

**MEDIA RELEASE****23 June 2021**

## Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools

Today the Speaker tabled the **Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools** performance audit report from the Auditor-General, Mr Michael Harris, in the ACT Legislative Assembly. The audit considered the effectiveness of the Education Directorate's strategies and activities to improve the quality of teaching practices in ACT public schools.

The report noted that the Education Directorate is implementing a series of activities to improve ACT public school teaching practices, which are centred on school improvement using the *National School Improvement Tool*, teacher professional learning and teaching workforce management. While there is a clear structure of performance measures and six-monthly internal reports, baseline data has not been consistently captured and used to determine the impact of initiatives to improve teaching quality.

The report identified that a comprehensive, evidence-based school improvement process is in place for ACT public schools to improve student outcomes, through the use of external reviews of schools against the *National School Improvement Tool*. Mr Harris says 'roles and responsibilities for the school improvement process are not well understood in schools and not all schools fully participate in Education Directorate's school improvement process'.

The Education Directorate does not centrally plan or monitor the distribution of experienced teachers across the ACT public school system. Principals can exclude highly experienced teachers from the annual teacher transfer round and teachers are not transferred to schools which they have not expressed a preference to teach at. Mr Harris says 'these practices limit the ability of schools to access highly experienced teachers to improve teaching quality'.

The teacher performance development process is not effective in supporting teaching quality, and does not effectively support teaching appraisals to allow feedback on classroom teaching practices. The performance management process for teaching staff is not implemented effectively.

While the Education Directorate has established a range of professional learning and other supports to improve teaching practices, the effectiveness of these programs is reduced by a lack of awareness amongst teachers and school leaders. Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms cannot demonstrate the impact of these programs across the ACT public school system.

The audit report made 14 recommendations for improvement.

Copies of Implementation of the **Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools: Report No. 06/2021** are available from the ACT Audit Office's website [www.audit.act.gov.au](http://www.audit.act.gov.au). If you need assistance accessing the report please phone 6207 0833.

# SUMMARY

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The impact teaching practices have on a student's learning outcomes outweighs the effect of every other factor outside the student's socio-economic and family background.<sup>1</sup> As such, teaching quality is acknowledged as the single most important factor influencing student performance within the control of education systems. The quality of teaching practices has cumulative and residual impacts on student outcomes. Contemporary research demonstrates that students taught by highly-effective teachers learn at twice the rate of their peers.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, studies showed that students who are taught by a succession of three high-performing teachers scored 49 percent higher on school assessments compared to students assigned to teachers with ineffective practices over a three-year period.<sup>3</sup> This performance audit examines the effectiveness of the ACT Education Directorate's strategies and activities to improve the quality of teaching practices in ACT public schools.

## Conclusions

### STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING QUALITY

The Education Directorate recognises the importance of improving teaching quality for the purpose of enhancing student performance. Since 2014, strategic planning and government-led initiatives have identified priorities to improve the quality of teaching practices across ACT public schools.

To improve its strategic planning framework, the Education Directorate has intentionally aligned its 2018-21 Strategic Plan, along with supporting implementation plans and initiatives for improving teaching quality, to the *Future of Education* strategy. Responsibility for key actions and expected timeframes within the strategic plan is assigned in Education Support Office divisional business plans.

There is a clear structure of performance measures and six-monthly internal reports to demonstrate progress against the 2018-21 Strategic Plan. However, baseline data has not been consistently captured and used in six-monthly progress reports to determine the impact of initiatives to improve teaching quality. These reports do not track progress against the full range of priority actions documented in divisional business plans, or provide a balance of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of strategies and activities to improve the quality of teaching practices at a system level.

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<sup>1</sup> Jensen, B. (2010). *Investing in our teachers, investing in our economy*. Melbourne: Grattan Institute. Page 10.

<sup>2</sup> Wiliam, D. (2009). *Teacher Quality: why it matters, and how to get more of it*. London: University of London. Page 3.

<sup>3</sup> Jordan, H., Mendro, R., & Weerasinghe, D. (1997). *Teacher effects on longitudinal student achievement*. Indianapolis IN: National Evaluation Institute.

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Education Directorate has established a comprehensive school improvement process, which provides effective support to schools to plan, deliver and evaluate activities that are intended to improve student educational outcomes, including activities to improve teaching quality. The school improvement process is evidence-based, uses international educational research, and has been designed to focus school leadership on achieving a small number of achievable and relevant priorities. This is supported by a consistently implemented approach of using multiple sources of evidence to inform the effectiveness of school teaching and learning activities. There is also an effective structure of external reviews to assess the performance of individual schools and the ACT public school system against the *National School Improvement Tool*. ACT public schools perform at a 'High' level when measured against the *National School Improvement Tool*, but there are challenges to maintain and improve this performance.

Since 2018, the Education Support Office has updated their roles and responsibilities to support schools through the school improvement process. However, the policies that support the school improvement process do not fully reflect current roles and responsibilities for the process and are not well understood across all ACT public schools. There is scope to better design the roles of Directors of School Improvement and Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers to support teaching quality across all public schools. Directors of School Improvement could be better focused to specialise in school sectors and Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers currently lack a role, responsibility and resources for school improvement. Addressing these issues may help improve the perceived benefits of these certifications and their effectiveness in improving teaching quality.

While school improvement documentation and a series of school visits are used to oversight school performance, these activities were not consistently undertaken across the ACT public schools considered as part of the audit. The Education Support Office does not formally analyse school improvement documentation to better target and improve teaching quality supports and this reduces the effectiveness of the school improvement process to improve teaching quality.

