



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of  
Education

Public education  
**A world of opportunities**



**DIRECTIONS FOR SCHOOLS**

# FOCUS 2018

AN INITIATIVE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S CLASSROOM FIRST STRATEGY





**“At the heart of our drive for continued improvement is the creation of a high performance and high care culture.”**

**Strategic Plan for  
WA Public Schools  
2016-2019**

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

**Focus 2018 is based on our strategic plan with its commitment to a culture of high performance and high care in each of our 800 schools across the State.**

It provides schools, Statewide Services, regions and central services with a clear direction for priority actions in public education for the year.

Success for all students, high quality teaching, effective leadership, and strong governance and support – the key areas of our strategic endeavours – are reflected in Focus 2018.

For 2018, actions for student success include improving all students' writing achievements, developing their skills in digital technologies and ensuring Year 3 students are learning a language.

Importantly, teaching quality remains a key focus. In schools where teaching improves the most, there is a high level of collegiality - staff work as a team, they see themselves as having a responsibility to support their colleagues, they share ideas and they take collective responsibility for the success of the school. There is a climate of learning and growing for both students and staff.

The development of school-specific plans to support high quality teaching and the use of the new Principal Performance Improvement Tool are actions to further drive improvement.

Implementing the new Government's policy and range of commitments in education is a key area of work across our portfolio.

I ask you to use Focus 2018 to guide your school's work for the year.

**Sharyn O'Neill**

January 2018

Front cover photo: Barbara Iffla, principal of Jolimont Primary School (2017 WA Primary School of the Year), and students.

## SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

**High expectations of success for every student in every school.**

### Schools

- Plan deliberate opportunities across the curriculum in innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial skills, building on students' STEM competencies.
- Focus on writing achievement across all years, including areas identified in NAPLAN and OLNA testing.
- Ensure each Year 3 student is learning a language and prepare for Year 4 students in 2019.
- Support students capable of achieving a C grade in an ATAR course to pursue this option, particularly in STEM subjects.
- Use additional education assistants in the early years as a part of election commitments.
- Target skills in digital technologies in the primary years to prepare for future needs.

### Statewide Services and regions

- Develop a 'pick and buy' list of Department endorsed resources to support STEM programs in schools.
- Publish advice on age-appropriate pedagogy, skills and capabilities for STEM and online resources.
- Introduce an additional five specialised programs for students with autism.
- Pilot a full service school model at Armadale Senior High School.

### Central

- Trial a new model of allocating TAFE places to increase access for students.
- Provide science laboratories and resource grants to identified primary schools as a part of election commitments.
- Provide clear direction to schools about 'prior to school' learning programs.
- Maintain centralised delivery options for Year 3 students to access languages programs including online and through SIDE.



## HIGH QUALITY TEACHING

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

### Schools

- Implement an explicit teaching methodology in every classroom.
- Build teacher understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to improve individual practice.
- Draw on evidence-based feedback — including classroom observations, student data and student surveys — to improve teacher practice.
- Strengthen performance management processes to support teachers and address underperformance.
- Tie professional learning to targeted areas for improvement identified in each teacher's performance.

### Statewide Services and regions

- Provide targeted support for improved engagement and academic performance of Aboriginal students at identified secondary schools.
- Train mental health coordinators in key school-based preventative mental health programs.
- Use Digitech Schools and Teachers Can Code to build teaching capability in coding.
- Partner with a university to introduce The Centre for Excellence in the Explicit Teaching of Literacy to increase expertise and develop resources for teachers as a part of election commitments.

### Central

- Support leadership teams to develop effective whole-school teacher feedback systems.
- Expand investment in Teach for Australia associates to provide high calibre teachers in low socio-economic schools.



## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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

### Schools

- Undertake self-reflection against the new Principal Performance Improvement Tool to make judgements about own performance and to plan for improvement.
- Take a visible and deliberate leadership role in implementing the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework across the school.
- Develop initiatives that support positive wellbeing and health for staff and students.
- Mentor those in middle leadership roles as part of a school-based talent identification and development initiative.

### Statewide Services, regions and Leadership Institute

- Establish the Leadership Institute and run leadership programs and initiatives aligned to the new leadership strategy.
- Deliver professional learning to support student health and wellbeing in schools.
- Assist schools to implement a process of self-assessment against the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework.

### Central

- Publish the new leadership strategy overview and develop priorities identified in the survey undertaken in 2017.
- Finalise with ACER the new Principal Performance Improvement Tool following a period of feedback by principals.
- Conduct the Western Australian Public School Principals' Fellowship Program.
- Continue to refine support for performance management by providing resources and guidance for specific case management.

## STRONG GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT

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

### Schools

- Implement the revised Child Protection policy, including protective behaviours curriculum.
- Participate in the new three yearly school review process to gain feedback for improvement and give confidence to the school community.
- Explore opportunities to make school facilities available to third party providers of outside school hours care as a part of election commitments.
- Develop guidelines for schools to review settings for privacy and security of sensitive information.
- Continue conducting capability assessments to prepare for the introduction of online student testing.
- Commence initial planning for implementing webSIS, supported by the project team.

### Statewide Services and regions

- Share successful models of senior school engagement programs across schools and regions.
- Strengthen support to schools to ensure more accurate and comprehensive management of student vaccination records.
- Use the Royal Commission findings to further embed a child safe and friendly culture across the system.

### Central

- Conduct an independent review of the student-centred funding model and consider changes for 2019.
- Develop and roll out a new three yearly school review process for all schools.
- Implement training for school boards and councils.
- Set up a direct to market maintenance and minor capital works model as a part of election commitments.
- Implement a new intranet across the Department.