



Metropolitan Region

Regional review report



Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owner of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation. This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.





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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Metropolitan Region** from **28 March to 1 April 2022**.

The report presents an evaluation of the region's performance against the six domains of the Education System Improvement Tool (ESIT). It also recommends improvement strategies for the region to implement in consultation with the department and regional community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

For more information regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland regions please visit the EIB [website](#).

1.1 Review team

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1.2 Regional context

Education region:	Metropolitan Region
Regional office locations:	Ipswich Mount Gravatt Nundah
Year regional director appointed:	2021
Number of schools:	<p>256 schools 6 Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (O&EEC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 182 primary • 47 secondary • 6 combined – Prep to Year 12 • 17 special schools • 3 specific purpose – Barrett Adolescent Centre Special School, Brisbane Youth Education and Training Centre (BYETC), Queensland Children’s Hospital School • School of Distance Education (SDE)
Number of schools with Early Childhood Development Programs (ECDP): <i>It should be noted that this data is point in time (11.39am 15/02/2022) and changes daily</i>	19 – 522 registrations as per Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) school data reflection
Number of Early Childhood Education and Care services:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 549 long day care • 121 kindergartens excluding State Delivered Kindergartens (SDK) • 264 Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) • 47 family day care centres • 7 unregulated early years services

Student enrolments:	173 211 comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary – 104 362 • Secondary – 68 849
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	8 786 students (5.07 per cent) comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary – 5 247 (5.02 per cent) • Secondary – 3 539 (5.14 per cent)
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	5.8 per cent (10 098 students) with a verified disability – Education Adjustment Program (EAP) 14.8 per cent (25 849 students) – Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability 2020 (NCCD)
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) median value*:	Average ICSEA for MER: 1036
School ICSEA range:	851–1224
Metropolitan region Full-time equivalent (FTE) staff:	18 437.41 – total regional FTE including school staff, regional office staff, corporate staff, and people and executive services division staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 139 – school FTE (as at 01/01/2022) • 156.01 – State schooling regional office FTE (as at 23/02/2022) • 58.4 – Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) regional office FTE (as at 24/02/2021) • 37 – corporate staff FTE (as at 23/02/2022) • 47 – People and corporate services FTE (as at 01/01/2022)

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

Regional office personnel:

- Regional Director (RD), seven Assistant Regional Directors (ARD), four Lead Principals (LP); **Regional Services** – director, five Principal Advisor Education Services (PAES), two executive services officers, school Community Liaison Officer (CLO), principal advisor – regulations, manager state schools operations – data; **State Schools – Strategy and Performance** – director, principal advisor student protection – students in care and youth justice, court liaison officer, regional Youth Support Coordinator (YSC), Principal Education Officer (PEO) – student engagement and wellbeing, PEO, senior project officer Education Support Funding Program (ESFP) and refugee, project officer – exclusion case manager, regional coordinator – complex case coordinator student engagement, community participation officer, principal advisor, guidance officer – student engagement and wellbeing, Education Officer – Special Duties (EOSD) – restrictive practice standards, guidance officer – intensive behaviour early years, guidance officer – intensive behaviour, inclusion capability manager, inclusion capability facilitator, executive services officer, two principal advisors for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), principal advisor Auslan, 18 senior guidance officers, Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) in charge, four senior advisors – speech language therapy, senior advisor – occupational therapy, senior advisor – speech language pathology, speech pathologist, senior advisor student wellbeing; **State Schooling – Teaching and Learning** – director, regional Teacher Learning Centre (TLC) manager, three managers capability TLC, manager teaching and learning, executive services officer, principal advisor early years Head of Department – Curriculum (HOD-C), six Principal Advisors Teaching and Learning (PATaL), principal advisor Indigenous English as an Additional Language or Dialect (IEAL/D), PEO principal capability, deputy principal – regional youth engagement, deputy principal – Solid Pathways (Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)/ Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA), two transition pathways officers QPSC, English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) coordinator – secondary schools), three regional schools sports officers, regional school support officer, regional music coordinator, principal advisor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, two regional Community Education Counsellors (CEC), two regional Community Partnership Officers (CPO); **Early Childhood Education and Care** – director – capability development team, project manager, senior project officer, project officer, manager, principal advisor, two early years coaches, administration officer, five partnerships facilitators, early childhood authorised officer, director – regulation), early childhood officer, senior business and communications officer; **Infrastructure** – manager, infrastructure advisor; **Finance** – manager, principal finance officer; **Human Resources** – director HR business partner, senior HR consultant and senior regional health and safety; **Information Technology** – two customer service managers.

Metropolitan school personnel:

- 182 principals, 2 heads of school/campus, 20 deputy principals, HOD – Special Education Training Alliance (SETA), Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), guidance officer, EAL/D regional coordinator and eight regional CECs.

Departmental representatives, key stakeholders and education partners:

- Deputy Director General (DDG) – State Schools, DDG – policy, performance and planning, chief finance officer, executive director finance and assurance services, Metropolitan North Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) representative, associate professor in Metropolitan Trauma Community Learning – Queensland University of Technology (QUT), director – finance and assurance services, director – office of the DDG State Schools, director – ministerial executive services unit, director – media, president of the Queensland Association of Combined Sector Leaders (QACSL), president of the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association (QSPA), president of the Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders Inc. (QASEL) and president of the Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP).

Government, community and business groups:

- State Member for Ferny Grove, State Member for Greenslopes, State Member for Ipswich, State Member for Jordan, State Member for Lytton, State Member for Petrie, State Member for Stretton, State Member for Mansfield and area coordinator Kids Capers Childcare.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Region Organisational Structure	MER ARD school allocation
Region Operational Plan 2022	Metropolitan Communities of Practice 2022
Region Strategic Plan 2021–2024	MetroConnect
MER Engagement Framework	2022 Learning Needs Analysis Survey
Metropolitan region Year 12 Outcomes	Regional Data Profile Semester 1, 2021
MER School Opinion Survey report 2021	Connect 4 Children strategy
Working for Queensland survey results 2021	Metropolitan – Complex Care 2022
Early Childhood Sector Profile	Regional Request for Support 2022 template
NAPLAN performance 2019 vs 2021	ARD School visit feedback example
Metropolitan – Success for All student Services placemat	Student Services Request for Support 2022 fact sheet
MER Regional workforce capability packages review 2018–21	Student Services: Tiered model of Support 2022
Every student with disability succeeding – Regional data reflection – April 2021	Student Services Dashboard – Students with Disability
Metropolitan – Every Student with Disability Succeeding Plan 2022	Student Services Dashboard – Students in Care
Metropolitan Communities of Learning (COLs) 2022	Draft Commissioning of Support in Metropolitan Region
Metropolitan – Student Services: A Shared Understanding of Regional Case Management (RCM)	MER workforce package 2021–2022

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Metropolitan Region, led strongly and passionately by the Regional Director (RD), has developed a culture of trust and belief in student improvement and giving every child a great start.

