

# **National School Reform Agreement**

## **Australian Capital Territory Bilateral Agreement: 2020 Progress Report**

## National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Australian Capital Territory – 2020

### Executive Summary

The ACT remains committed to driving reform to improve learning outcomes for all children and young Australians as their guiding principle and places a sense of urgency to the task. This commitment is outlined in the ACT Government's *Future of Education Strategy* and *Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*. These strategies are focused on investing in and providing a system that supports student agency, inclusion, equity and access to high quality education for every child and young person. This will ensure all children and young people, regardless of background, have an educational experience of the highest quality that meets their needs, motivations and aspirations.

ACT Public Schools, Catholic Education and Independent Schools made considerable progress in 2020 against identified priority actions of the National School Reform Agreement despite the interruption of COVID-19. Our actions are driven by a commitment to the Alice Springs Mparntwe Declaration – 'Our vision is for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be' by ensuring that every child and young person has access to a great education and the life opportunities that this affords them.

The ACT is especially focused on three areas of quality teaching: initial teacher education; curriculum; and assessment; and are acutely aware that quality teaching is by far the most important in-school factor in determining student performance. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) continues to be a high priority of the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI). The TQI is engaged rigorously in the national ITE standards agenda, with both ITE providers in the ACT coming onboard and compliant with nationally agreed annual reporting requirements.

The ACT has a comprehensive approach to teacher professional learning, particularly focused on the Australian Curriculum. This is supported with high quality teacher professional development targeting the interconnectedness between curriculum, assessment and reporting. The ACT remains at the fore of national work on Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment. ACT teachers from all three sectors are members of the National Teacher Practice Reference Group. ACT teachers use formative assessment on a daily/weekly basis to assess student learning and identify required instruction and support. Putting student data at the teachers' fingertips empowers teachers to personalise learning plans and address areas for further growth.

The ACT Board of Secondary Studies (BSSS) also maintains a strong partnership across the three schooling sectors. Through a five-year review cycle, they develop or replace courses (35 new courses in 2020) to ensure they are contemporary and underpinned by the Australian Curriculum. ACT Public, Catholic and Independent Schools, the BSSS and TQI, are collectively committed to ensuring a world class education for every child and young person in the ACT.

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### Progress Against Each Reform Direction

#### Reform Direction A - Support students, student learning and achievement

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Develop a cross-sectoral implementation plan to underpin the ACT Government's Future of Education Strategy.	All	2019	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Future of Education Strategy is being delivered through three phases and the first phase implementation plan is now complete (as at the end of 2020). The Future of Education Phase Two Implementation Plan will be finalised in 2021.</li> </ul>
Implement stage one of the cross-sectoral Future of Education implementation plan.	All	2020	<p>Implementation completed in 2020. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Future of Education Strategy is being delivered through three phases and the first phase implementation plan is now complete (as at the end of 2020). The Future of Education Phase Two Implementation Plan is on track to be launched in late 2021. Phase Two implementation activities will include implementation of Phase One initiatives held over or to be continued in Phase Two.</li> </ul>

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Establish a cross-sectoral reform forum to share progress and challenges.	All	2019	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings between senior officials of all sectors have allowed for collaboration and sharing of progress and challenges on a number of fronts including legislation reform.</li> <li>• There is strong ongoing cross-sectoral collaboration focused on implementation of the Australian Curriculum, NAPLAN online and the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD).</li> <li>• During COVID-19, all three sectors collaborated to respond to both remote and on campus learning challenges. This included sharing of professional development and resources for teachers, scenario planning, and guidance to support the safe operation of schools.</li> </ul>
Deliver professional learning on the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities.	All	2019	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2020, 655 teachers engaged in face-to-face professional learning workshops on the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities.</li> </ul>

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These have been delivered as a universal offering to individual teachers, teaching teams and whole school teams.</li> </ul>
Develop and implement academic reporting explicitly aligned to Australian Curriculum achievement standards.	Gov	2019 and ongoing	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT Education Directorate staff delivered professional learning for 400 teachers in 2020, unpacking the Achievement Standards.</li> <li>• 158 participants engaged in designing engaging and inclusive learning programs using the Australian Curriculum.</li> <li>• Professional Learning targeted the interconnectedness between curriculum, assessment and reporting.</li> <li>• Academic reporting in the ACT is explicitly aligned to the Achievement Standards. A new School Administration System (SAS) has been rolled out in all ACT public schools. The reporting module captures reporting of student achievement against the Achievement Standards.</li> </ul>
Build upon existing ACT Australian Curriculum assessment reform effort to play a lead role in national efforts to refine	All	2019	Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.

