



Data Analysis: State-wide purpose of public education in South Australia consultation

Department for Education

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Purpose of Engagement



Participants were asked to provide ideas and feedback to help write a Statement of Purpose for Public Education in South Australia, a set of areas of impact, and measures of success for our public education system. This will be used as the basis for a new department strategic plan outlining the priorities of the department. In addition to the stakeholder feedback, evidence from experts and experiences in South Australia and other jurisdictions should be used to help interpret and analyse the data needed to make decisions on its strategic direction, priorities and implementation. Please note, the language used in this report needs to be considered to ensure clear and coherent translation to the preschool and school communities as a primary audience.

The Department for Education would like to thank everyone who participated and helped organise and facilitate discussions on the purpose of public education in South Australia. As public education is embedded in its community we kicked off the conversation in 2022 with student forums throughout the state and continued with employers and leaders of schools and preschools. We also received valuable feedback from staff, parents, community members and others.



Summary of engagement

Student discussions were held with:

- More than 850 children and young people at 7 forums across the state
- Smaller group discussions with:
 - Preschool children
 - Aboriginal students
 - Aboriginal students studying in the Yalata and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands
 - Children in care
 - Students identifying as having a disability (organised by schools)
 - Students involved in the justice system
 - Students with a culturally and linguistically diverse background.
- Artwork illustrating ideas and experiences was provided by preschool children

Staff and stakeholder forums and discussions were held with:

- Preschool directors and school principals
- Oversight and Advocacy Bodies
- Leader and Principal Associations
- Australian Education Union (SA branch)
- Industry Skills Councils
- Force Forty members
- Educators SA members
- Philanthropists and NGOs.

Survey and written submissions:

More than 45 written submissions were received (refer to p49 for a list) and more than 9,500 students, staff, parents, carers and community members participated in surveys.

In summary, Square Holes has collated the data and prepared a summary of findings, as well as individual analysis on each component of the research, from the below consultations:

Leaders' Day

Forums and meetings

Student forums

Surveys

Written submissions

Student feedback forms

Artwork from kindergartens

Industry Skills Councils forum



Analysis Summary



Three core pillars driving the purpose conversation



- Active and engaging learning opportunities
- Agency and collaboration in learning
- Belonging and curiosity
- Practical life skills
- Feel safe and confident to engage and make mistakes
- A focus on creativity and problem solving
- A good and enjoyable job
- Happiness and positive life experiences

1 Student wants and needs



- Active and creative classrooms
- Collaboration and discussions
- Personalised lesson planning
- A supportive learning environment where students feel belonging and confidence
- Reasonable teacher workloads
- Training and relevant development opportunities
- Nurturing critical / creative thinking and problem solving
- A focus on developmental progression

2 What would need to be true?



- Fair and equitable system
- Time and flexibility for teachers
- Clear communication and actionable implementation
- Reimagining measures of success
- Collaboration and partnership among educators, schools and government
- Inclusion and diversity
- Student empowerment

3 System features and principles





Student Wants and Needs

Answering these key research objectives:

- What are students hopes for the future?
- How education can help with that?
- What should students learn more of at school?
- What skills and capabilities will support students to thrive and navigate the world after they complete school?
- What do you expect from the public education system to support students to thrive emotionally at school?
- What specific skills and capabilities do graduates need to thrive in further education?



Key insights: Student wants and needs

Students desire more **active learning** and **opportunities beyond the classroom**

1 Discussed is the somewhat perceived outdated education delivery and assessment methods.

Students **value collaboration and discussions** with their peers

2 But often feel they don't get the opportunity to work through problems and tasks in this manner.

Students seek **flexibility in learning** connected to their world and passions

3 As suggestions to increase student engagement and motivation to learn.

Students want all to have **agency in learning** and the confidence to participate

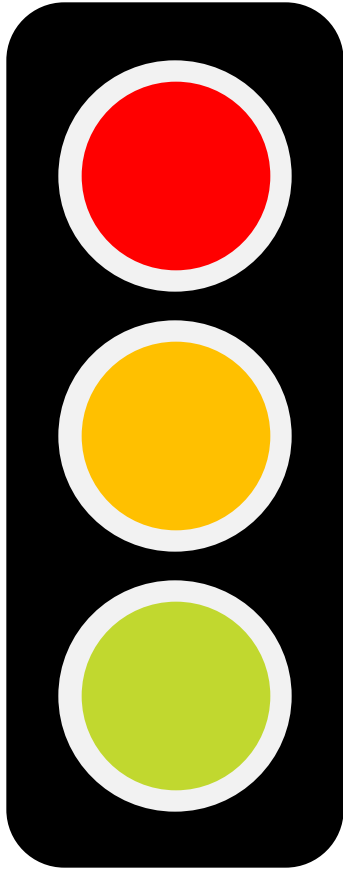
4 Safety to take risks and voice their opinions in a supportive/encouraging environment.