A strong moral purpose amongst all staff exists regarding the importance of service delivery and success for all children, students and young people. The region's values of *'Care and Enable'* are well understood and established through the focus on building strong relationships and being responsive to client needs. *'Care and Enable'* is additionally demonstrated through the region's deliberate and relentless focus on children and student outcomes, and challenging performance.

Principals and school leaders articulate many positive changes over the past 12 months that have contributed to the strong regional culture of *'Care and Enable'*. Most commonly cited are the high visibility of the RD, the strong focus on relationships/wellbeing between the regional team and early childhood services and schools, and opportunities for authentic engagement of principal voice in regional work.

The region's priority for 2022 is to ensure that every child receives their entitlement to the Australian Curriculum (AC), and achieves a 'C' or above in English and Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) attainment in the senior years.

The region has established clear expectations articulated by school leaders that every school will have a curriculum, assessment and reporting plan, engage in internal and external moderation, and implement case management processes. Principal Advisors – Teaching and Learning (PATaL) work with Assistant Regional Directors (ARD) and schools to support the implementation of these priorities.

The Regional Leadership Team (RLT) has an unrelenting focus on improving the educational outcomes for all children and students within the region.

Their united belief is that this is achievable through gathering evidence on the progress of individual students, developing teacher expertise in curriculum and assessment, and informed intervention through effective case management. Some regional leaders refer to a cultural shift from looking at data to using data to inform strategy and intervention. The RD and RLT have a fundamental belief that all strategic decisions within the region are based on data and focus on improving the outcomes of students and children.

Each year the ARD leadership team commits to a leadership challenge to ensure effective implementation of the regional priorities.

The 2021 leadership challenge was 'Every school has a plan to deliver the AC and every school is engaged in external moderation'. Many schools communicate that external moderation is yet to commence. The 2022 leadership challenge is 'Every teacher has an opportunity to engage in M1 and every school has student case management processes'. Some principals express a desire for greater clarity regarding the appropriate model of moderation and ensuring regional support aligns to the model.

Regional leaders express a commitment to the development of effective leadership at all levels.

The region identifies that ‘growing the capability of their people to have the skills, knowledge and support to perform at the highest level every day’ is key to the regional improvement strategy. The common vision of ‘*Success for All*’ connects the work of teams and provides the opportunity to build the capability of all levels of leadership within the region.

As part of the region’s revised governance structure there are eight advisory groups and a Principals’ Congress with regional and principal representation that meet termly.

The advisory groups have recently undergone a series of changes including membership, purpose and alignment. Advisory groups are now chaired by an ARD and the Principals’ Congress is chaired by the RD. Further opportunity exists to investigate how these groups have the most impact on regional priorities. There is broad representation on the advisory groups and congress including from small and large primary and high schools, special schools and Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (O&EEC). A sense of optimism that this governance structure is able to achieve a strong collaborative partnership between schools and the region is apparent. Principals express that they would value further clarification in relation to the feedback and feed-forward expectations of these groups.

Regional team members express a collective appetite for working collaboratively across teams to ensure the service provided to schools and early learning centres is of a high standard and leading to improved outcomes for students and children.

Regional and school leaders articulate appreciation for the autonomy encouraged in the development of professional learning focused partnerships and groups within and beyond the region. A number of schools express a degree of uncertainty regarding how to effectively establish and participate in clusters or groups of like schools. They indicate they would appreciate targeted support, guidelines and direction in gaining the most out of their collaborative arrangements.

Principals articulate a high level of satisfaction with the targeted support provided by regional education services.

Principals advise there are multiple pathways to access this support. Some principals and regional staff express the belief that there is a lack of clarity as to the most appropriate pathway to access this support, and there is a risk that the support is not always coordinated. Variation in the approach, responsiveness and quality of support from the corporate services area is articulated.

The current approach to providing a range of support services to schools is predominantly deemed to work well to provide schools with the support they require. Metropolitan Region is pursuing a structured, strategic and data-informed approach to commissioning both human and material resources to address perceived disconnect in service provision, and to better align services to the region’s priorities. The region is developing the ‘Commissioning of Support in Metropolitan Region’ to operationalise this.

Regional staff and school leaders display strong understanding and implementation of both curriculum and assessment practices, and the interconnection between them.

Most principals indicate that to achieve the desired lift in academic outcomes there needs to be greater focus on, and support for, developing teacher pedagogy. Most principals indicate that the use of evidence-informed pedagogical practices is driven from within schools rather than the region. A number of school leaders comment that ARDs actively promote the use of visible learning strategies. School leaders articulate that the emphasis on curriculum implementation, moderation practices and performance could be mirrored in a regional focus on pedagogy to suit the local context of each school. An understanding of the interconnection of curriculum, assessment and pedagogical practice for improving the quality of teaching is yet to be apparent within regional priorities. School leaders comment that they would welcome an increased focus and implementation support from the region in the use of high-yield evidence-based pedagogical practices.

ARDs place a high priority on working collaboratively as a team.

The regional values of *'Care and Enable'* and the system's strategies of *'A great start for every child, and every student succeeding'*, underpin the ARDs' work as a team. Senior leaders utilise these agreed principles to challenge and support each other and drive their capability development. They articulate a high level of trust and value the significant shift in the RLT approach. They demonstrate an intentional focus on collaborative learning in relation to the delivery of regional priorities, positioning ARDs as lead-learners in the region. The ARD team has a strong culture of self-improvement and building effective instructional leadership skills. They participate in co-visits to learn from one another and share practice with the RLT. The work of the ARD is highly valued by school leaders. They describe a good balance between care and challenge in their work.

The region has established a diverse range of collaborative networks and partnerships focused on building professional capability, wellbeing, and improving outcomes for students and children.

Regional staff members, principals and the wider educational community speak positively of the region's ability to foster and support collaborations from which schools and early learning centres may learn and grow. The region has identified a clear and sharp focus for region-wide improvement in relation to A-C Levels of Achievement (LOA) in English. This is reflected in the focus of the full range of collaborative networks and groups supported across the region that aim to achieve improvements in this area.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop ways, as an RLT, to quality assure the effectiveness of the implementation of regional expectations and develop a shared understanding of instructional leadership.

Collaboratively develop, coordinate and communicate a differentiated, targeted and strengths-based leadership framework aligned to regional priorities.

Strengthen and communicate the roles and responsibilities of members of all advisory groups, including the Principals' Congress, to include expectations for feedback and feed-forward.

Provide clear advice and support to schools in establishing and participating in effective collaborative teaching and learning communities to share best practice, achieve regional priorities and celebrate success.