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ACARA’s national learning progressions in literacy and numeracy.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ACT continues to deliver professional learning to support teachers in using the progressions (Version2) as published on the Australian Curriculum website.</li> <li>In 2020, 130 teachers participated in workshops about the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions.</li> </ul>
Build upon existing ACT Australian Curriculum assessment reform effort to play a lead role in national efforts to develop the digital formative assessment proof of concept.	All	2019	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ACT is actively involved in progressing the Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment initiative (LPOFA) through the Alpha phase.</li> <li>ACT teachers from all three sectors are members of the National Teacher Practice Reference Group and the ACT supports stakeholder engagement in the project including with industrial bodies.</li> </ul>
Build upon existing ACT Australian Curriculum assessment reform effort to play a lead role in the development of national learning progressions in general capabilities.	All	2020 and ongoing	<p>Implementation completed in 2020. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ACT staff partnered with schools to strengthen understanding and capacity to design and deliver</li> </ul>

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			<p>curriculum, incorporating the General Capabilities as part of the three-dimensional design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers engaged in developing understanding of the General Capabilities and how they can be incorporated into teaching and learning plans to develop the students' capabilities.</li> </ul>
<p>Conduct a cross-sectoral STEM educators forum (STEMed ACT) in partnership with a range of professional teacher associations and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>2019</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The STEMed Conference 2019 was held in Canberra on 5 and 6 April 2019, with 125 conference delegates in attendance on day one and 115 on day two.</li> </ul>
<p>Implement the Cultural Integrity Continuum and Toolkit in all ACT Public Schools.</p>	<p>Gov</p>	<p>2018 onwards</p>	<p>Implementation completed in 2018. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 2018 Cultural Integrity has been included in the School Improvement review process for ACT Public Schools. Schools are reviewed on a five-year cycle. ACT public schools use the Cultural Integrity Continuum Framework to self-assess progress and determine next steps in their journey.</li> <li>This is incorporated into annual Principal discussions, with decisions and actions feeding into each school's planning processes as required. This</li> </ul>

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			<p>ensures schools progress on their cultural integrity journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ACT Education Directorate reports on the progress of Cultural Integrity in ACT public schools through its Annual Report and the Whole of Government ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement.</li> </ul>
<p>Implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures enriched elaborations for Science as part of cross-sectoral curriculum effort.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>2019 and ongoing</p>	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures enriched elaborations for Science were promoted in ACT schools.</li> <li>A cross-sectoral project Empowered Learning Professionals: First Nations Science has been developed in response to the publication of 95 elaborations in Science.</li> <li>ACT Education specialist STEM teachers from the Academy of Future Skills have been trained and the CSIRO Indigenous Science program I<sup>2</sup>S<sup>2</sup> and have been working with the ACT Education Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group to integrate traditional knowledge of science and the</li> </ul>

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			environment into their work in schools and in professional learning sessions.
Meeting the learning needs of students through more and expanded schools for Canberra’s growing suburbs.	Gov	2019 and ongoing	<p>Activities will be ongoing.</p> <p>Major infrastructure and capital works projects undertaken during 2020 to modernise facilities and better meet the learning needs of communities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Expansions design commenced for 3 schools and a fourth school entered the construction phase of the expansion program. This will modernise these schools and increase student capacity by more than 400 places.</li> <li>• 5 Schools <b>had Relocatable Learning Units placed on site in</b> early 2020 ready for day 1 term 1, increasing student capacity by 250</li> <li>• <b>In late 2020, preparation for Relocatable Learning Unit placement</b> began for a further 13 schools, increasing student capacity by 750, ready for the beginning of 2021.</li> <li>• One new school was built, another commenced construction and a third is in the master planning stage.</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feasibility studies are underway to inform options to expand at other existing schools and to identify new school sites across the ACT</li></ul>

