties that can be encountered. The series of findings and recommendations are associated with student attendance and engagement, academic achievement, liking school and a sense of belonging. The wellbeing of children and young people is enhanced and their learning outcomes are optimised when they feel connected to others, and they experience safe and trusting relationships. A school community in which all members are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity and fosters positive relationships provides a strong foundation for students to reach their full potential.

The educational landscape has changed significantly over the last 10 years and the Department of Education is taking contemporary approaches to targeting existing issues and needs. Public schools are striving to create a culture in which every student is heard and experiences a sense of belonging to the school community, of being known and understood as an individual, and of staff who care about each student’s overall progress and wellbeing.

The Department of Education has identified further opportunities and directions arising from the Commissioner’s findings and recommendations that will be implemented during 2019.

This Government response relates to both the Commissioner’s report Speaking out about school and learning and the Joint Standing Committee’s report Talking to the experts.
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM
THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S REPORT **TALKING TO THE EXPERTS.**

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<td><strong>Recommendation 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;a) The Minister for Education review the way data from the National School Opinion Surveys (NSOS) is used and reported, to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of policy and practice at a school level across WA.&lt;br&gt;b) Governing authorities report on aggregated NSOS data relevant to the school sector in the annual reporting framework to monitor trends overtime.&lt;br&gt;c) Schools demonstrate via their annual reports the actions they will take as a result of the NSOS survey of student responses.</td>
<td><strong>Finding 1 – The value of speaking directly to students</strong>&lt;br&gt;There appears to be merit in the Commissioner’s recommendation that better use be made of data collected through the ‘National School Opinion Survey’ (NSOS) by the Department of Education, by other relevant governing bodies, and by schools.</td>
<td>• The Department of Education’s <em>Strategic Plan for WA Public Schools 2016–2019</em> requires the collection of system performance information to monitor perceptions relating to the management of student behaviour, the quality of teaching and school leadership.&lt;br&gt;• Public schools in WA use information from the National School Opinion Surveys (NSOS) and a range of other sources to inform planning, including school priorities – both short and long term.&lt;br&gt;• To assist public schools’ compliance with the legislative requirement to report parent, student and teacher satisfaction data (<em>Australian Education Regulation 2013</em>, Section 60(1)(f)), the Department introduced a tailored version of the NSOS. It was intended that public schools would use and report on the surveys on biennially.&lt;br&gt;• Following some initial implementation in 2014 and 2015, all schools were required to run updated versions of the surveys in 2016.&lt;br&gt;• The surveys are a tool for schools and whilst corporate and regional executive staff have considered state level NSOS information, the results are not currently publicly reported on a systemic basis. The Department has committed to all public schools using NSOS in 2018. To facilitate this, arrangements with Education Services Australia for ongoing access to <em>School Survey</em> were extended to the end of 2018.&lt;br&gt;• The surveys remain unchanged from 2016 to allow for comparison across two mandatory survey cycles.&lt;br&gt;• Schools are required to include in their annual School Report information about the satisfaction of parents, students and staff. It is optional for schools to include the findings from the biennial NSOS to assist in meeting this requirement.&lt;br&gt;• Substantial summary data from the 2016 NSOS has been provided to the Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP).&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>• Analysis of the 2018 NSOS data will not be finalised until mid-2019. At that point the Department will consider options for continuing NSOS on a biennial basis and for how NSOS data might be reported and used.&lt;br&gt;• The Department is supporting the Commissioner’s development and implementation of a pilot student wellbeing survey in 2018 and 2019.&lt;br&gt;• The Department’s <em>Focus 2019: Directions for Schools</em> requires that school planning is informed through capturing the views of students and facilitating involvement where appropriate.</td>
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| **Recommendation 2**                       | **Finding 2 – Aboriginal Student Engagement** | • The Department’s *Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework* (the framework) was developed to support all public education staff to reflect on their approaches to the education of Aboriginal students.  
• The framework sets expected standards for staff when working with Aboriginal students, their families and communities. It supports staff to reflect on their behaviours, attitudes and practices, and to identify opportunities for improved action.  