Provide clarification and further communication regarding the commissioning process to improve understanding and transparency across regional teams and schools.

Extend the focus from curriculum and assessment to enhancing pedagogical practice to drive continuous improvement in quality teaching and student outcomes.

3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

3.1 Clarity of vision and purpose

Findings

Metropolitan Region, led strongly and passionately by the RD, has developed a culture of trust and belief in improvement for all children and students. A strong moral purpose exists amongst all staff regarding the importance of service delivery and success for all children, students and young people.

The region's values of *'Care and Enable'* are well understood and established through the focus on building strong relationships and being responsive to client needs. *'Care and Enable'* is additionally demonstrated through the region's deliberate and relentless focus on children and student outcomes and challenging performance.

Principals and school leaders articulate many positive changes over the past 12 months that have contributed to the strong regional culture of *'Care and Enable'*. Most commonly cited are the high visibility of the RD, the strong focus on relationships/wellbeing between the regional team and schools, and opportunities for authentic engagement of principal voice in regional work. Regional staff – outside of the RLT, express a desire to have similar opportunities to provide feedback on regional work.

A strong sense of accountability through the use of data amongst leaders in the region is apparent. The region has used data as a way to build a strong 'why' and inform the priorities and targets for 2022. The 2022 targets were developed in reference to previous targets resulting in some incremental increases from 2020-2021. Previous A-C English data indicates that in Prep to Year 2, Metropolitan Region results have plateaued at less than 84 per cent, and Years 7 to 9 data was at 84 per cent and declining. QCE attainment in 2020 was 91.8 per cent and increased to 98.2 per cent in 2021.

The region's priority for 2022 is to ensure that every child receives their entitlement to the AC, achieves a 'C' or above in English, and QCE attainment in the senior years. The region has established clear expectations articulated by school leaders that every school will have a curriculum assessment and reporting plan, engage in internal and external moderation, and implement case management processes. PATaLs work with ARDs and schools to support the implementation of these priorities. Some regional staff express that they are yet to be able to clearly identify themselves or their role in contributing to the achievement of these priorities.

The region has set targets for 'C' or above in English. Each schools' progress towards this target is monitored as a way to differentiate ARD and regional support, and to celebrate achievement. Some schools have exceeded the target and discuss focusing on moving C's to B's, and B's to A's.

Principals display a strong moral purpose towards ensuring that all students achieve a 'C' or above in English and view this as a critical focus for the region. Some principals whose data far exceeds this target are perceived to have less urgency and accountability. They communicate that they frequently don't view regional priorities as part of their work. Some principals with highly complex students express a desire to access further expertise and/or support to find solutions to ensure every student succeeds. For some schools there is a lack of clarity and transparency in how to engage expertise and resources from student services to support

schools and students' needs. It is acknowledged by the region and principals that there is a need to move towards a more targeted and equitable, not equal, support model.

'What if we won't?' is a regional strategy to target the reduction in Prep School Disciplinary Absences (SDAs). Principals are able to discuss this strategy and the interventions to support Prep students at risk of receiving a SDA. The principal, ARD, student services and regional Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) staff collaborate to build comprehensive profiles of students who have received SDAs to assist in shaping the appropriate support required to ensure a successful school experience.

The regional ECEC team expresses the belief that the sharp and narrow focus on a great start through success in English and reduced Prep SDAs has elevated their work in the region. They are working closely with ARDs, schools and early childhood services, and feel empowered to make a difference.

Regional and school staff are engaged by the sharp and narrow focus on outcomes for children and students. They discuss the shift in the region from compliance to school improvement.

A newly developed governance structure is operating within the region. The RLT meets fortnightly for a full day and consists of the RD, ARDs, directors and heads of corporate services. A team of ARDs was engaged in a process to research and develop an effective full-day structure to meet the needs of the team leading towards an impact on school improvement. ARDs travelled to other regions to observe and discuss their processes prior to developing their own. The agenda includes professional learning, case management, feedback from advisory groups and workshopping focus areas.

Eight advisory groups with regional and principal representation meet once per term. The advisory groups have recently undergone a series of changes including membership, purpose and alignment. Advisory groups are now chaired by an ARD. There is further opportunity to investigate how these groups have the most impact on regional priorities.

A Principals' Congress was established in 2021 as a mechanism to bring strong and authentic voice to the region. The congress is chaired by the RD. Principals were able to nominate to be a representative. There is broad representation on the congress committee including from small and large primary and high schools, special schools and O&EECs. Principals on the congress express feeling that their view and opinion are highly valued and articulate appreciation for the opportunity to work directly with the RD. A strong sense of optimism for what this group may achieve as a strong collaborative partnership between schools and the region is apparent. Principals articulate they would value further clarification on the feedback and feed-forward expectations of this group. Many principals express that they are yet to be aware of who their representative is and how they are able to contribute if they not a member of the congress.

Each year the ARD leadership team commits to a leadership challenge to ensure effective implementation of the regional priorities. In 2021 the leadership challenge was 'Every school has a plan to deliver the AC and every school is engaged in external moderation'. Many schools communicate that external moderation is yet to commence. In 2022 the leadership challenge is 'Every teacher has an opportunity to engage in M1 and every school has student case management processes'. Some principals express a desire for greater clarity regarding the appropriate moderation model and ensuring regional support aligns to the model.

The ARD team has a strong culture of self-improvement and building effective instructional leadership skills. They participate in co-visits to learn from one another and share practice with

the RLT. The work of the ARD is highly valued by school leaders. They communicate a good balance between care and challenge in their work. Leaders discuss their school visit including focused data discussion on A-C English achievement and classroom visits. Some principals articulate that classroom visits only occur if time permits. Some ARDs have begun facilitating collaborative communities with a shared purpose, including learning walks and talks by school leaders and teachers. School leaders speak highly of the strong learnings from these opportunities. Many principals speak of working in parallel and express a strong desire to work with schools in a more authentic and rigorous way. Some principals express a strong desire for greater co-design of school visits from ARDs/Lead Principals (LP).

The RD undertakes 'ride-alongs' with all ARDs. School leaders articulate valuing the opportunity to have the RD in their school and ARDs express valuing the feedback provided to further enhance their practice.

Improvement strategies

Develop ways, as an RLT, to quality assure the effectiveness of the implementation of regional expectations and develop a shared understanding of instructional leadership.

Strengthen and communicate the roles and responsibilities of members of all advisory groups, including the Principals' Congress, to include expectations for feedback and feed-forward.

Develop shared expectations for the facilitation of collaborative communities to share practice and build expertise across schools and services.

Develop a process to regularly seek regional staff voice and feedback on key work.