The Education Support Office has established a range of activities to oversight and support school leadership to improve teaching quality. Directors of School Improvement have an active role to support principals in improving teaching quality through school improvement, and are supported by Instructional Mentors. The Leadership Development Strategy has also been implemented with a view to school leaders leading and mentoring teachers to improve teaching practices. While these supports have assisted principals and deputy principals, school executives (School Leader C staff) spoken to as part of the audit were consistently unaware of this support. While school executives' awareness may have been affected by the interruption of the Strategy's planned activities in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this reduces the effectiveness of school leaders to lift the quality of teaching in ACT public schools.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Education Support Office has developed professional learning programs, supports and resources for ACT public school teachers and leaders to improve teaching practices. The Education Support Office organises and manages professional learning programs that are intended for use across all ACT public schools, but there is variability in teachers' and school leaders' awareness of the programs. This reduces the effectiveness of the programs to improve teaching quality. Where programs are accredited with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute and teachers make use of them, there is evidence that the programs help improve teaching practice at the school level. However, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the programs are still maturing and there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate the programs are having a system-level impact on teaching quality in ACT public schools.

Professional learning communities are a mandated professional development practice in ACT public schools. They involve school leaders and teachers collaborating to address the immediate educational needs of their students. The Education Directorate has implemented the 'Spiral of Inquiry' and 'Multiple Sources of Evidence' research-based better practice approaches to guide ACT public school teachers and leaders' engagement in professional learning communities. However, schools considered as part of the audit did not consistently use these supports. There is a need for more support for all schools to implement these approaches in their professional learning communities. Annual professional learning programs required by the *Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022* were not consistently implemented in the schools considered as part of the audit or used to focus professional learning communities on improving student educational outcomes through improved teaching quality. Consistent and reliable implementation of professional learning communities could help to establish their role as the primary accountability mechanism for improving student outcomes at the school level.

The ACT Teacher Quality Institute receives rich data on ACT public school teachers and leader professional learning activities. However, the Education Directorate has not sought advice from the ACT Teacher Quality Institute or requested data for the purpose of holistically monitoring or evaluating the impact of teacher professional learning programs on improving the quality of teaching practices. This impairs the Education Support Office's efforts to plan and deliver professional learning to improve teaching quality.

The New Educator Support Program is a recognised support under the *Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022* for developing new teachers in the first three years of their career. Provisions include a five-day central induction, reduced face-to-face teaching hours and six days of classroom release to facilitate professional learning activities. However, these supports are not implemented in a way that is accessible for all New Educators. The *New Educator Support Guidelines* and the *New Educator Support Plan* provide a framework for implementation, but there is a lack of clarity associated with common expectations for New Educators' development throughout the three years of the New Educator Support Program. Furthermore, the Education Directorate does not have sufficient data or mechanisms to evaluate the efficiency or effectiveness

of the New Educator Support Program, or whether New Educators are reliably accessing their enterprise agreement entitlements.

### TEACHING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

The management of the teaching workforce is an important determinant in achieving teaching quality across all ACT public schools. The *Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022* includes a structure that recognises the importance of teacher experience. The Education Directorate has assigned roles and responsibilities to classroom teachers at the top of this structure at the ‘Experienced Teacher 2’ level to mentor New Educators and contribute to improving student educational outcomes. Principals are also assigned responsibilities to manage the school teaching workforce to improve student outcomes. However, the Education Directorate does not centrally plan or monitor the distribution of experienced teachers to determine if New Educators and schools have equitable access to them. Principals can exclude highly experienced teachers from the annual teacher transfer round, and teachers are not transferred to schools which they have not expressed a preference to teach at through this process. These practices limit the ability of schools to access highly experienced teachers to improve teaching quality.

The teacher performance development process is not effective in supporting teaching quality. While it refers to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, it does allow teachers to demonstrate their compliance with mandatory professional learning processes under the *ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act (2010)*. The Education Directorate also cannot use the process to plan, deliver or evaluate the effectiveness of supports to improve teaching quality across all ACT public schools as it is a manual process managed at the school level. The performance development process does not effectively support teacher appraisals which was regularly reflected as a highly valued support to improve practice by teachers who contributed to the audit. Schools develop their own ways to encourage these activities which are variable in quality and effectiveness.

The performance management process under the *Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022* is not implemented effectively in ACT public schools. The Education Directorate advised that one teacher had been managed through these processes in the 2019-20 financial year. However, this is not likely to reflect the true level of underperformance in ACT public schools. The Education Directorate does not have an informed understanding of the true level of teacher underperformance.

## Key findings

### STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING QUALITY

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In April 2016, the Education Directorate released key documents that were intended to support improved educational practices: *Great Teachers by Design* and *Great Teaching by Design*. Executives and school leaders involved in the audit advised that the frameworks were primarily ‘guiding documents’ and, as such, lacked clearly identifiable objectives, outcomes and measurable indicators of success. The *Great*

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*Teachers by Design* and *Great Teaching by Design* frameworks were not supported by implementation plan(s), nor was there centralised support for their implementation from the Education Support Office. Nevertheless, many of the initiatives and key actions detailed in the *Great Teachers by Design* and *Great Teaching by Design* frameworks have been a foundation for, and contributed to, the development of the *Future of Education* strategy and subsequent initiatives.

The Education Directorate's 2014-17 Strategic Plan, *Education Capital: Leading the Nation* identified an 'ambitious agenda' to: increase the number of high performing students; reduce the number of students who are not achieving; increase the number of children who benefit from early childhood education and care; and increase qualification levels of the ACT community. Despite the 2014-17 Strategic Plan being implemented prior to the release of the *Great Teachers by Design* and *Great Teaching by Design* frameworks in May 2016, no effort was made to draw the linkages and alignment between the 2014-17 Strategic Plan and the activities identified within the two strategies. The 2014-17 Strategic Plan set out five priorities for the Education Directorate, each of which was accompanied by three or four key strategies. The key strategies that were identified to achieve the outcomes of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan were not specific or measurable. A 2017 strategic planning taskforce convened by the Education Directorate concluded that the plan was developed with little consultation, included unclear measures and failed to prioritise the actions that mattered most to improving student outcomes. The taskforce also found that the Education Directorate did not adequately monitor or report against the 2014-17 Strategic Plan priorities to ascertain their impact on student performance.