• The Department provides professional learning, advice and guidance on leading implementation of the framework, as well as targeted support to embed the Framework in schools and across the Department.  
• The Department recognises the importance of relationships between all school staff and their Aboriginal students, parents, families and communities. Relationships with Aboriginal students, parents and families are central to the implementation of the framework.  
• The framework sets the expectation that schools will foster positive relationships with Aboriginal students, and build a learning environment that is welcoming for Aboriginal students and their families.  
• Implementing the *Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework* is identified as a priority in the Department’s *Strategic Plan for WA Public Schools 2016–2019*. Schools are expected to implement the framework as a clear statement of expected practice and behaviour in schools and communities to increase Aboriginal student achievement and drive improvement planning.  
• Monitoring schools’ engagement with the framework is being undertaken through:  
  – gathering qualitative and quantitative data on professional learning and support activities; and  
  – capturing more in-depth information on the use of the framework in a local context from a small sample group of schools. The purpose is to capture emerging journeys with a view to sharing these across schools and networks. | • The Department’s *Focus 2019: Directions for Schools* sets expectations that schools will use the *Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework* (framework) to make improving outcomes for Aboriginal students the role of the entire school community.  
• The Department’s Statewide Services will partner with selected schools to use the framework to drive change in their local contexts. This includes:  
  – providing professional learning, advice and guidance to school networks about engaging and building relationships with their local Aboriginal community; and  
  – continuing to work closely with schools to assist them with ongoing self-assessment and planning with the framework. |
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<td>• Initiatives such as the Kimberley Schools Project (KSP), collaboration between the Department of Education, Catholic Education Western Australia, Association of Independent Schools Western Australia and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, will continue.</td>
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<td>• From 2019, there will be a specific focus on participating KSP schools partnering with the local community to drive increased student and community engagement.</td>
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<td>• There are a number of place-based initiatives in which the Department is a key stakeholder, providing professional support, advice and guidance to school communities, in accordance with the needs of the local community context.</td>
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| **Recommendation 3**  
The governing authorities review the use of strategies and resources, such as the Australian Government's Student Wellbeing Hub, available to develop positive and respectful relationships across a school environment and report on uptake, implementation and effectiveness across WA schools. | **Finding 6 – Feeling safe at school**  
Hearing children talk in their own words about feeling safe at school provides invaluable feedback about ways in which schools and education providers need to respond to the challenge of providing a safe schooling environment.  
- The Western Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education syllabus incorporates respectful relationships education, aimed at supporting students to develop knowledge and skills to engage in age-appropriate relationships with others.  
- The Department currently supports a broad, integrated approach to building personal and social capabilities, such as the skills and understandings required for positive and respectful relationships, through a range of evidence-based whole-school social and emotional learning programs. These include *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS™)*, *Friendly Schools Plus*, and *Aussie Optimism*, with training facilitated by accredited Department school psychologists.  
- The Department has two representatives contributing to the National Respectful Relationships Education Expert (working) Group and has provided input into the resources and development of online professional learning modules that will be available through the Student Wellbeing Hub.  
- Resources available on the Student Wellbeing Hub have been promoted through internal Departmental communications to all schools.  
- The Department commends any initiative that will enhance the development of positive and respectful relationships and the quality of teaching and learning programs.  
- The Department will continue to promote the Student Wellbeing Hub through its communication channels.  
- The Department is working with the Department of Communities to progress the delivery of respectful relationships education in Western Australian schools. A pilot program will commence once a service provider has been engaged.  
- The Department entered into an agreement with the WA AIDS Council to provide professional learning and support to principals, teachers and support staff to understand the individual needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex students in public secondary schools using the resources in the Student Wellbeing Hub. |  
- Students are given a voice through a focus on the development of their emotional vocabulary and appropriate communication skills as part of social emotional learning.  
- There is a steady increase in the number of schools implementing evidence-based social emotional learning programs.  
- Schools can access student surveys relating to bullying via the Friendly Schools framework.  
- Friendly Schools promotes the use of student cyber leaders in upper secondary school settings.  
- The Department will continue to contribute to the National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Group.  