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### Reform Direction B – Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Actively contribute to the review of senior secondary education including, pathways to work, further education and training and prerequisites for university entry.	All (through the Board of Senior Secondary Studies)	2019	<p>Implementation completed in 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies actively contributed to the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways.</li> <li>• The ACT curriculum reform and renewal process includes the annual development of new or replacement courses within a five-year review cycle, with the Australian Curriculum underpinning foundational design specifications across all curriculum for 2020.</li> <li>• Course accreditation occurred for 35 new courses of study. These courses were established in partnership with schools, external experts, industry, tertiary training, and education sectors to ensure that they are in step with the knowledge, skills and understanding required for successful post schooling outcomes.</li> <li>• The ACT Senior Secondary Certificate can incorporate substantial recognition of formal external vocational training including School Based Apprenticeship to further support students.</li> </ul>

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twenty-one school-based industry courses were supported by the BSSS as part of a suite of contemporary courses integrating nationally recognised vocational competencies, with ongoing review of the curriculum to maintain operability with training package requirements.</li> <li>• A review of the production of the ATAR was undertaken in concert with Tertiary Admissions Centres (TAC'S) and the Technical Committee on Scaling (TCoS) to interrogate and evaluate the validity and compatibility of data in order to maintain national consistency and accountability.</li> <li>• In 2019 the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) established a Student Forum so that young people would have a voice in their senior secondary education. Year 11 and 12 students from participating colleges join the forum annually. In this way, students are able to take on a leadership role within the ACT and contribute their ideas and experiences in support of the future direction of education and the provisions of the Board. The forum is ongoing but was paused in 2020 due to COVID-19.</li> <li>• In November 2020 the Directorate undertook a review of the Transitions and Careers Officers in</li> </ul>

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p>ACT Public Colleges, to better understand the level of demand for one-to-one services to support at risk students who require specific support in career planning and transitioning. A report and its recommendations are being considered by the Directorate in 2021.</p>
<p>Implement relevant findings of the review of senior secondary education.</p>	<p>All (through the Board of Senior Secondary Studies)</p>	<p>2020 and ongoing</p>	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) has supported a common language to promote a shared understanding for teachers and students across the senior secondary curriculum through the embedding of the general capabilities in all courses.</li> <li>• The ACT Senior Secondary Certificate makes provision for up to five years to qualify for this Certificate. A number of ACT colleges support extended packages. CIT (TAFE) also provides a range of options.</li> <li>• Inclusive education was strengthened in the ACT through the further development of the university H course program and the continued embedding of the M classification in all courses. An H course enables senior secondary and University credit simultaneously and is a valuable extension</li> </ul>

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			<p>opportunity and support for transition. The M classification tailors courses for students with mild to moderate intellectual disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Student Profiles Online portal was significantly enhanced to provide in-depth information on student progress and their ongoing learning results to support student efficacy in learning through increased transparency and accessibility to assessment data.</li> <li>• In 2020 a collaboration framework commenced between the Directorate and the ACT’s only legislated provider of vocational education and training (VET), the Canberra Institute of Technology. This resulted in the development of a <a href="#">CIT for Schools menu</a> which details all VET offerings to both government and non-government schools in the ACT region and is publicly available.</li> <li>• The Directorate participated in the inaugural Year13 Digital Careers Expo in 2020, a national event which was promoted across all school sectors in the ACT. The expo provided the opportunity to promote Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs) and pathways to careers within the Education Sector.</li> </ul>

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student commencements in the Industry Pathways Course (IPC) pilot occurred in 2019 and 2020, funded through the National Partnership Agreement for the Skilling Australians Fund. The IPC is delivered through a partnership model with CIT and schools and provides Year 9 and 10 students with real experience in a variety of VET pathways, ensuring they are exposed to the full range of options for their future, not just vocational options.</li> <li>• Planning commenced in 2020 for a VET in ACT Public Schools Project. Completion in 2020 was delayed due to the shifting priorities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Work is continuing in 2021 and the project is anticipated to run over a five-year period from 2021-2025.</li> <li>• In December 2020 a pilot program concept, developed by the Directorate in collaboration with ACT Office for Women and the National Association of Women in Construction, attracted a funding contribution from the first round of the National Careers Institute Partnership Grants Program. The pilot is being further developed in 2021 and is due to commence in a minimum of four ACT public schools in 2022.</li> </ul>