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The *Future of Education; An ACT education strategy for the next ten years* was released in 2018. The strategy 'outlines the plan for education in the ACT for the next decade'. The first phase of the *Future of Education* strategy was supported by an implementation plan that identified six priorities for improving the ACT public education system and 68 commitments for the Education Directorate to implement. The planned activities detailed in the first phase implementation plan are comprised of tangible programs, supports or strategic planning tasks. Priority 3 of the first phase of the *Future of Education* has a focus on supporting teaching quality, and includes a range of supports focused on developing early career teachers, improving teaching quality through school and system-level support, and developing school leaders. Priority 2 and Priority 6 also include initiatives intended to improve teaching quality. The Education Directorate published an evaluation of Phase One of the *Future of Education* in June 2021, and reported 63 of its 68 commitments had been established or completed. The Education Directorate reported that five commitments had been delayed due to the redirection of resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the completion of the first phase of the *Future of Education* in 2020, the second phase implementation plan is yet to be published by the Education Directorate.

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To support the implementation of the commitments in the *Future of Education*, the Education Directorate has developed a series of cascading strategic planning documents. These include the *Education Directorate 2018-21 Strategic Plan* and divisional and branch business plans. The 2018-21 Strategic Plan identifies five strategic goals, each of which is supported by priority actions and between five to

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seven indicators of success. The indicators are typically specific and measurable as they focus on increasing an observable performance measure of the ACT public school system, but they are not supported by identifiable or quantifiable targets. The priority actions identified in the 2018-21 Strategic Plan are assigned to the Education Directorate’s divisions and branches through annual business planning processes. There is a clear structure of allocating priority actions to divisions with timeframes identified for each activity.

Progress in implementing the 2018-21 Strategic Plan actions is reported through a biannual reporting framework of six-monthly review reports. At the time of audit reporting, three of these reports had been produced; April 2019, November 2019 and August 2020. The structure of identifying priority actions, specific indicators of success and a framework for reporting progress represents a positive improvement on the structure of reporting under the 2014-2017 strategic planning activities for the directorate. The reporting framework identifies a clear alignment between the *Future of Education* and the 2018-21 Strategic Plan. However, the six-monthly reporting process is hampered by a lack of baseline data through which progress against the indicators should be measured. The reports provide progress updates in narrative form against the priority actions along with case study examples for particular areas of success. While this gives some qualitative evidence of progress, the reports produced to date have had a predominant focus on ‘success stories’. They do not consistently and explicitly explore: challenges in implementing priority actions; potential improvements to the indicators of success; and what needs to be done or modified to improve performance. The progress reports have also been inconsistent in their consideration of priority actions and indicators of success. These have not been consistently considered and addressed in each report in a way that provides a clear indication of the Education Directorate’s progress and performance over time.

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**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

Paragraph

The *National School Improvement Tool* was designed by the Australian Council of Educational Research in 2012; its purpose is to support Australian schools’ improvement activities by documenting the practices displayed by highly performing schools in the form of benchmarks. The *National School Improvement Tool* and its associated performance domains form the basis of the Education Directorate’s integrated school improvement process, which includes a series of cyclical activities: school reviews; school improvement plans; actional plans; school improvement visits; and impact reports. Guidance on the use and application of the *National School Improvement Tool* is outlined in the *People, Practice and Performance* framework (2016) and the *Evidence and Data Plan for School Improvement* (2019).

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The *People, Practice and Performance* framework was re-endorsed by the Education Directorate in 2018 as the cornerstone for school improvement activities and it has continued to positively influence the school improvement process. However, the framework was not reviewed or updated before its re-endorsement. While the core features of the school improvement process remain relevant in the framework, some of the principles and assumptions behind the framework have since been superseded by newer developments. This includes new school improvement roles of Directors of School Improvement and Instructional Mentors, as well as school

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improvement priorities outlined in the *Future of Education*. The *Evidence and Data Plan* does not refer to, or otherwise acknowledge, the roles and responsibilities of Instructional Mentors or Education Support Office teams that assist schools in improving teaching quality. Similarly, the plan does not satisfactorily explain the purpose and intended outcomes of school improvement visits in the school improvement process. The exclusion of this information in the *Evidence and Data Plan* combined with the outdated information in the *People, Practice and Performance* framework presents a risk that Education Directorate policies designed to enhance school improvement in ACT public schools may lead to confusion and misunderstanding with respect to the Education Directorate's school improvement processes.

Under the *National School Improvement Tool*, the school review is the primary evaluation tool for examining the effectiveness of the planning and management of individual school resources for the purpose of improving student outcomes. Undertaken in the fifth year of a school's improvement cycle, school reviews use the *National School Improvement Tool* as the framework for assessing a school's progress towards directorate and school priorities, including an assessment of the quality of teaching practices displayed. Five of the six schools considered as part of the audit had undertaken a school review under the current integrated school improvement processes. All reviews included specific and actionable recommendations for schools to implement as part of their next five-yearly school improvement plan, and were made available on the school's website. There is evidence that the schools considered the recommendations when designing their next school improvement plan and sought to address the issues in a small number of high-level priorities for the following five years. There is also evidence that the school review recommendations were then also specifically addressed in subsequent annual action plans.

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On the basis of the school reviews that are conducted each year, the Australian Council for Educational Research provides the Education Directorate with a *System School Review Report*. The *System School Review Report* summarises the strengths and areas for improvement for the ACT public schools that had undergone the school review process that year. There is evidence of the Education Directorate responding to *System Review Reports* since 2016 with actions targeted at improving teaching quality against ACT public schools across some recommendations in these reports. Since 2019, the Education Directorate's responses to *System School Review Reports* have improved in how they address the Australian Council for Education Research's recommendations for system-level improvement. Actions have been attributed to Education Support Office branches to progress and monitor throughout their implementation. However, the Education Directorate's responses to the *System School Review Reports* have not included reference to how prior year recommendations have been implemented. The Directorate's response to the 2020 report includes similar or identical actions to those identified in its response to the 2019 report; the details of any progress made or any challenges or delays to the implementation of the actions is not explicitly addressed or acknowledged in the documentation. While the reports are necessarily focused on historical performance in improving student educational outcomes and improvements across the system might take some years to be observed, there is an opportunity to better reflect and recognise progress that may be being made.