3.2 Enabling effective leadership

Findings

Regional leaders express commitment to the development of effective leadership at all levels, in schools, early learning centres and regional office contexts, to support the region's Strategic Plan 2021–2024. This is apparent through one of the region's objectives of '*Capable People delivering Responsive Services*'. The region identifies that 'growing the capability of their people to have the skills, knowledge and support to perform at the highest level every day' is key to their regional improvement strategy. The common vision of '*Success for All*' connects the work of teams and provides the opportunity to build the capability of all levels of leadership within the region.

ARDs place a high priority on working collaboratively as a team. The region's values of '*Care and Enable*' and moral purpose of '*A great start for every child, and every student succeeding*', underpin their actions. Senior leaders utilise these agreed principles to challenge and support each other and drive their capability development. They articulate a high level of trust and value the significant shift in the RLT approach. They demonstrate an intentional focus on collaborative learning in relation to the delivery of regional priorities, positioning ARDs as lead-learners in the region. Feedback indicates ARDs deliver a consistent message to principals and schools.

ARDs indicate a high level of contact with their allocated schools, principals and leadership teams. School visits align to the agreed focus/agenda for each term as identified by the RLT. Some principals comment that these agendas are flexible and responsive to school needs.

ARDs articulate their use of school-based visits to challenge principals to ensure data-informed leadership and practices. The majority of principals express valuing the shift from compliance to coaching and communicate increasing levels of trust and engagement. Principals articulate that methods for follow-up discussions, feedback and provisioning/commissioning support vary across schools.

Most principals express that supervision is experienced as a supportive professional relationship. Principals articulate the importance of ARDs having consistent, yet differentiated Ways of Working (WOW). Some principals seek greater differentiation of approaches to better consider principal experience, school context and improvement agendas. Some principals express a willingness to engage in more rigorous professional dialogue with the ARD to foster principal leadership skills and grow a stronger culture of shared accountability.

Principals and regional staff acknowledge that the intent of the Annual Performance Review (APR) process is to identify opportunities to build their capability and leadership. For some, the APR process authentically supports ongoing growth conversations with their ARDs or line managers. For others, the APR is considered a process to be undertaken to meet departmental requirements. The development and monitoring processes regarding APR plans vary and are yet to be articulated.

Many stakeholders acknowledge the need for the region to develop a more strategic approach to leadership development and make clear the roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and measures for monitoring performance. Some stakeholders express the belief that the next piece of work is in targeted experiences for aspiring deputy principals to engage in structured and strategic opportunities that will support their advancement to the principalship position.

The region does is yet to have a clearly defined leadership capability framework. A range of documents exists outlining leadership development strategies and opportunities. These include the Metropolitan Regional Guide to Leadership Development 2022, Targeted Programs for Leadership Streams, Metropolitan Communities of Learning (COLs) 2022 and Communities of Practice (CoP) 2022. These documents outline the region's planned activities to engage school and regional staff in leadership and capability development. These documents are yet to appear to be widely known by principals and regional staff members. Several personnel are able to identify activities that they have participated in.

The region has supported the implementation of a well-regarded program titled 'The Project is Me'. This 18-month program aims to develop 'the how' of leadership. In 2021, 35 principals and deputy principals completed the course. Participants articulate high levels of satisfaction. Some school leaders are yet to be aware of the program and the selection process.

Many principals acknowledge that the region offers and promotes coaching and mentoring opportunities to build the leadership capacity of aspiring and middle leaders in schools. The identified program is delivered in concert with central office and opens 50 places, predominantly to aspiring deputy principals and new principals, linking them to experienced colleagues. Places are also allocated for staff from regional teams.

The region sponsors the Metropolitan Aspiring Leaders Program. This program has operated for 17 years and targets aspiring teachers, Heads of Department (HOD) and deputy principals seeking promotion, using 'strength finders'. The program is strongly supported by experienced principals, providing access to external experts and enhancing localised Professional Development (PD) networks.

The region provides and facilitates a range of advisory groups consisting of principals and regional staff. The broader aim is to promote a culture of collegial learning and distributed leadership where principal voice is apparent in the strategic direction of the region. A number of principals articulate appreciation for these opportunities to build their capability and contribute to the region's improvement agenda.

A significant number of alliances and clusters in the region place emphasis on the leadership growth of principals and other leaders in schools. A number of clusters, typically formed on a geographical basis or a common agenda, are able to describe initiatives they have developed to foster learning. For those involved in cluster arrangements, many principals speak of the positive value of authentic collaboration opportunities. Some principals utilise their cluster to source and fund programs. In some clusters, collaboration extends to middle leaders to support the agendas occurring within their schools. Many principals across the region indicate they are yet to have the same opportunities for collaboration with other schools and would welcome further opportunities to work together and share best practice, aligned to an evidence-based framework, to support high quality and authentic collaboration.

The work of the early childhood team is highly regarded. They work closely with the sector to support capability development of educators aligned to the system priorities of increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in kindergarten and supporting successful inclusion practices. They effectively use data to inform where to focus training, assess the quality of the program they deliver, and measure the impact through early childhood data sets. These include participation rates and regulation data focusing on Quality Area 6.

The ECEC culture and community team works to build culturally inclusive services through extensive capability development. The team has built a strong relationship with environmental education centres to deliver cultural insights workshops that include 'Walking on Country.' They additionally conduct outdoor classroom days as an opportunity for educators to observe the work in action. Using the data from Connect 4 Children, the team has also developed and facilitated five clusters to further build on their learnings and includes one face-to-face meeting and one online meeting per term. The region has seen a 5 per cent increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children participating in kindergarten over the past year.

The regional ECEC team delivers a two-part workshop for early years educators on inclusive practices supported by multiple external partners. This ensures that services have a quality Service Inclusion Plan (SIP) in place.

The team has a strong focus on building the capability of early years educators to improve pedagogy through the use of the 3a approach. Services have been targeted and invited to attend, with a focus on communities with high vulnerability rates.

Principals and regional office staff members new to the region or to their role identify considerable variance regarding induction. Many identify that induction typically operates in partnership with central office and includes acquisition of basic knowledge related to matters of compliance. A small number of recent appointments to regional positions articulate satisfaction with the process of induction, including learning about issues of compliance, in addition to being linked to a professional mentor. Most identify this as an improvement on previous induction processes. Regional team members and school leaders recognise that induction is yet to be systematically designed and implemented for newly appointed staff.

Key regional messages linked to sharing information and building capability in principals across the region are distributed via MetroConnect. Principals indicate a desire for a more concise and user-friendly resource and communication tool.

Improvement strategies

Collaboratively develop, coordinate and communicate a differentiated, targeted and strengths-based leadership framework aligned to regional priorities.

Enhance the APR process to model consistent and rigorous implementation of all phases and investment in strengths-based practices.