- The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework will be promoted to schools when it is launched in Term 4, 2018. |
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| Recommendation 4  
Schools be resourced to implement a whole-of-school approach to improve student-peer and student-teacher relationships and monitor and report annually on the strategies and outcomes of the approach. NSOS survey results or other such mechanisms be used to monitor and report on these relationships. | Finding 7 – Student Physical and Mental Health  
The voices of children and young people are particularly insightful when it comes to assessing physical and mental health, and suggest that under-diagnosis may be a significant problem amongst some groups of students. | • The Department’s Strategic Plan for WA Public Schools 2016–2019, includes an expectation that schools build positive relationships within classrooms and the school, and across the broader school community. Strategies implemented to support positive relationships will reflect local contexts.  
• The Department has supported whole-school approaches to mental health and wellbeing that include strategies for building and maintaining positive relationships, such as KidsMatter and MindMatters, since their inception. The Department will continue to work with beyondblue and headspace as these initiatives transition to the new Mental Health in Education initiative from August 2018.  
• The Department is implementing the Government’s election commitment to select 300 schools to receive an additional 0.1 FTE of Level 3 classroom teacher time to oversee the delivery of evidence-based mental health programs and frameworks. These programs and frameworks support teaching and learning of the skills and understandings required to engage in respectful, supportive relationships in the school community and beyond.  
• Specific items in the biennial NSOS can provide insights for schools, particularly in relation to student-teacher relationships.  
• Specific NSOS data from 2016 and 2018 may be of use to schools to gauge levels of, and improvement in, some aspects of student-teacher relationships. | • Work will continue between the Department of Education and the Department of Communities in relation to the respectful relationships teaching program.  
• The Department’s Focus 2019: Directions for Schools requires that school planning is informed through capturing the views of students and facilitating involvement where appropriate.  
• From 2019, the 300 schools who received an additional 0.1 FTE of Level 3 classroom teacher time will build on programs and frameworks to support teaching and learning of the skills and understandings required to engage in respectful, supportive relationships in the school community and beyond. |
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<td>• Following analysis of 2018 data, the Department will consider its ongoing commitment to NSOS, including the extent to which NSOS results could be used to monitor and report on relationships.</td>
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**Recommendation 5**

Governing authorities incorporate staff selection criteria addressing personal characteristics such as the value that teacher and student support candidates place on the development and maintenance of positive, respectful student-staff and parent-staff relationships into recruitment and selection processes.

|  |  | • As part of the Department’s commitment to a culture of high care in schools, all Department staff are expected to contribute to this culture in their everyday work. This ensures that all people in school communities are treated with care and respect.  
• The Department’s selection criteria for teachers and principals reference Australian Professional Standards that privilege the importance of working with parents and the broader community, as well as ethical practice highlighting respect for others. |  |
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| **Recommendation 6**<br>Universities review current teacher training curriculums/course content in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees with regard to a clear expectation of teacher requirements to include strong interpersonal skills with a desire to build positive relationships with students and parents. This should be incorporated into practical development and assessment. | **Finding 3 – Teacher training**<br>It may be desirable to expand the input that the Department of Education has into the scope of teacher training in Western Australia. | • Public schools contribute to pre-service teacher education by supporting the placement of pre-service teachers in schools. Being included in a school community is an important way in which our future teachers can learn about the significance of positive school community relationships.  
• The Department’s Graduate Teacher Induction Program provides a range of support for early career teachers to transition from university to being classroom-ready and beyond.  
• The professional learning component of the Graduate Teacher Induction Program has a focus on building positive relationships with students, parents and colleagues.  
• The In-Class Coaching Program supports graduate teachers to consider strategies for building effective relationships with students, colleagues and parents. | • The Department will include the review of current teacher training and course content in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in discussions with universities. |
| **Recommendation 7**<br>Governing authorities and other parent program providers support schools in accessing information for parents and guardians on how to support their children in their learning, such as the Australian Government’s Student Wellbeing Hub website. | **Finding 4 – The role of parents**<br>The role played by parents in enhancing student engagement is vital. | • The Department supports schools in accessing information for parents and caregivers about a range of issues, including how to support children in their learning, through links and resources available on the Department website and Connect communities.  