Students crave the **belonging and curiosity** present in earlier years

5 The transition into high school and added pressures, subsiding support and change in delivery that comes with it is a strong undertone in feedback.



Stop • Address • Start



- ! Perceived outdated and traditional forms of assessment and learning (e.g., reliance on rote learning, exams, textbooks)
- ! Work/ assessment overload and unrealistic timelines
- ! Not giving enough time for students to grasp complex ideas/ problems
- ! Predominate focus on grades as the ultimate cognitive priority rather than the progression of learning

- Waning support and community belonging as students transition into high school
- External pressures and impact of COVID, social media and other technology on student wellbeing and confidence

- ✓ More active learning opportunities and classrooms
- ✓ Personalised and empowered learning – encourage students to work in a way that best suits them, and cater for individual interests
- ✓ More student engagement, discussion and collaboration with each other
- ✓ Encourage creative thinking, exploration and alternate views of assessment – opposed to rote learning
- ✓ Greater support structures and environment – establishing stronger student wellbeing and confidence to participate
- ✓ Increased emphasis on teaching important life skills for greater holistic development (e.g., tax, nutrition, coping mechanisms)





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I want schools to introduce learning in really fun ways while keeping everything simple. Classrooms can also be more active by creativity and shared ideas from children.

Year 4 – 6 Student

Open text analysis



- A good and enjoyable job
- Achieve success (through both schooling and into a career)
- Happiness and positive life experiences
- Help family, friends, community and the environment

WHAT

Do you hope for the future?



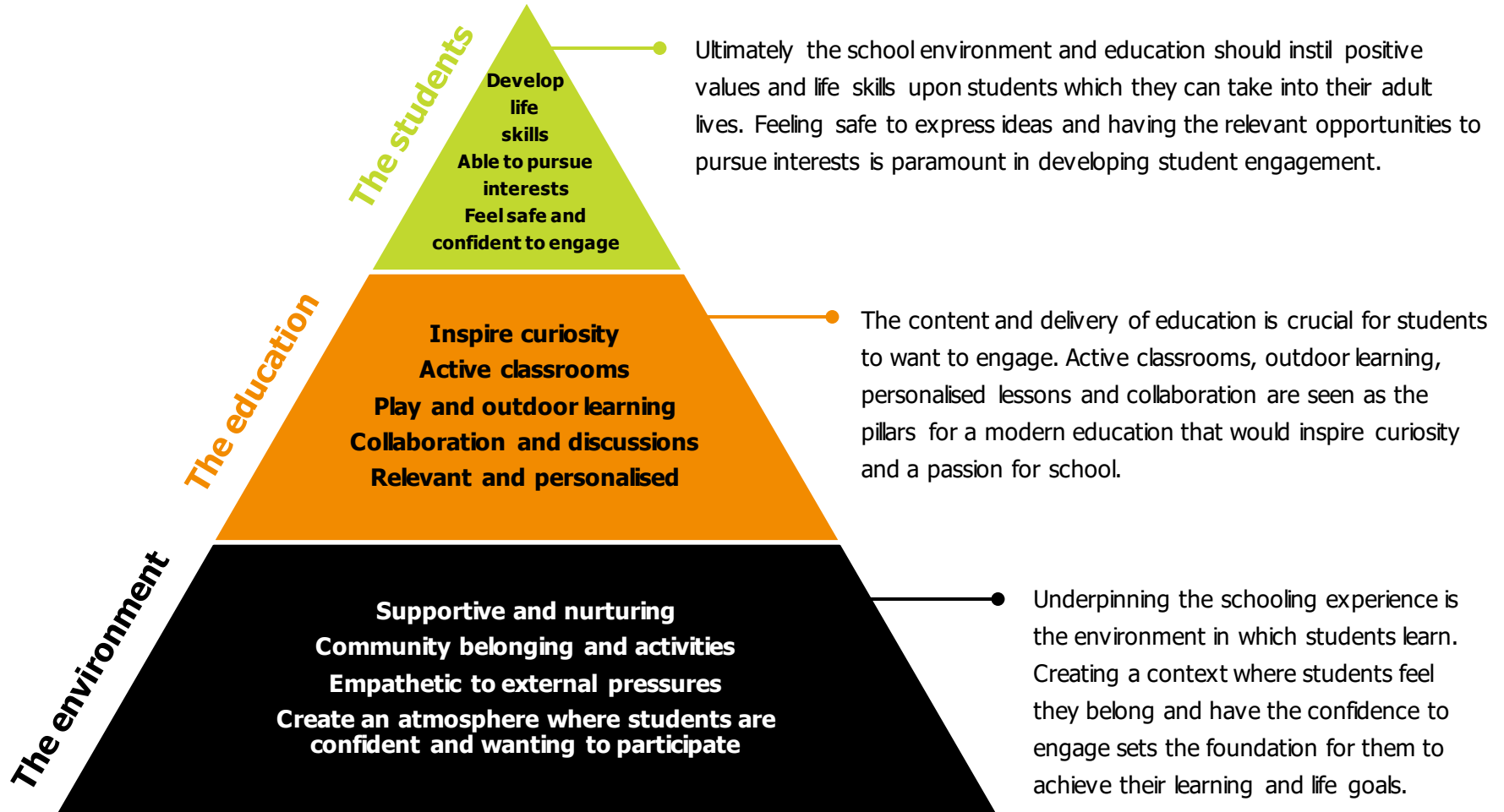
- Structure a supportive learning environment that teaches strong values and useful life skills
- More engaging, interactive and personalised education
- Provide relevant opportunities and pathways to help explore areas of interest and careers

HOW

Might school help you achieve that?