Utilise the APR process to identify, nurture and grow leaders and, in particular, middle leaders through universal and targeted professional learning opportunities.

Collaboratively develop an authentic and differentiated induction program for beginning principals and personnel new to the region, or their roles, and implement with fidelity.

3.3 Evidence-based policy and practice

Findings

The RLT has an unrelenting focus on improving the educational outcomes for all students and children within the region. Their united belief is that this is achievable by gathering evidence on the strengths of individual students, teachers with an appropriate curriculum and assessment knowledge base, and informed intervention through effective case management. Some regional leaders refer to a cultural shift from looking at data to using data to inform strategy and intervention.

The RD and RLT detail a fundamental belief that all strategic decisions within the region are based on data and a focus on improving the outcomes of students and children. Key regional policies are developed through a combination of research, alignment with government policy, and evidence-based practice by key regional leaders. These are endorsed through a developing governance structure.

The implementation of policy through the development of region-agreed practices is facilitated and communicated through a range of avenues. There are professional collegial learning groups and advisory groups that provide an opportunity to develop common approaches in utilising data to improve students and children's outcomes.

A number of agreed practices are aligned to moderation. The understanding amongst school leaders of the expected practice in using some data sets to inform teaching and learning, and appropriate interventions currently varies.

Many school leaders and RLT members reference the work of Lyn Sharratt¹ and 'FACES on the data' as being the research base behind case management. Practices amongst schools and those articulated by ARDs vary. Some school leaders refer to tracking of at risk students as an expected case management practice. The development of agreed non-negotiables for case management practices to be implemented in all schools with an associated professional learning plan and inbuilt Quality Assurance (QA) process is yet to be embedded.

The Metropolitan Regional K-12 Data Plan 2022 clearly outlines the measures, regional targets, monitoring, WOW with schools, governance and management for key data sets in relation to the achievement, engagement, wellbeing and transition of students and children. The RLT establishes and communicates regional targets included within the plan.

The plan explicitly states the key responsibilities of teachers, school leaders and regional leaders in working with the identified data sets in alignment with the School Improvement Hierarchy (SIH). The timelines associated with collection, dissemination and evaluation of each data set are yet to be included in the published data plan. The tools that are utilised to analyse each data set, and the specific regional members with the responsibility to do so, are yet to be specified within the plan. The region currently has a number of RLT members and other staff involved in data collection, analysis and communication across the region. A coordinated role is yet to be apparent.

An allocated RLT member works closely with a manager in generating a range of creative visuals to share and communicate key data sets aligned to the regional targets. The manager

¹ Sharratt, L., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Putting FACES on the data: What great leaders do!*. Corwin.

also provides data analysis to inform the allocation of some wellbeing resources to schools and services for other members of the RLT, and specific data requests from advisory groups. The data manager is pivotal in responding to data requests from ARDs, school clusters and CoPs, in addition to supporting the capability of regional staff in identifying, sharing and analysing data to highlight key areas of focus. The RLT has an established review cycle for the annual data plan, and principals express appreciation for the continuity of focus of key regional targets, in particular A-C LOA in English and QCE attainment.

The RD expresses a strong belief that the focus on student performance data within each school should be on the specific number of students rather than solely percentages due to the significant size and continual growth of the region. This is underpinned by the belief that every student and child is entitled to a great start and access to the AC.

The early childhood team uses a range of data to frame their work including Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), transitions, kindergarten participation and Prep SDA data. The region additionally uses appropriate non-confidential regulatory data to supplement the core non-regulatory data.

At the end of 2021, the early childhood team implemented a survey for all schools and the analysis of this qualitative and quantitative data supported the development of their 2022 work plan. Members of the team are continuously developing their data literacy skills.

The region utilises a range of centralised data management systems and survey tools to collect, analyse and interpret key quantitative and qualitative data sets aligned to region and system priorities. Data literacy capability development is an ongoing focus for RLT members and school leaders. OneSchool and School Online Reporting Dashboard (SORD) are used to generate key data sets from state and national assessments at a state, regional and school level.

The implementation of SORD has allowed for greater granularity in data analysis at a school level and has provided the opportunity for all schools and school leaders to compare individual performance to the region and like schools. Varying levels of expertise and confidence in the use of SORD amongst school and regional leaders are apparent. The region has a number of collaboratively developed targets focused on school improvement at a region, school and individual student level. These targets are communicated to school leaders through multiple forums including the regional strategic plan, the 2022 regional operational plan, school leader meetings and through structured ARD visits to all schools. The 2022 targets were developed in reference to previous targets resulting in some incremental increases from 2021. Knowledge of the specific focus on Prep to Year 2 English is strong with knowledge of the Years 7 to 9 English target emerging.

Regularly scheduled school leader meetings are utilised by the RD to highlight the improvement of the region against established targets. The key 2021 celebrations regarding improvements in data are compared to other regions and state averages. There was significant improvement in QCE/Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) attainment from 91.8 per cent in 2020 to 98.2 per cent in 2021. In 2021 there was a 2.3 per cent improvement in Prep to Year 2 A-C achievement that equated to over 1200 students.

The 2022 regional targets outlined in the K-12 data plan for achievement are: A-C in English, QCE/QCIA attainment, attendance – engagement, SDAs, kindergarten participation and retention across all junctures. The key wellbeing targets are Age-appropriate pedagogies (AAP) in practice and identified questions in the annual School Opinion Survey (SOS). The use of

transition statements, key qualitative data regarding transition from Year 6 to Year 7, and post-school transitions are the focus in measuring impact of transition programs across the region. Strong knowledge exists amongst the RLT and wider regional staff of the targets and the moral imperative behind these targets. Knowledge of the regional targets amongst leaders of schools focuses on the targets relevant to their individual sectors.

ARDs, in conjunction with the RLT, analyse school performance against agreed criteria in order to provide a differentiated support model. In negotiation with their ARD, each school sets specific school targets at either a whole-school or cohort level. School leaders receive feedback following most school visits with reference made to the school targets aligned to the regional priorities. To develop greater precision in monitoring the A-C LOA targets, schools submit term progress for English LOA, in addition to the semester reporting information that is available through SORD. Many school leaders refer to the role the ARD plays in discussing the school's progress towards the targets and that this is a crucial component of all school visits. Following school visits, ARDs provide a range of written feedback to school leaders. This feedback varies and includes a summary of the visit, observations of practice from classroom visits, relevant SORD and data sets, and questions/next steps for consideration.

At a regional level, RLT members develop individual student profiles to inform appropriate interventions aligned to regional priorities. Some of these students are marker students within the schools they support. This is exemplified by the analysis undertaken to support students receiving SDAs in Prep. The regional team identifies previous support and existing quantitative and qualitative data in relation to the student and then works closely with the school to minimise the occurrence of future SDAs through tailored interventions.