• Schools and parents access new information from the Department’s website, and schools are alerted to new information through regular internal communications, highlighting links to relevant resources and information, including resources on the Student Wellbeing Hub.  
• The Department provides the Positive Parenting Program professional learning for parents, which assists them to raise healthy, well-adjusted children, who have the skills and confidence they need to succeed at school. In 2018, a Stay Positive Campaign is being implemented. The target audience is all parents of kindergarten children. This campaign offers all parents and carers in Western Australia the opportunity to attend Seminar One: The Power of Positive Parenting. | • The Department will continue to promote the Australian Government’s Student Wellbeing Hub to schools and will promote the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework when it is launched in Term 4, 2018. |
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<td>- The Department supports provision of information to parents via its website, and targeted initiatives, such as Child and Parent Centres, KindiLink, and collaborative relationships with initiatives that offer parent information, advice and support regarding a range of issues e.g. such as the beyondblue National Education Initiative (commencing 1 November 2018).</td>
<td>- Specific NSOS data from 2016 and 2018 may be of use to schools to gauge levels of, and improvement in, some aspects of communication with students and parents.</td>
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| Recommendation 8 | Finding 4 – The role of parents: The role played by parents in enhancing student engagement is vital. | - The Department’s policy framework calls for schools to implement accountability and reporting requirements, including the Delivery and Performance Agreement and the Funding Agreement for Schools to ensure that the needs of students are met within the local context.  
- The Teaching, Assessing and Reporting Policy and Procedures set out the requirements for all schools in Western Australia as determined by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority.  
- The Department’s Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting policy outlines the minimum assessment and reporting requirements for all public schools and aligns to the Authority’s policy and procedures.  
- All schools have assessment and reporting plans that respond to local context and student needs in meeting the requirements of the two relevant policies.  
- Teachers, students and parents are able to communicate through Connect Classes.  
- Specific items in the biennial parent and student NSOS can provide insights for schools in relation to communication with students and parents. | - Following analysis of 2018 data the Department will consider its ongoing commitment to NSOS, including the extent to which NSOS results could be used to monitor reporting to, and communication with, students and parents.  
- The Department’s Focus 2019: Directions for Schools requires that school planning is informed through capturing the views of students and facilitating involvement where appropriate. |
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| **Recommendation 9** Federal and State Ministers for Education review the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians with regard to ensuring the relevance of curriculum and other aspects of education meet the contemporary needs of students. | **Finding 5 – The Melbourne Declaration** It would be timely to review the Melbourne Declaration and the Commissioner’s Consultation and Report might play a part in informing this review. | • The Department’s Strategic Plan *High Performance – High Care, Directions for Schools* and *Focus 2018* outlines the importance of teacher quality and responds to the contemporary needs of students.  
• STEM education is attracting national and international attention. The former Chief Scientist of Australia, Professor Ian Chubb’s report *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics: Australia’s Future*, highlighted the need for a coordinated approach to STEM education to tackle Australia’s STEM skills shortage. The Department’s Statewide Services STEM Support Plan outlines the support for STEM education in Western Australian public schools, which aligns to the Education Council’s National *STEM School Education Strategy 2016–2026*. This work is focused on supporting students to develop the future-focused skill set that current research indicates is essential in the rapidly-changing workforce.  
• Young people in Years 11 and 12 have a range of alternative education and training options that include school, apprenticeships and traineeships, being in full-time employment, training or higher education or a combination of all of these. These options must combine to be full-time and young people are supported to access the most relevant options that meet their needs and aspirations.  
• Teachers and schools continue to be supported to implement the Western Australian Curriculum, Technologies through professional learning opportunities such as *Teachers Can Code* and *Leading Change: Digital Technologies*.  
• All Western Australian public schools with primary-aged students have received a Digital Technologies resource kit, including materials to support teaching and learning activities that support student engagement in coding. Schools also have access to online resources and professional learning communities.  
• The Department’s Innovation Partnerships Schools initiative supports schools to engage with innovative new practices in order to understand and better meet the learning needs of young people. | • The Department will implement a program for low socio-economic schools to build student interest, aspiration and capability in STEM.  