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School improvement plans seek to document the direction and priorities for a school in the form of improvement goals over a five-year period. They are developed initially after the completion of a school review and are informed by the performance information obtained from the school's assessment against the *National School Improvement Tool* as well as other school performance and demographics data. Four of the six schools considered as part of the audit had developed, and were implementing, school improvement plans (the remaining schools had school strategic plans due to the timing of previous external reviews). School improvement plans had a common structure and, as expected, had a sharper focus on a small number of improvement priorities. All plans included measures to track the achievement of school improvement priorities.

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A school's action plan is the delivery mechanism for achieving the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. They should be developed annually and seek to document the resources, time and processes that are to be used to achieve improvement goals. Only two of the six schools considered as part of audit published action plans in 2019 and only three of these six schools published action plans for 2020. By not publishing annual action plans as required by the school improvement process, schools lack transparency and accountability for actions designed to progress school improvement plan priorities. For those annual action plans that were completed in the three schools, it is apparent that school leadership teams are largely identifying activities to address their school's improvement priorities in isolation of the Education Support Office supports available to ACT public schools. Supports available from the Education Support Office such as Instructional Mentors, coaching and leadership support for implementing professional learning communities, and universally available professional learning programs are not consistently identified in annual action plans to achieve school improvement plan priorities in ACT public schools. Guidance provided to all schools in completing their action plans does not prompt them to consider the appropriateness of these supports in achieving their improvement priorities.

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School improvement visits are a monitoring mechanism that are intended to provide differentiated support and feedback to schools on their progress towards priorities identified in their school improvement plan. Education Directorate guidelines specify that all ACT public schools should participate in at least one visit annually. For the six schools considered as part of the audit, there was evidence of six school improvement visits conducted between 2018 and 2020 in five of the six schools.

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A feature of the Education Directorate's school improvement process is incorporating the development of the school principal's performance and development plan, and the associated review processes, as part of the improvement monitoring activities for the school. This recognises the important contribution that principals make in developing and sustaining a school culture that supports teaching quality. The principal's performance and development plan, which is developed in conjunction with a school's annual improvement documentation, is another means by which Directors of School Improvement and principals consider the school's progress in achieving its improvement targets. The priorities and activities contained in the performance and development plans for the principals of the six schools considered as part of the audit aligned with their school's improvement plan and the

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Education Directorate 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Principals' adherence to the requirements of the *Principal Performance and Development Guidelines* was largely consistent in the documentation reviewed. Mid-cycle and end-cycle reviews demonstrated principals' efforts to deliver on their plan's targets through tangible, measurable and evidence-based activities.

Impact reports are developed at the end of the school year and are intended to demonstrate a school's progress against its annual action plan. They are designed to monitor and evaluate how the school has contributed to the strategic priorities of the directorate, delivered on its improvement agenda through progress towards its school improvement plan priorities and determined the impact of these actions on student outcomes. The impact reports of the six schools considered as part of the audit showed there was a focus in these reports on improving student performance through improved quality teaching practices. Each school had designed and implemented various actions to achieve this goal ranging from the establishment of staff coaching and mentoring programs, to the introduction of student feedback tools, as well as the use of evidence-based professional learning communities to perform active research projects to identify effective pedagogical practices. However, impact reports do not provide consistent feedback on system-wide supports for school improvement that can be turned into actionable information to assess impact and areas for improvement. The current process for schools to complete impact reports does not provide a clear prompt to schools to give feedback on the appropriateness and quality of system-wide supports. While the Education Support Office examines impact reports for this purpose, this process is not formalised.

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The Education Support Office has implemented a range of supports that are designed to assist in the implementation of school improvement activities. These include: Directors of School Improvement, the School Planning and Review Unit and Instructional Mentors. Through their supervisory responsibility over principals, Directors of School Improvement are the link between ACT public schools and the Education Support Office. The four Directors are each responsible for a geographically-based school network and they directly supervise principals and provide support to school leaders through the different stages of the school improvement process. This model, which is intended to facilitate networking, communication and sharing of practice, provides a network of approximately 20 schools that are mostly within a small distance of each other. Principals valued the support and collaboration of peers provided by this structure. The effectiveness of the Directors of School Improvement has been improved with the establishment of the School Operations Unit to handle critical incidents at schools which historically were the responsibility of Directors of School Improvement. However, there are risks in the complexity of this role that may challenge its effectiveness. There may also be opportunities to focus each Director of School Improvement on particular educational settings, rather than on a geographically clustered set of schools to expand on the intent of meeting individual school needs to better align supports with the intent of the *Future of Education*.

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The School Planning and Review Unit has also assisted with focusing school improvement activities on measurable and achievable priorities at schools. In recent years, the School Planning and Review Unit has assisted schools in focusing on more

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specific and achievable improvement goals; this was evident in the school improvement plans considered as part of the audit. Instructional Mentors have also assisted with engaging with school leaders to strengthen the adoption of professional learning communities under the 'Spiral of Inquiry' model across the ACT public school system and developing school leader expertise in coaching and mentoring as part of the Education Directorate's initiative aimed at enhancing leadership capabilities across all levels. A key challenge in the use of the Instructional Mentors has been high turnover in the roles. Three years into the program, school leaders across ACT public schools also remain largely unaware of the role of Instructional Mentors or confused regarding the support role they provide.

In 2018 the Education Directorate committed \$5.4 million to a three-year Leadership Development Strategy; the *Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Program*. A series of professional learning supports have been designed to support principals and school leaders through the Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan, including professional learning for all principals (which has an aspect that focuses on new principals), developing finance, human resources and business skills, an annual leadership symposium and a biennial leadership conference. This is being supported with a principal and deputy principal coaching and mentoring program that involves experienced and retired principals providing support to upskill principals and deputy principals in leadership practice. Feedback data from attendees shows that the Leadership Development Strategy has contributed to some shifts in leadership practice that facilitate improved quality teaching practices in ACT public schools. Notably, there is a significant increase in the perceptions of the quality of support from Education Support Office through these activities. 3.100