Specific resources are allocated at a regional and school level to support each of these priority groups. Knowledge of the regional focus on improving the performance of these identified priority groups varies amongst school leaders. Disaggregated student performance targets aligned to regional targets for priority groups are yet to appear in all school data plans and Annual Implementation Plans (AIP). Some school leaders refer to discussion on priority groups as part of regular ARD school visits. The RD acknowledges that this will be a continued regional priority.

Decisions informed by data regarding the deployment of finite additional resourcing to support students and children, and the commissioning of regional support to develop capability within schools, are an evolving practice. Directors allocate specific resources and deploy support in response to data and school context. The focus is on providing the support that the school requires and building capability within the school and service to best support the individual needs of all students.

Improvement strategies

Collaboratively develop an agreed approach to academic case management informed by evidence, with an established QA process that may be contextualised for each school.

Further develop the data literacy skills of regional and school leaders to disaggregate and analyse school performance data for identified priority groups and implement effective intervention strategies to close the gap.

Develop a coordinated approach to the collection and analysis of all data informed by the RLT to ensure consistency in high quality data-informed practice for all schools and services.

3.4 Quality teaching

Findings

Regional leaders outline their belief that effective teaching and learning frameworks are critical in building capability and delivering quality teaching. This regional belief is conveyed in the messaging of the region's focus on doing 'the right work, right now'. This belief is further refined in the communication of the following regional leadership challenges for 2022 that include: 'Every teacher in metro provided with the opportunity to engage in moderation before teaching and assessment in at least one learning area'; and 'Every school has developed and implemented a student case management process'.

Principals are supportive of initiatives to build school leader and teacher capability in priority areas. The region offers a diverse range of support strategies including face-to-face learning opportunities, online resources, and advisors to support the building of quality teaching and learning and to advance the regional agenda. Some principals outline that the significant disruption to the beginning of the 2022 school year has impacted on their ability to fully engage with the current regional leadership challenges.

Principals articulate that the clarity of messaging aligned to the regional improvement agendas has increased, and are supportive of the direction. A frequent comment is that school leaders feel invigorated by the agenda's direction and that the focus on the 'real' work is appreciated. Some principals speak of the messaging as being measured, sensible, visionary and inspiring.

There is a large regional teaching and learning support team that is available to assist schools in AC moderation and case management. The regional team outlines the role as building the capability of principals and middle leaders to a point where they are skilled and confident to deliver professional learning to their teaching staff aligned to the regional priorities. Principals who have engaged in this expertise are able to outline how their own and their middle leaders' knowledge has grown and express feeling confident to deliver the professional learning to their teaching staff. A systematic process for evaluating the impact of the support is yet to be apparent. Consistent use and monitoring of high impact professional learning strategies are yet to be documented.

School Leaders' Meetings (SLM) are part of the regional suite of offerings to build principals' capabilities. Principals acknowledge that these days provide an opportunity for the delivery of key messages and initiatives aligned to the delivery of teaching and learning. A range of professional learning days is currently offered to principals and include whole-region, ARD-aligned and cluster collaboration meetings. Principals articulate that the messaging from the system, the region and the RD is echoed by the ARD at these meetings and during school visits. Principals articulate appreciation of the opportunity for collaboration, learning from others and sharing of practice on these days.

Collegial relationships are a further process for sharing and are apparent across the region. Principals predominantly speak positively of the professional and personal relationships they have with colleagues. ARDs actively encourage principals to learn from and share with each other. Principals speak of some ARDs and LPs working closely with clustered principals on collaborative inquiry processes to address identified problems of practice. Other principals speak of their ARD/LP aligning them with other schools from outside their traditional clusters to enhance their knowledge and understanding of a specific focus area. Principals speak of some well-established geographical clusters being a key element of the region. Some principals cite

multiple examples of cluster collaboration where curriculum, assessment and sharing of pedagogical practice have occurred. Some principals articulate a lack of opportunities to engage with other schools to further their learning.

School leaders are consistently aware of the region's expectations regarding implementing the AC and the leadership challenges used to provide a sharp focus on this work. The measures to monitor schools include each school developing a plan to deliver the AC and leaders and teachers' engagement in various phases of the moderation process. Principals articulate high levels of support for the process of deepening curriculum knowledge and moderation processes. Some principals identify that further work is required to successfully implement curriculum practices, plans and programs across the region.

Differentiated approaches are employed by ARDs and LPs to provide support for each school's improvement journey. Many principals articulate that being able to work long term with the same supervisor builds a strong working relationship that results in more impactful work. Some principals comment that their ARD or LP has a strong line of sight into curriculum implementation through planned classroom visits that include conversations with teachers and students, and review and discussion of curriculum planning documents and classroom artefacts. Other principals are less clear regarding their ARD/LP's line of sight for the enactment of curriculum implementation. This line of sight is yet to be a consistent practice and some school leaders articulate variation in their understanding of QA expectations.

Enactment of the four phases of moderation is a key element in the region's improvement agenda. The implementation and participation in the M4 phase in 2021, and participation in the M1 phases in 2022, have been specifically identified as key expectations for the region. Principals articulate the use of the regional teaching and learning team as a key support mechanism for implementation of the four phases of moderation. Principals comment that the support offered by the teaching and learning team is aimed at upskilling school leaders in the expected practices. Some principals indicate professional learning delivered directly to teachers would be a more impactful model for teacher PD.

Some principals are able to speak of the ARD or LP having direct impact and engagement in the M4 phase of moderation, with others articulating that their ARD or LP is less directly engaged in the M4 process. Consistent QA processes that include feedback and measures of impact on teacher development and student achievement are yet to be established.

Many regional and school leaders indicate that the recruitment of teachers to the region as a whole is often over-subscribed within the transfer process. They articulate that the reality of the process is that some areas of the region are viewed as highly desirable, with other areas within the region viewed as less so. This perception poses challenges for regional Human Resources (HR) staff and school leaders.

Early career and beginning teachers are supported by the region in a number of ways. These include the manager of the Teaching Learning Centre (TLC) being a member of the RLT. Regional leaders work with the TLC to target programs to support the development of beginning and early career teachers. A Learning Needs Analysis Survey is undertaken to ascertain the key professional needs of the group. The 2022 survey identifies the desire for professional learning in behaviour management, differentiation skills in delivering the curriculum, conducting difficult conversations, wellbeing, and technology support. The TLC works with beginning teachers to align them with a beginning teacher mentor. The TLC team outlines that they are a recent addition to the regional suite of support for teachers and indicate that they are currently

building their identity so that all schools are aware of what they are able to offer in building teachers' capabilities.