• Teachers and schools identified as having a strong STEM culture will be engaged to mentor others.  
• Students in Years 10, 11 and 12 will be provided with information regarding VET pathways and career prospects.  
• Teachers and schools will be supported to provide deliberate opportunities through the Western Australian Curriculum for students to develop general capabilities of critical thinking, creativity and entrepreneurship, including through STEM.  
• Delivery of VET qualifications by schools will provide pathways that connect to further training, higher education and employment. |
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|  |  | • As part of a broad, general secondary education provided by public schools in Western Australia, students in Years 10, 11 and 12 have access to vocational education and training (VET) qualifications which contribute to the development of the generic competencies that young people will need for their future.  
• It is timely to revisit the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008). Its predecessors, the Adelaide Declaration (1999) and the Hobart Declaration (1989), each had lifespans of around 10 years. The educational landscape has changed significantly over the last 10 years and more contemporary approaches that target existing issues and needs may be required. | • Schools will be provided with resources to support VET course selection aligned with future employment, training and higher education opportunities. |
| Recommendation 10  
Governing authorities review the mechanisms for monitoring the provision of support to students who require assistance to complete their school work and develop strategies to ensure that such assistance is provided. NSOS data or other such mechanisms be used to monitor and report on this.  
**Finding 1** – The value of speaking directly to students  
There appears to be merit in the Commissioner’s recommendation that better use be made of data collected through the ‘National School Opinion Survey’ (NSOS) by the Department of Education, by other relevant governing bodies, and by schools.  
• Public schools have access to a range of specialist services, including specialist consulting teachers and school psychologists.  
• The School Psychology Service provides advice and support to schools, students and families about a broad range of issues that affect engagement in education and helps direct support and assistance from a range of agencies and services both within and outside the Department.  
• Upon request, schools have access to specialist support for complex cases through the Schools of Special Educational Needs: Behaviour and Engagement, Disability, Sensory and Medical and Mental Health.  
• The School of Special Educational Needs: Disability supports schools to build the capacity of their teachers to deliver effective classroom programs. Consulting teachers assist schools, upon request, to provide teaching and learning adjustments through whole-school consultation, targeted professional learning and intensive services to students through their classroom teacher.  
• Through the student-centred funding model, the Department is committed to ensuring that schools are resourced in a way that enables them to meet the needs of all students. Disability funding is provided to schools to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability and additional needs. Disability funding has two components, the Individual Disability Allocation and the Educational Adjustment funding. Principals have the flexibility to determine how this funding is used to best meet the needs of their students.  
• Workshops will be available to teachers on effective instruction for students with specific learning disorders.  
• A web-based resource is being built for schools to assist students with complex learning needs associated with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).  
• Functional needs assessment tools for students with disability will be validated and piloted.  
• An allocation of the educational adjustment based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) will be designed and trialled. |
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- Schools are supported to meet the educational needs of students with disability through a range of professional learning.
- The School Psychology Service and the Schools of Special Educational Needs provide assessment and tailored support for students and their schools where sensory, disability, medical and mental health or behaviour and engagement difficulties have been identified.
- All public schools receive additional funding and/or support for students with identified conditions that present a significant barrier to learning.
- The School Psychology Service provides advice and support to schools, students and families on a broad range of issues that affect engagement in education and helps direct support and assistance from a range of agencies and services both within and outside the Department. Outcomes are monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Every public school has access to a school psychologist who work at the three tiers of intervention providing universal, targeted and individual support, encouraging student voice at all levels.
- Department staff have access to ongoing professional learning and information about evidence-based practice. This includes information and skills related to identification of barriers to learning.
- The Department welcomes information from the School and Learning Consultation research project, which will greatly assist in directing ongoing work to improve the effectiveness of identifying and supporting students experiencing difficulties.
- Specific items in the biennial NSOS can provide insights for schools in relation to student support.

- Specific NSOS data from 2016 and 2018 may be of use to schools to gauge satisfaction with some aspects of student support.