Through focus group discussions with school executives (School Leader C staff) it was apparent that most executives were not aware of the supports under the Leadership Development Strategy, with only two of six groups of School Leaders referencing the professional learning supports within the strategy. While the Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan has an aspect that specifically focuses on new principals there is no similar approach for new school executives (School Leader C staff). While there are supports available to all school leaders, and some of the key activities under the Strategy that were planned for commencement in 2020 were interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a significant cohort of over 400 staff. This cohort of school executives is expected to have a significant impact on improving student outcomes through leading classroom teachers. 3.101

National certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers was established by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership in 2012 as a method of formally recognising exemplary teachers who demonstrate quality teaching practices and leadership in schools. The *Future of Education* sought to 'work towards ensuring a highly accomplished and lead teacher is in every school' by the end of its first phase in 2020. At this time, 32.9 percent of ACT public schools had at least one school leader or teacher on staff with the Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher certification. The Education Directorate established a professional learning community to create a networking and sharing space for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers, but its implementation was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 3.112

Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in ACT public schools do not have defined roles or responsibilities beyond that of their classroom teacher band. The *2018-2021 Education and Training Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement* states 'teachers who achieve certification at the higher career stages of the Standards will be encouraged to take up leadership roles in modelling exemplary teaching practice and in building capacity for excellent teaching within schools and across the system'. No further guidance is provided as to what these leadership roles are expected to achieve, and no resourcing is identified (including classroom release time) to achieve these expectations.

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School leaders, including qualified ACT Teacher Quality Institute assessors, as well as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers advised during focus group discussions that they are used variably in ACT public schools and their impact was limited by a lack of resources and time. There was a lack of interest from teachers and school leaders interviewed as part of this audit in obtaining the Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher certification. Teachers and school leaders perceived the cost of obtaining the certification, the workload associated with obtaining the certification and the lack of perceived benefits from having the certification as the major disincentives in pursuing the accreditation. Furthermore, the teachers and school leaders interviewed as part of the audit questioned Education Directorate's use of teachers with this certification, advising that it does not necessarily lead to promotional or enhanced career opportunities.

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## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Since 2018 the Education Support Office has been taking an increasing role in the development and implementation of professional learning programs and resources that are made available across all ACT public schools. The programs aim to address system-wide needs that have been identified in previous reviews or through school improvement activities. The key programs that have been established since this time are: the Cultural Integrity Program; the Academy of Future Skills; the Affiliated Schools Program; the Early Years Literacy Initiative; the Digital Solutions Program; Positive Behaviours for Learning; and Enabling Pedagogies. These programs have established some useful practices to improve teaching quality in schools. Three of the seven programs are fully accredited with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute and two are partially accredited.

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The most consistently valued programs by teachers were programs that included resources that could be used in classes and used coaches or mentors to support teachers to improve their practice. While programs such as Positive Behaviours for Learning and Cultural Integrity had a high level of teacher awareness and satisfaction, teachers were less aware of newer programs such as the Affiliated Schools Program, the Academy of Future Skills and Enabling Pedagogies. Professional learning resources are being increasingly made available through the Education Directorate's Service Portal, but there is a low level of awareness of this resource.

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The *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022* requires principals to develop an annual professional learning program for their school leaders and teaching staff. The annual program is required to

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integrate professional learning community programs and school-led professional learning activities. None of the six schools who participated in the audit could provide evidence demonstrating they had consistently implemented annual professional learning programs for each year between 2014 and 2020 as required by the two most recent enterprise agreements.

A review of the schools' professional learning programs showed there was variability in the quality and comprehensiveness of the programs and their implementation. Two of the five schools' programs did not reference the school's professional learning community and three schools could not demonstrate that the activities in their program had been completed as planned. The enterprise agreement requirement of principals to develop an annual professional learning program is not integrated into the school improvement process. As a result, schools are not effectively using their mandatory annual professional learning programs under the enterprise agreement to demonstrate how professional learning is contributing to progress towards school improvement priorities.

Professional learning communities are a method of school improvement where groups of teachers meet regularly to work in a structured and collaborative process to improve student outcomes. ACT public school teachers and school leaders' participation in professional learning communities is a requirement of the *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022*. All six ACT public schools considered as part of the audit had implemented professional learning communities, which focused on improving student outcomes. Documents from schools showed that themes explored in professional learning communities are derived from each school's improvement priorities outlined in its school improvement plan. However, a review of planning documentation for professional learning communities and their presentations reflecting the findings or impact the process has had on student outcomes, as well as discussions with school focus groups showed there was wide variability in the quality and rigour of professional learning communities across ACT public schools.

Experienced teaching staff who participated in the audit commonly voiced a frustration that the professional learning community model is not facilitated by the Education Directorate to take place across networks of schools. This was particularly noticeable in high schools and colleges where one teacher in the whole school may be responsible for a school subject, and was not able to easily collaborate with other like teachers. Evaluation mechanisms of professional learning community impact were highly variable across all settings as no formal requirement or guidance is provided by the Education Support Office. Two schools had designed their own evaluation mechanisms to guide improvement in professional learning community processes and ensure staff feedback informed future processes. Directors of School Improvement had designed a simple assessment tool based on their observations of effective professional learning communities in ACT public schools. This tool gave sound examples of what effective professional learning communities looked like. However, schools were not aware of this tool or other resources to identify how they could improve the effectiveness of their professional learning communities.

All teachers in public schools must be registered with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute and complete 20 hours of professional development annually. Teachers are

also required to record their professional development with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute through a dedicated online learning portal. Data associated with ACT public school teachers' professional development has been captured for over ten years since the establishment of the ACT Teacher Quality Institute, but the Education Directorate does not have access to a consolidated view of this data to:

- identify trends in teacher professional learning; or
- help inform how professional learning impacts on student outcomes.

The Education Directorate does receive data on ACT Teacher Quality Institute accredited programs it runs on an activity-by-activity basis and this can help inform the development of individual programs and give feedback on the quality of each accredited professional learning activity. However, there is no consolidated view of data for all programs that allows the Education Directorate to more broadly monitor the quality of its professional learning programs across ACT public schools, or their impact on student educational outcomes.