The region and school leaders demonstrate strong understanding and implementation of both curriculum and assessment practices, and the interconnection between them. Most principals indicate that to achieve the desired lifts in academic outcomes there needs to be greater focus and support for developing teacher pedagogy. Most principals articulate that the use of evidence-informed pedagogical practices is driven from within schools rather than the region. A number of school leaders articulate that ARDs actively promote the use of visible learning strategies. School leaders outline that the emphasis on curriculum implementation, moderation practices and performance could be mirrored in a regional focus on pedagogy to suit the local context of each school. An understanding of the interconnection of curriculum, assessment and pedagogical practice for improvement of quality of teaching is yet to be apparent within the regional priorities. School leaders comment that they would welcome an increased focus and implementation support from the region in the use of high-yield evidence-based pedagogical practices.

Strong evidence and understanding of the interconnections within the ECEC team are apparent with explicit systems and process to support principals, leadership teams and teachers to clarify how to use evidence-based pedagogy in the early years to support how to teach and what students need to learn from the curriculum. In addition, there is strong evidence of the work of the ECEC team in supporting the continuity and alignment of curriculum from kindergarten – Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG) into school – AC.

There are 8785 First Nations students currently enrolled in schools across the region. An overt focus on the importance of Indigenous education, led by the RD, is a key area for improvement moving forward. There is movement away from focusing on a percentage measure towards using specific student numbers to sharpen all school attention on this agenda. The future work outlined by the Indigenous advisory group is focusing on building all staff cultural competencies in order to support Indigenous learning.

Improvement strategies

Extend the focus from curriculum and assessment to enhancing pedagogical practice to drive continuous improvement in quality teaching and student outcomes.

Establish QA processes to ensure the implementation of the AC and moderation practices across all schools in the region is rigorous, consistent and sustainable.

Review the model for regional professional learning to include measures of impact on changed teacher practice and student performance.

3.5 Collaborative networks and partnerships

Findings

The region has established a diverse range of collaborative networks and partnerships focused on building professional capability and wellbeing, and on improving outcomes for students and children. Regional staff members, principals and the wider educational community speak positively of the region's ability to foster and support collaborations, from which schools and early learning centres may learn and grow.

The region has identified a clear and sharp focus for region-wide improvement regarding A-C LOAs in English. This is reflected in the focus of the full range of collaborative networks and groups supported across the region that aim to achieve improvements in this area.

Regional team members express a collective appetite for working collaboratively across teams to ensure the service provided to schools and early learning centres is of a high standard and leads to improved outcomes for students and children. Regional and school leaders express appreciation for the autonomy encouraged in the development of professional learning focused partnerships and groups within and beyond the region.

ARDs are supporting collaborative networks across the region that they encourage to be independently motivated to learn and innovate. ARDs speak positively of their role in seeking opportunities to facilitate collaborative learning opportunities and partnerships with a view to ensuring there is shared accountability and commitment amongst members. Most principals articulate that some of the most valuable collaborative learning occurs through their interactions with their ARD. They articulate that in addition to building their leadership capabilities and instructional leadership skills, interactions with ARDs are establishing effective learning networks for colleagues to share and learn from each other.

The region is committed to giving principals voice through principal advisory groups, and the recently formed Principals' Congress. Advisory groups meet regularly and are chaired by an ARD. Groups include behaviour, great start, engagement and wellbeing, leadership, student protection and inclusive practices.

The region is enabling principals and other school leaders to participate in a range of professional learning networks by supporting a number of CoPs. CoPs are open invitation networks, supported by ARDs, PATaLs, Principal Advisor Education Services (PAES) and other regional staff, and are focused on raising and discussing key educational issues in the region. Region-led CoPs meet on an 'as need' basis and cover areas including trauma-informed practice, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Auslan, inclusion and the early years. Most principals articulate that CoPs supplement the more formalised regional advisory groups, and express appreciation for the opportunity to actively participate in targeted and collaborative professional learning. Many principals detail that sharing of information, findings and strategies developed through the CoPs varies and comment that they would appreciate further opportunity to share learnings from other groups.

The ECEC regional team is actively engaged with a range of internal and external partners to enact the early years and regional priorities. CoPs, advisory groups and project groups enable a range of internal and external stakeholders to co-construct targeted initiatives and implement practices in support of the achievement of regional targets and priorities. ECEC team members, regional staff and principals discuss how intentional collaboration across teams and with ARDs is elevating the importance of successful early years transitions. Stakeholders from the

Department of Child Safety speak positively of the strong, mutually beneficial partnership formed with ECEC through the Connect 4 Children strategy.

A number of professional clusters are established within the region and operate as independent professional networks not directly organised through the regional office, including, deputy principal groups, HOD – Curriculum (HOD-C) groups, head of inclusion groups, learning area associations and specialist teaching clusters. Principals and ARDs articulate most of these groups have wide-ranging agendas and priorities, and that they are also supporting teachers and middle leaders to focus on regional priorities.

Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) and principal association representatives comment that there is a strong collaborative relationship with the RD and regional office staff. They share their appreciation for the value the region places on their advice and consultation. They outline that issues raised through these consultation channels are viewed as an opportunity for collaborative resolution.

The region has well established processes and practices to facilitate communication with the centre. Many regional and centre staff articulate that collaboration is strongest in reacting to matters requiring immediate action. Centre staff comment that the region responds quickly and decisively. Regional staff indicate that communication and collaboration between the region and the centre's strategic and operational branches are yet to be fully realised in all areas. Regional staff identify the need to be proactive in engaging with the centre, particularly in promoting regional teaching and learning priorities.

External moderation is a key driver for the establishment of school clusters, particularly related to building shared curriculum expectations within the region. Currently, some schools are yet to work in cluster arrangements or undertake external moderation. A number of schools are yet to be clear regarding how to effectively establish and participate in clusters or groups of like schools. They indicate they would appreciate targeted support, guidelines and direction in gaining the most out of their collaborative arrangements, particularly in relation to external moderation.

The region facilitates a number of interagency partnerships particularly through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services team with the development of a region-wide database of external support services. Regional staff highlight the benefit of the database in supporting schools to identify specific external support for First Nations children and students.

More broadly, schools describe a strong desire to further build external partnerships that directly align to achieving regional and school targets. Many principals indicate they would highly value support from the region in identifying new partnerships. They articulate an appetite for support in measuring the impact of existing partnerships in achieving regional priorities.

Local Members of Parliament speak of the positive relationship they have with regional office staff, schools and early learning centres within their electorates. They share appreciation of the region's responsiveness. Some advise they would appreciate a more rigorous approach to updating on key staff changes within their electorate and the regional office.