- Following analysis of 2018 data the Department will consider its ongoing commitment to NSOS, including the extent to which NSOS results could be used to monitor and report on some aspects of student support.
- The Department’s Focus 2019: Directions for Schools requires that school planning is informed through capturing the views of students and facilitating involvement where appropriate.
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| Governing authorities review and report on the resourcing, support and ongoing monitoring of the implementation of child safe policy and practice, and positive behaviour management across all schools in WA. | Hearing children talk in their own words about feeling safe at school provides invaluable feedback about ways in which schools and education providers need to respond to the challenge of providing a safe schooling environment. | • The Department’s Student Behaviour policy came into effect at the beginning of the 2016 school year.  
• The policy states, ‘Department of Education schools provide every student with the educational support the student needs to learn and maintain positive behaviour’.  
• Principals must, in accordance with the Student Behaviour procedures:  
  – document a whole-school plan to support positive student behaviour;  
  – implement the documented whole-school plan to support positive student behaviour; and  
  – provide individual student behaviour support where the need is identified.  
• The School of Special Educational Needs: Behaviour and Engagement (SSEN:BE) is a service to schools providing professional, consultative and intensive student support to assist schools implement the policy. Schools can request assistance directly to SSEN:BE.  
• SSEN:BE has conducted two investigations, one designed to learn more about what works when students require intensive support and another to learn what works to engage students at risk of disengagement or disaffection with school. Both these investigations used ethnographic research methodology and subsequent facilitated co-design workshops with key stakeholders and schools which facilitated application of knowledge gained from the research.  
• In December 2018, the Minister for Education released WA’s first action plan to help schools prevent and manage intentionally violent behaviour and incidents. The plan provides 10 broad actions to help guide schools, families and communities to work together to address the complex societal issue.  
• Development of the plan involved consultation with stakeholders from across the community about effective ways to bring about change.  
• New rules for students who intentionally instigate violence begin in the 2019 school year, including automatic suspension. Principals will | • The Department will continue to participate in the Australian Government Bullying and Cyberbullying Senior Officials Working Group.  
• A representative from the Department will attend the New South Wales Anti-Bullying Conference in late October 2018.  
• Student voice was promoted in WA public schools on the 2018 NDA with the theme ‘Imagine a world free from bullying’. It is expected that the 2019 NDA theme will progress this theme into ‘actions’, with a further increase in school numbers and student voice.  
• The Department’s Focus 2019: Directions for Schools requires the Department to publish materials and planning guides for schools to use to counter bullying.  
• The Department will continue to promote the Office of the eSafety Commissioner. |
### Recommendations from the January 2018 report
**Speaking out about school and learning**

### Findings from the September 2018 report
**Talking to the experts**

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| All schools implement the principles and practices of child safe organisations, underpinned by their own child safe policy. NSOS or other surveying of students, be used to monitor students’ reporting of safety at school on an ongoing basis. | | move to expel any student who intentionally physically attacks school staff.  
- The plan also includes better support for school staff and support programs to help change the behaviour.  
- The Department is represented on the Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Working Group which manages the *Bullying. No Way!* website. The website provides information and ideas for students, parents and teachers. On the third Friday of March each year, the SSSC Working Group promotes the National Day of Action (NDA) against bullying and violence, which is Australia’s key anti-bullying event for schools. The NDA brings school communities together to highlight their work in addressing bullying and violence.  
- The Department supports the review and recommends a co-design approach with key stakeholders and schools to further improve understanding about what promotes effective support of positive student behaviour and engagement.  
- Such a process could inform the effectiveness of professional learning programs delivered to schools to support positive behaviour and engagement, such as Positive Behaviour Supports and Classroom Management Strategies. | | | |
| **Finding 6 – Feeling safe at school**  
Hearing children talk in their own words about feeling safe at school provides invaluable feedback about ways in which schools and Education providers need to respond to the challenge of providing a safe schooling environment. | | | | |
| **Recommendation 12**  
During 2016-17 the Department’s *Child Protection* policy was revised to further develop schools as child-safe organisations consistent with the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.  