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Some schools have attempted to receive recognition for their teachers in completing school-led professional development; two of the six school leadership teams advised that they sought to have activities during the two days prior to the commencement of the school year recognised as accredited learning, but reflected this was an onerous process. Furthermore, not all professional learning programs implemented by the Education Support Office were recognised as accredited learning with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute. For example, mentoring activities under the Affiliated Schools Program were not recognised as accredited professional learning. Similarly, three of eight of the professional learning programs associated with the Positive Behaviours for Learning Program are not accredited for registration purposes with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute. While this does not mean that the programs are of lesser value and teachers can record their participation as teacher-identified professional learning for registration purposes, there is a missed opportunity for the Education Directorate to receive specific and targeted feedback from teachers through professional learning evaluations, which would be the case if the program was registered with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute.

4.69

Analysis of school expenditure data for the six schools participating in this audit showed that there was substantial variation in the amount spent by schools on fee for service professional learning. The amount spent on fee for service professional learning varied between \$733 and \$1,409 per full-time equivalent teacher or school leader. A number of school principals consulted as part of the audit, as well as some industry peak bodies advised that the funds provided to schools to support fee for service professional learning was insufficient to meet the needs of teachers. Principals advised that they used more than their notional allocation to allow staff to pursue professional learning opportunities. The Education Support Office has recognised these issues and has sought to provide the new universally offered programs across all ACT public schools in order to provide scale, with the expectation that school professional learning activities could focus on professional learning communities, and meeting specific needs of individual teachers that could not be fully addressed through these programs. An evaluation of the first phase of the *Future of Education* reported teachers' perception of the Education Directorate's commitment to professional learning. It noted 79 percent of teachers reporting

4.78

strong and consistent support for professional learning in 2018, which declined slightly to 76 percent in 2020.

Graduate teachers are considered 'New Educators' for their first three years in ACT public schools. The Education Directorate has demonstrated its commitment to the development of New Educators in the *ACT Public Sector Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022* through the New Educator Support Program, which comprises a range of supports such as: a five-day centralised induction prior to the commencement of the school year; reduced face-to-face teaching hours to facilitate support and mentoring; six New Educator Support Days to be used to facilitate professional learning and development; and the provision of coaching and mentorship from experienced teaching colleagues. These supports and high level suggestions for New Educator development activities for schools to provide are documented in the *New Educator Support Guidelines* (March 2020). A template plan is also provided for schools to agree development activities with their New Educators. Schools also have an accountability to apply these entitlements through the annual completion of a *School Annual EA Implementation Plan* checklist which is co-signed by an Australian Education Union delegate.

4.86

Despite this policy and compliance framework, there is no visibility as to whether New Educators are receiving these entitlements and whether they are being used effectively across the Education Directorate. This presents a risk that New Educators will receive inconsistent access to professional development across their first three years as an ACT public school teacher. In this respect there is no:

4.87

- analysis or confirmation of how New Educators use reduced teaching hours and New Educator Support Days to improve their teaching practice; and
- examination of the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring activities for New Educators.

A mandatory five-day centralised induction is held for all first-year New Educators prior to the commencement of the school year. According to the Education Directorate's *New Educator Guidelines*, the purpose of the induction is to ensure all New Educators are 'effectively supported, prepared and informed of their responsibilities and entitlements as they begin in their roles'. The centralised induction for New Educators is not accredited with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute and therefore cannot be counted towards the accredited training requirement under their annual registration requirements. In focus groups conducted for the purpose of this audit, there was persistent negative feedback regarding the delivery of the centralised induction from all levels of school leaders and teaching staff, including New Educators. This feedback centred on the timing of this training before New Educators start teaching, and this should instead predominantly occur after they have an opportunity to teach and understand what they need to learn to improve the quality of their teaching practice.

4.92

New Educators are expected to have reduced face-to-face teaching hours to facilitate enhanced support and mentoring. This allowance is calculated as a reduced number of minutes per week of classroom time that reduces as the New Educator progresses through the development program. It is designed to provide schools with

4.97

a provision of time for coaching and mentoring support programs designed to meet the development needs of each New Educator. The specific organisational details are decided by individual school management to allow program flexibility to meet the needs of each New Educator over time. School leaders and New Educators who participated in focus groups for the purpose of this audit advised that the provision of additional classroom release hours for New Educators were largely used to catch up on administrative tasks rather than for coaching and mentoring purposes. New Educators and school leaders also advised that the reduction in face-to-face teaching hours was largely provided on an adhoc basis. School leaders advised that making time for New Educators to collaborate with their experienced teacher mentor within school hours is difficult and considered impractical within school settings. New Educators reflected that the additional time allowance was not allocated in a consistent or structured way that would assist them to improve the quality of their teaching practice. The allowance of reduced face-to-face teaching hours for new educators is not effectively implemented in all ACT public schools. Not all new educators can access this time, and it is not consistently used to improve teaching quality.

The *Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018 – 2022* provides for six additional classroom release days for each New Educator. These can be taken as two leave days for each year of the three year program. While New Educators and school leaders in all schools were aware of the provision of New Educator Support Days, focus groups involving both cohorts showed a lack of understanding of the exact allocation of days and the circumstances in which to use them. School leaders and New Educators reflected that accessing the provision in full was impractical due to staffing pressures including the difficulty in obtaining relief teaching staff.

The combination of supports provided under the New Educator Support Program are not evaluated to determine whether they are effective in developing a series of expected pedagogical competencies in New Educators. Documenting expected pedagogical competencies that New Educators should display at the program's completion, and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the program could allow the Education Directorate to determine whether there are barriers for to accessing these supports.

## TEACHING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Paragraph

Research shows that there is a relationship between years of teaching experience and the quality of practice demonstrated by an individual teacher: the quality of a teacher's practices most steeply increases in their initial years in the classroom; and the effectiveness of their teaching practices continues to improve significantly until their seventh year of service. Sixty one percent of ACT teachers are classified as Experienced Teacher 2 teachers, with at least eight years' experience, which the research suggests is the point at which they are expected to have an ongoing positive impact on student outcomes through high quality teaching. Twenty two percent are classified as Experienced Teacher 1 (four to seven years' experience) and 17 percent are identified as New Teachers (less than three years' experience). There is variability between the deployment of Experienced Teacher 2 classroom teachers across ACT public schools, for example 26 schools have a workforce made up of more than 70

5.23



percent of Experienced Teacher 2 staff and 22 schools have a workforce of less than 50 percent of Experienced Teacher 2 staff. The school with the lowest proportion of Experienced Teacher 2 staff has only 26 percent at this level.