The regional student protection team has established partnerships with the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs and the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to support young people engaged in the youth justice system. Two court liaison officers provide support to young people, their families and schools in continuing their engagement with education. Stakeholder meetings are held on a regular basis to ensure all possible available

support and interventions are in place. Through these partnerships, proactive programs have been implemented utilising youth justice funding to assist in reducing recidivism.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families is facilitated through three school Community Liaison Officers (CLO) and two regional Community Partnership Officers (CPO). These officers indicate that the quantity and complexity of social, health and education issues affecting these families are increasing. They articulate that a key part of their role is to establish enduring partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and leaders, and with Indigenous community organisations. They acknowledge these partnerships and collaborations are in the early stages of establishment and are optimistic for the future possibilities.

Improvement strategies

Provide clear advice and support to schools in establishing and participating in effective collaborative teaching and learning communities to share best practice, achieve regional priorities and celebrate success.

Establish consistent processes to enable regional advisory groups, CoPs and other collaborative networks to share and communicate findings, strategies and information to all principals and school leaders across the region.

Identify new external partnerships and evaluate the impact of existing external partnerships aligned to regional priorities.

3.6 Targeted use of resources

Findings

The region has significant human and material resources available for deployment to schools and ECEC services to deliver high level educational outcomes and drive improvement. Across and within regional teams there is an articulated shared culture of service orientation and a focus on capability development. Principals detail that regional offices act as a support and service organisation to schools to ensure that every child gets a great start and every student in the region is succeeding.

Principals articulate a high level of satisfaction with the targeted support from regional education services staff. Principals advise there are multiple pathways to access that support. Some principals and regional staff express the belief that there is a lack of clarity as to which is the most appropriate pathway and that there is a risk that the support is not always coordinated. Variation in the approach, responsiveness and quality of support from the corporate services area is articulated.

The current approach to providing a range of support services to schools is predominantly deemed to work well to provide schools with the support they require. To address perceived disconnect in service provision and to better align their services to the region's priorities, the region is pursuing a structured, strategic and data-informed approach to commissioning of both human and material resources. To operationalise this, the region is developing the Commissioning of Support in Metropolitan Region framework. This draft framework articulates the intended principles, processes, governance and measures for providing available human and material resources to support regional priorities that align to the commitment of giving every child a great start and every student succeeding. The draft framework has an equity basis to support schools where the greatest need is identified. Draft documentation outlining the policy and procedural approach for commissioning work is aligned to the effective and equitable distribution of resources. It outlines that criteria for consideration include threats to meeting targets and declining measures compared with similar schools. It additionally accounts for high-profile cohorts such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students in Out-of-Home Care (OOHC), students with disability and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) students.

The RD and other regional leaders articulate the purpose of the proposed commissioning model is to 'provide schools with the resources they need, not necessarily what they want', to build capability within schools and services and to focus on investing resourcing in a purposeful and targeted manner to achieve outcomes. Clarity and understanding of the new commissioning process in the regional offices are yet to be realised.

Principals express valuing the presence of regionally-based student services staff working within their schools aligned to their school needs, and in some cases supporting individual students. The proposed Student Services Request for Support 2022 fact sheet advises of the range of regional support available in the form of specialist staff provided through the students with disability resourcing model, such as therapists, nurses and Advisory Visiting Teachers (AVT), and the range of capability development and advisory services available to students.

Principals, particularly those in secondary schools, express a strong degree of concern regarding regional governance and allocation of the guidance officer workforce, the provision of sufficient and timely communication, and representation in leadership discussions. Principals

advise that guidance officers receive confirmation of their school placement close to the end of the year and this impacts their confidence in the system and their personal wellbeing.

Regional staff and stakeholders communicate an increasing complexity of the work of senior guidance officers and guidance officers. Guidance services workforce and principals articulate that these pressures have been compounded by the region's sharp focus on A-C achievement, particularly for schools in challenging communities, actions to reduce reliance on SDAs in the early years, and requirements to effectively case manage excluded students into a successful enrolment or alternative pathways.

Some school leaders and stakeholders express a level of concern regarding the unintended consequences of school-purchased processes for student services staff such as Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) and guidance officers. Some principals additionally express concern regarding the region's 'buy-in' process for Whole School Support – Student Learning Resource (WSS-SLR) resources. It is articulated that the fiscal capacity for some schools to purchase Full-time equivalent (FTE) support staff results in the re-deployment of staff to different schools. School leaders advise this may not always align with the needs of the school. Additionally, the process of purchasing additional FTE staff in the student support area places pressure on the limited workforce. Principals articulate that those who decide not to buy into regional resources are unsupported when students with highly complex and challenging behaviours enrol.

School leaders acknowledge a positive shift in the responsiveness of the region to provide some resources and supports as required. School leaders and system stakeholders articulate the region's strong, timely and effective response to conditions outside school control, such as natural disasters, emergent high-profile issues and complex student presentations. Principals affected by the recent floods praise the operational and wellbeing support they received from regional leaders and staff.

Regional staff express a strong and shared commitment to providing quality services that support the delivery of student outcomes aligned to regional priorities. The clear focus on student outcomes as a regional priority results in some regional staff advising that their support needs do not receive similar attention.

School leaders understand that technical assistance and expertise are available to them through the PAES role, directors and their ARD. This technical assistance and expertise are highly valued. School leaders consistently articulate that requests for resourcing support may be raised directly with their ARD and are responded to in a timely manner.

Regional corporate services support is available to schools. Some school leaders clearly and strongly indicate that infrastructure, human resource and finance support from the region is timely and effective. Variation exists in the experiences articulated by other school leaders.

Some stakeholders and community representatives articulate that discrepancies in school utilisation and enrolment practices across the region are a key area of concern. Regional data indicates broad variation across schools in utilisation as measured by student enrolment compared to the school's built capacity. For some schools, enrolment growth and demand significantly exceed their capacity and for other schools enrolment demand is in decline resulting in excess existing capacity. A view articulated is that enrolment practices in some schools through the use of excellence programs and marketing to increase enrolments beyond local catchments potentially drives unintended consequences for other neighbouring schools.

Some stakeholders and school leaders outline that significant implications are apparent in some schools including infrastructure and resourcing demands, community perceptions and residualisation effects. Some stakeholders identify that a system or regional approach is required to determine innovative solutions that address these challenges and maximise utilisation for all schools.

Improvement strategies

Provide clarification and further communication regarding the commissioning process to improve understanding and transparency across regional teams and schools.

Consider ways to enhance consistency of the service delivery experience for schools in the support provided by regional corporate services – infrastructure, human resources and finance.

Develop metrics to measure the impact of the provision of support services to schools, including the impact of the 'buy in' process.

Expand regional messaging of '*Care and Enable*' to capture regional, corporate and administrative staff, including consistent wellbeing and self-care messaging across regional offices.