- The Department continues to developed approaches to child safe and friendly schools to support its work in promoting a culture of high care at classroom, school and system level. Findings from the Royal Commission and the work of the Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People regarding key features of child-safe organisations provided an important foundation for this work.  
- The approach emphasises four key domains, within the education sector’s scope of influence, that support the development of safe, respectful and supportive whole-school environments that are vital to | | | |
| Specific NSOS data from 2016 and 2018 may be of use to schools to gauge student perceptions of safety at school.  
Following analysis of 2018 data the Department will consider its ongoing commitment to NSOS, including the extent to which NSOS could be used to monitor student perceptions of safety at school. | | | |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finding 1 – The value of speaking directly to students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Department’s Focus 2019: Directions for Schools</strong> requires school planning to be informed through capturing the views of students and facilitating involvement where appropriate.</td>
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<td>There appears to be merit in the Commissioner’s recommendation that better use be made of data collected through the ‘National School Opinion Survey’ (NSOS) by the Department of Education, by other relevant governing bodies, and by schools.</td>
<td>student wellbeing, belonging and connection, engagement and achievement.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 13</strong></td>
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<td>• The Department will consider the extent to which NSOS or other surveying of students are appropriate and should be used to monitor students’ reporting of safety at school on an ongoing basis.</td>
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<td>Relevant governing authorities and key stakeholders work with the Commissioner for Children and Young People to review and develop a best practice model/s for implementation of social and personal support within schools.</td>
<td>• The Department will continue to develop and improve its approach to implementing principles and practices of child-safe organisations in line with findings and recommendations from the Royal Commission into institutional response to child sexual abuse and the work of the WA Commissioner for Children and Young People.</td>
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<td><strong>Finding 6 – Feeling safe at school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Specific items in the biennial NSOS can provide insights for schools in relation to perceptions of student safety.</td>
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<td>Hearing children talk in their own words about feeling safe at school provides invaluable feedback about ways in which schools and Education providers need to respond to the challenge of providing a safe schooling environment.</td>
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<td><strong>The Department’s Strategic Plan for WA Public Schools 2016–2019</strong>, includes an expectation that schools build positive, supportive relationships across the school community.</td>
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<td>• The Department supports the development of students’ personal and social capabilities through a range of evidence-based whole-school social and emotional learning programs, with training facilitated by accredited Department school psychologists.</td>
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<td>• The School Psychology Service provides advice and support to schools, students and families about a broad range of issues that affect engagement in education, including issues related to social and personal support, and helps direct support and assistance from a range of agencies and services both within and outside the Department.</td>
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<td>• The Department supports whole-school approaches to mental health and wellbeing such as KidsMatter and MindMatters that promote mental health programs.</td>
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<td>• Students are given a voice through a focus on the development of their emotional vocabulary and appropriate communication skills as part of social emotional learning.</td>
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<td>• There continues to be an increase in the number of schools implementing evidence-based social emotional learning programs.</td>
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<td>• The Department will continue to promote mental health promotion frameworks via the National</td>
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| Recommendations from the January 2018 report  
*Speaking out about school and learning* | Findings from the September 2018 report  
*Talking to the experts* | Current strategies | Future directions/ opportunities |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| **Finding 7 – Student physical and mental health**  
The voices of children and young people are particularly insightful when it comes to assessing physical and mental health, and suggest that under-diagnosis may be a significant problem amongst some groups of students. | | School environments in which all school community members are socially and personally supported and treated with care and respect.  
- The Department has worked with the Commissioner for Children and Young People on a range of initiatives and is committed to continued involvement in, and support of, the work of the Commissioner for the benefit of Western Australian students.  
- The Department will continue to work with *beyondblue* and *headspace* as *KidsMatter* and *MindMatters* transition to the new *beyondblue National Education Initiative* (commencing 1 November 2018). | Education Initiative as of 1 November 2018.  