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<p>Build off the lead role that the ACT Teacher Quality Institute has had in quality Initial Teacher Education regulation to actively contribute to quality assurance improvements in the national consistency and transparency of Initial Teacher Education regulation.</p>	<p>All (through the Teacher Quality Institute)</p>	<p>2019</p>	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TQI staff and trained Initial Teacher Education (ITE) accreditation panel members actively engaged in national ITE accreditation standards setting workshops (one in 2020).</li> <li>• Active participation in national review of ITE program accreditation guidelines and procedures, with new guidelines published in 2020.</li> <li>• Both ITE providers in the ACT implementing nationally approved TPAs (2018) and LANTITE (2017), ongoing.</li> <li>• Master level ITE programs offered by the University of Canberra nationally accredited, (2019).</li> <li>• ITE providers in the ACT compliant with nationally agreed annual reporting requirements (2017), ongoing.</li> <li>• ACT Annual ITE data report provided to AITSL, April 2020, ongoing annually.</li> <li>• Continued to train ITE Accreditation Panel members.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop cross-sectoral collaboration in school leadership.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>2020 onwards</p>	<p>Implementation completed in 2020. Activities will be ongoing.</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened cross sector collaboration to share progress and challenges and achieve legislative reform</li> <li>• A coordinated cross sector response to remote and on campus learning during COVID-19</li> <li>• Scoping began for the curation and sharing of local research and resources on excellent teaching practice.</li> <li>• Australian Curriculum general capabilities professional learning was delivered across government and non-government schooling sectors.</li> </ul>

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### Reform Direction C – Enhancing the national evidence base

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Build upon existing NCCD cross-sectoral moderation activities and strengthen consistency on a year-by-year basis.	All	2018 onwards	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCCD Cross Sector Senior Leadership Information session was held to build the knowledge and understanding of the NCCD processes and inclusive practices of Principals and Deputy Principals (13 February 2020)</li> <li>• NCCD Cross Sector Learning Support Assistants (LSA) Network meeting was held to support the professional development of LSAs in their role of supporting students in our schools (3 March 2020).</li> <li>• NCCD Cross Sector Introductory/orientation session for new Disability Education Co-ordination Officers (DECOs) and other interested teachers (10 March)</li> <li>• NCCD Mid-cycle moderation session was held. Due to COVID-19, this session was facilitated online for ACT Directorate staff (20 May).</li> <li>• NCCD end-cycle moderation session was held online with ACT Directorate staff (20 May 2020).</li> <li>• During 2020, where permissible, face to face NCCD support visits to schools were undertaken and Quality Assurance work with individual schools (continuing the established methodology of</li> </ul>

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p>targeting due to variation in data, and some randomly selected) after 7 August census day were conducted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACT Directorate NCCD officer continued to further develop the inclusive capability and practice of DECOs through the following activities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mentoring and coaching DECOs new to this role</li> <li>○ Development of the DECO network through termly network meetings</li> <li>○ Provision of targeted Individual Learning Plan (ILP) professional learning in individual schools.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Provide national leadership in NAPLAN online by maximising implementation in all ACT schools.	All	2018 onwards	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to COVID-19, NAPLAN 2020 was not conducted, with testing resuming in 2021. All ACT schools accessed NAPLAN Online in 2021.</li> </ul>
Contribute to the ongoing data collection for the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy including amendment of legislation to allow for sharing of data held by the Teacher Quality Institute.	All (through the Teacher Quality Institute)	2019 onwards	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p>

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Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative amendments to allow data sharing with Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) enacted in August 2019.</li> <li>• MoU with the ATWD data linkage agency and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) signed May 2020.</li> <li>• The 2019 and 2020 ACT Teacher Workforce data files uploaded to ATWD, via AIHW, in June 2020 and February 2021, ongoing annually.</li> </ul>
Build off the existing ACT cross-sectoral student identifier to actively contribute to the development and implementation of a national Unique Student Identifier.	All	2019 onwards	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACT continues to actively participate in national discussions to implement the December 2019 Education Council decision to generate and operate a national Unique Student Identifier.</li> </ul>
Build upon recent ACT performance measures to actively contribute to the development of new measures of performance particularly student learning gain and general capabilities.	All	2018 onwards	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the national level, measures of general capabilities are yet to be developed.</li> <li>• The ACT continues to improve the measurement of student wellbeing, challenging behaviours and student engagement and belonging.</li> </ul>

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Implement new national measures of performance particularly student learning gain and general capabilities.	Gov	As available	<p>Implementation completed in 2019. Activities will be ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2020, the ACT reported performance against the strategic measures: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student learning growth</li> <li>○ Equity of student outcomes</li> <li>○ Strength of student engagement and belonging with their school.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Measures of general capability will be added once developed nationally.</li> </ul>