The proportion of Experienced Teacher 2 classroom teachers in a school may have a direct impact on student educational outcomes and the ability of New Educators to access their industrial rights. When a school's workforce is made up of 50 percent or less Experienced Teacher 2 classroom teachers, the additional duties designed to contribute towards improved teaching quality assigned to these teachers are at risk of not being performed or being performed to a subpar standard. The proportion of experienced teachers at a school can also have a persisting impact on student outcomes, as the effects of high-quality teaching are cumulative. If the classroom teaching workforce remains stable over three years, students at the ACT public school with the lowest proportion of experienced teachers currently have a 1.8 percent chance of being taught by a series of Experienced Teacher 2 teachers over this time. This compares with the students at the school with the highest proportion of experienced teachers, which have a 77.1 percent chance of this occurring.

5.24

Under the *Education Directorate (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2022*, teachers permanently employed by the Education Directorate are placed at a particular school for an initial five-year term. At the end of this period, teachers are expected to apply for transfer to another ACT public school through an annual process known as the 'transfer round'. The annual teacher transfer round is an important process for developing and deploying highly experienced teachers across the ACT public school system. However, there are confounding factors that interfere with the effective operation of the transfer round and its effect on teaching quality across the school system. This includes the opportunity for school principals to hold on to their experienced teachers and exclude them from the transfer round by simply extending a teacher's placement for up to five years. There has also been limited central oversight of when teachers are due for transfer. Until a recent update in December 2020 of teacher placement end date records by the People and Performance Branch the Education Directorate did not have complete and accessible data on when teachers were due to complete their five-year school placements. Placement end dates were not centrally recorded for 621 teachers and school leaders (approximately 18.4 percent of the total number of 3,382 teachers as at February 2020). Extensions to teaching placements increases the risk of highly experienced teachers being clustered in a smaller number of schools, thereby reducing the impact they could otherwise have if deployed where the ACT public school system as a whole may need them for the purposes of equity and lifting student outcomes and may also interfere with New Educators' rights to access experienced mentors to improve their teaching quality.

5.38

To maintain teaching quality in ACT public schools, the Education Directorate must recruit sufficient teachers to account for growth in student numbers and staff turnover. Presently, this rate is approximately 6.5 percent. Resignations have accounted for 67 percent of teacher separations between 2014 and 2020, and the majority of these teachers have left in the first seven years of service, which is before research suggests they become highly effective teachers. The Education Directorate has recently established a *2021-2023 Workforce Strategy* which outlines high level goals to manage the risk of being unable to secure sufficient high-quality teachers,

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along with potential programs and projects identified to address this risk over the next three years. While retention measures are identified in this strategy, the Education Directorate does not monitor the reasons teachers resign from ACT public schools through exit surveys to determine if such activities are appropriately targeted.

Teacher and school leader performance and development plans are intended to be the process by which principals and teachers identify, plan, action and evaluate targeted professional learning and development to improve teaching quality. To set the performance expectations of school leaders, the Education Directorate has established an *ACT School Leadership Capability Framework* that specifies the competencies expected of: principals (School Leader A); deputy principals (School Leader B); and school executives (School Leader C). The Education Directorate has not designed a similar capability framework for classroom teachers. 5.65

A consistent approach to the performance development process was observed in the six schools considered as part of the audit. However, of the 54 performance development plans considered for the purpose of the audit, 79 per cent were incomplete in terms of content, supervisor endorsement or evidence of feedback to teaching staff. Teaching workforce data cannot be easily used to monitor whether performance and development plans are completed, or timely and complete feedback is given. While it is accepted best practice that teachers and school leaders link their performance and development plan goals with school improvement priorities, the generic approach observed in the six schools resulted in a lack of evidence of teachers reflecting on how they individually needed to improve their teaching practice in support of school improvement priorities. Focus groups within the six schools considered as part of the audit indicated that the professional development plans were not used to support teaching quality within the workforce. Teachers and school leaders alike viewed the performance and development process as a mandatory compliance exercise. 5.66

The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership recommends the use of classroom observations to provide teachers with clear feedback and direction in the form of evidence-based strategies for developing the quality of their teaching practice. Despite this, the Education Directorate does not maintain a policy or guidelines for regular teacher appraisals or classroom observations for permanent teaching staff in ACT public schools. Rather, they are a widely understood and suggested practice that each school should pursue, but it is not mandated. Only two of six schools conducted regular effective teaching appraisals and the leaders of these schools actively supported and encouraged this practice. In the absence of central tools and supports for teaching appraisals, these school leaders developed their own resources to support this activity. Opportunities to encourage and model classroom observations could have a meaningful impact on systemic teaching quality in ACT public schools. 5.72

Effective performance management of teaching staff is important to maintain the quality of teaching practices in ACT public schools. The Education Directorate has established policies, protocols and mechanisms to support performance management. This includes the human resources business partners who are available to school leaders to help manage underperformance in their setting. 5.85

However, only one teacher was reported as underperforming in 2019-20. This is low for a workforce of over 4,000 teachers and school leaders. This is supported by discussions with Education Support Office executives and school leaders who suggest the number of teachers and school leaders who are not demonstrating quality teaching is underreported. The Education Directorate has no informed understanding as to whether performance management of ACT public school teachers is underreported, or the supports required to help school leaders to improve teaching quality through these processes.

## Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 1 FUTURE OF EDUCATION

The Education Directorate should, as a matter of priority develop and publish the implementation plan for the second phase of the *Future of Education*.

### RECOMMENDATION 2 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REPORTING

The Education Directorate should improve its strategic planning reporting framework by consistently and specifically reporting on progress towards its planned actions in its six-monthly review reports. Reported progress should include quantitative and qualitative analysis for:

- a) all priority actions identified in its Strategic Plan;
- b) all indicators of success for each Strategic Plan goal; and
- c) the completion of activities committed to in annual divisional business plans.