- From 2019 the 300 schools that received 0.1 FTE of Level 3 classroom teacher time will build on programs and frameworks to support teaching and learning of the skills and understandings required to engage in respectful, supportive relationships in the school community and beyond. |
| **Recommendation 14**  
The Department of Education to commission a research project to investigate across all school sectors the apparent under-diagnosis of health conditions and its impact on students. | **Finding 7 – Student physical and mental health**  
The voices of children and young people are particularly insightful when it comes to assessing physical and mental health, and suggest that under-diagnosis may be a significant problem amongst some groups of students. | | |
| **Finding 6 – Feeling safe at school**  
Hearing children talk in their own words about feeling safe at school | | Statewide Services branches and schools value and foster collaboration with a range of Government and non-Government agencies, services and institutions in order to continuously improve early identification of health (including mental health) conditions and referral pathways for schools and their students, as well as gathering accurate data and information related to the prevalence and impact of a range of health conditions.  
- These collaborative relationships support the continuous development of skills and knowledge of the Department workforce in identifying health and mental health conditions.  
- Education plays a significant role in early detection of difficulties, in partnership with families. Schools also assist students and their families by ensuring effective processes for referral, assessment and support from both services offered within the Department and external services in health and community sectors.  
- The Department welcomes information from the School and Learning Consultation research project in directing ongoing work to improve the effectiveness of identifying and supporting students experiencing difficulties. | |
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<td><strong>Recommendation 1</strong></td>
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<td><em><strong>Accurate data and information relating to prevalence and impact of health conditions is very important for both education and health sectors in planning for provision of support to students in need.</strong></em>&lt;br&gt;<em><strong>The Department would welcome the opportunity to work with stakeholders to explore strategies for improving the accuracy and effectiveness of systems for gathering health-related information.</strong></em></td>
<td><strong>The findings of the Commissioner’s report <em>Speaking out about school and learning</em> will be considered as part of future policy reviews that pertain to students’ safety, wellbeing and engagement.</strong></td>
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| **Recommendation 2**                        |                                        | **The Department of Education’s strategic plan, establishes student health, safety, wellbeing and engagement as priorities for Western Australian public schools. The series of findings and recommendations from the Talking to the Experts report are aligned with the Department’s strategic intent.**  
**The Department of Education’s policies are designed to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all students in their learning environments. The Department’s policies also establish a framework for engaging students and providing a comprehensive school education. Individual school plans, priorities and teaching practices are informed by the Department’s policies and procedures.**  
**Policies are reviewed regularly (every three years) to ensure their scope is aligned with the Department’s strategic direction and consider contemporary approaches to meeting the needs of students.**  
**In supporting the educational and life outcomes of students, schools make local decisions regarding the implementation of strategic initiatives and policies.** | **There is clear potential for the ongoing periodic application of the survey, and for the survey results to constructively inform Department policy and practice.** |
| **Recommendation 2**                        |                                        | **Department representatives have been directly involved in progressing the development, piloting and implementation of the Commissioner’s Wellbeing Survey, which will be conducted with a stratified sample of Year 4 to Year 12 students in 2019. This has included consideration of the survey construct, items, methodology and ethical concerns. An opt out consent process has been approved by the Department to assist in maximising the response.** | **The Department of Education’s strategic plan, establishes student health, safety, wellbeing and engagement as priorities for Western Australian public schools. The series of findings and recommendations from the Talking to the Experts report are aligned with the Department’s strategic intent.**  
**The Department of Education’s policies are designed to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all students in their learning environments. The Department’s policies also establish a framework for engaging students and providing a comprehensive school education. Individual school plans, priorities and teaching practices are informed by the Department’s policies and procedures.**  
**Policies are reviewed regularly (every three years) to ensure their scope is aligned with the Department’s strategic direction and consider contemporary approaches to meeting the needs of students.**  
**In supporting the educational and life outcomes of students, schools make local decisions regarding the implementation of strategic initiatives and policies.** | **The findings of the Commissioner’s report *Speaking out about school and learning* will be considered as part of future policy reviews that pertain to students’ safety, wellbeing and engagement.** |

School provides invaluable feedback about ways in which schools and Education providers need to respond to the challenge of providing a safe schooling environment.
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<td>Speaking out about school and learning</td>
<td>Consulting to be repeated with appropriate frequency for producing useful research-based insights into the future as well as the optimal methodology and scope for this project.</td>
<td>rate and hence the overall level of representation reflected through the survey.</td>
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