### RECOMMENDATION 3 PEOPLE, PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The Education Directorate should review and update the *People, Practice and Performance* framework to:

- a) reflect the revised structure of the Education Support Office, including the roles of Directors of School Improvement and Instructional Mentors and their role to support and maintain accountability for school principals;
- b) reflect the requirements of the *Evidence and Data Plan for School Improvement* (2019); and
- c) require all schools to participate in school improvement activities as well as complete and publish all required school improvement documentation on their website.

### RECOMMENDATION 4 EVALUATION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DOCUMENTATION

As part of Recommendation 3, the Education Support Office should review and revise the *People, Practice and Performance* framework to require the formal evaluation of school improvement documentation on an annual basis. The evaluation should involve consideration of school improvement plans, action plans, school visits feedback and impact reports as a method of gaining specific, actionable and timely information about ACT public schools' progress in

improving student educational outcomes. The evaluation should then be used to assess and review Education Support Office supports for teaching quality to determine any refinements or additional assistance required to support schools achieve this outcome.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5      DIRECTORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

The Education Directorate should review the role of Directors of School Improvement and in doing so:

- a) consider whether individual directors should specialise in sector-specific oversight and support (such as roles focusing on colleges, high schools, primary schools) to better target the implementation of supports for improving teaching quality; and
- b) determine if the directors' span of control allows them to fulfil the requirements of the *People, Practice and Performance* framework.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6      SCHOOL EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The Education Directorate should establish a development program for new school executives (School Leader C staff) that upskills these staff on the instructional leadership practices of the *Empowered Learning Professional Leadership Plan* during the initial years of their appointment.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7      HIGHLY ACCOMPLISHED AND LEAD TEACHERS**

The Education Directorate should clearly identify and articulate its expectations for the role and responsibilities of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in ACT public schools. The role could include working with principals and Education Support Office to support school improvement activities, and better using the school network model to connect with other professionals to promote better teaching practice in their school settings.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 8      ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS**

The Education Directorate should develop a practice for the Education Support Office to oversee:

- a) the completion of each school's annual professional learning program; and
- b) the development of a school's annual professional learning program as part of the school improvement process. The program should identify the development needs of teaching staff in connection with school improvement goals, and the expected impacts on student outcomes.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9      PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES**

The Education Directorate should establish universal professional learning for all school leaders and teachers on the Spiral of Inquiry Model and Multiple Sources of Evidence approach in order to support school leaders to facilitate these activities. This support should focus on increasing understanding and consistency in the quality and impact of professional learning communities for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching practices in all ACT public schools.

#### RECOMMENDATION 10 ACT TEACHER QUALITY INSTITUTE LEARNING

The Education Directorate should work with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute to:

- a) receive and analyse data to use for evaluating the quality of Education Directorate professional learning activities, and identifying trends and insights from its teachers' professional learning to help determine the impact this has on improving student outcomes; and
- b) design methods and practices to recognise key professional learning supports, including professional learning communities, as accredited learning that meets the requirements of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*.

#### RECOMMENDATION 11 NEW EDUCATOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

The New Education Support Program should be reviewed and redesigned. The program should:

- a) be facilitated by the Education Support Office to provide centralise oversight of all Enterprise Agreement provisions, centralised support and resourcing to New Educators in ACT public schools;
- b) document a core set of highly-effective pedagogical competencies that New Educators are expected to acquire within the first three years of their teaching careers;
- c) include a series of centralised, scaffolded professional development activities to build New Educators' capabilities over the course of the three years of the program;
- d) provide schools with clear guidelines and expectations to facilitate experienced teacher coaching and mentoring for New Educators; and
- e) establish an annual monitoring and evaluation process for the program, which incorporates feedback from New Educators, experienced teacher mentors and school leaders.

#### RECOMMENDATION 12 CLASSROOM TEACHING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

The Education Directorate should review and revise the mechanisms that support the distribution and monitoring of the teaching workforce across ACT public schools by:

- a) monitoring the distribution of experienced teachers across ACT public schools to ensure it aligns with Education Directorate priorities under the *Future of Education*; and
- b) developing processes to monitor and review principal decisions to extend teacher placements to ensure schools have appropriate and equitable access to experienced teachers.

#### RECOMMENDATION 13 TEACHER WORKFORCE SEPARATION

The Education Directorate should develop and analyse data associated with teaching workforce separations by implementing exit surveys and conducting analysis on the reasons teachers resign from ACT public schools.

## RECOMMENDATION 14 PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The Education Directorate should:

- a) develop policies and guidelines and support for school leaders that enable regular, development-focussed teacher appraisals aligned with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. These should be modelled and encouraged through the Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan and aligned with the professional learning requirements of the *ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010* to gain additional benefit from these activities;
- b) systematise the performance development process to improve efficiency and make teacher professional development data available for central oversight and management to improve teaching quality; and
- c) develop supports for school leaders to manage underperformance for poor teaching practices. These supports should emphasise the need to quickly address performance issues, identify ways to successfully improve performance, and connect underperforming teachers with practical supports to improve their practice.

### Response from entities

In accordance with subsection 18(2) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*, the Education Directorate was provided with:

- a draft proposed report for comment. All comments were considered and required changes were reflected in the final proposed report; and
- a final proposed report for further comment.

In accordance with subsection 18(3) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* other entities considered to have a direct interest in the report were also provided with extracts of the draft proposed and final proposed reports for comment. All comments on the extracts of the draft proposed report were considered and required changes made in the final proposed report.

### Education Directorate response

*The Education Directorate welcomes the Auditor-General's performance audit on teaching quality and looks forward to responding to its recommendations. The audit findings support the Directorate's mandate to enable schools where students love to learn, and our work programs reflect this key objective.*

*We appreciate that the audit recognised the Directorate's work to deliver quality teaching practices in ACT Public Schools. We also remain committed to support our school teachers and leaders in their professional learning and to continually improve systems to sustain optimal learning outcomes for all our students.*