The fundamentals of schooling: A student perspective





What would need to be true?

Answering these key research objectives:

- What are the skills, tools and support our staff need to apply their profession for the benefit of each student?
- What would you change (or not change) in public education that would make the biggest positive impact on the young people of South Australia?
- What should schools and preschools do more of?
- What should schools and preschools do less of?
- Are there any changes you would like to see in the functional supports to schools or roles and responsibilities in staff that work to support children?



Key insights: What would need to be true?

Staff (and others) report current **workloads and administrative burdens**

1 Paperwork and box ticking procedures can decrease effectiveness to teach.

Invest in **professional learning and development** opportunities

2 Providing teachers with the necessary time and skills to be able to effectively cater to each learner in the ways that best engage them.

There is a desire to expand student competencies together with core literacy and numeracy, **nurturing critical thinking and creativity**

3 Although such foundational skills are critical, there is scope to extend (not replace) student capabilities to ensure they are better prepared for the adult world.

Ease pressures on teachers and allow them time to focus on empathetic and personalised education delivery

4 By relinquishing some administrative responsibilities, teachers will have time to better connect and engage with their students in a meaningful way.

Move beyond content-focused curriculum to a more holistic **developmental progression-focused** one

5 Refocusing within classrooms on personalised learning to the development of each learner.





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I am ready for a fundamental shift in what teachers in secondary schools focus on - from content, to skills, dispositions and capabilities. I think we need to focus on helping students to become highly effective self-reflective learners.

Secondary School Leader

Five changes to consider for public education



1. Creating a safe and secure learning environment

Safety remains a core concern for parents, students, staff and community members alike. Bullying and physical / emotional harassment is impacting students wellbeing and ultimate desire to engage with their education, whilst also impacting staff capacity to teach and engage their class. As a consequence, many expressed the need for further support staff and programs to aid those with challenging behaviours and special needs, easing the onus on teachers. Inclusion and diversity training is also greatly supported.

2. More holistic focus on student skills, dispositions and capabilities

A whole child approach is considered key to student development. This requires education that recognises and values the diverse needs of each student. To not only address academic needs but also social, emotional, and physical needs. Extending beyond foundational skills (such as literacy and numeracy), to important life skills and critical / creative thinking to provide the best possible platform for students to thrive beyond an educational setting.

3. Additional teacher support and reduced administrative workload

'Let teachers teach', a recurring sentiment in responses, highlighting the need to let teachers be educators first and administrators second rather than the inverse. It is believed that a reduction in administrative tasks will better equip teachers to offer the flexible and personalised learning that is craved.

4. Evolving standardised testing methods

There is a strong call to shift from a content-focused curriculum to a more developmental progression-focussed one. Utilising evolving technology and innovative practices to keep students (and teachers) engaged and informed. Currently there is a perception that existing standardised testing methods and assessments (e.g., NAPLAN, SACE) are narrow, impersonal and often demotivating, with little recognition or reward for other development activities being undertaken by the student and schools.

5. Funding and resource allocation

Greater funding and provision of resources across the entire public education sector was a key theme across consultation. There is hope an evolved funding model will help to create fairer and more equitable education opportunities for all (including those in regional areas, from lower socio-economic backgrounds and culturally and linguistically diverse students). Such investment is suggested to address issues concerning teacher support, improved facilities and capacity for additional help or extension.





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Support children to grow to be their best versions of themselves, in an environment that values them as individuals, celebrates their growth and has a foundation grounded in relationships and connection.

Early School Leader



System Features and Principles

Answering these key research objectives

- In preparing students to participate in the industries of the future, what is the role of:
 - Public education
 - Business and industry
 - Non-governmental organisations
- How can our education system be flexible enough to build on the strengths of individual students while ensuring all students receive a high-quality education experience?



Key insights: System features and principles

The purpose of public education is to create a society that is **fair and equitable** to all

1 Presently some students are being left behind in the current system.

An evolved system will provide teachers with the **time and flexibility** to do the job they love

2 Teachers want autonomy, support and time to get to know their students, and to be creative and curious about how to best mould them into life-long learners.

The values that shape the purpose need to be **clear and communicated effectively**

3 So that it can guide and motivate leaders to engage with it, without too much interference.

There is a call for a **reimagining** of how **schools measure success**

4 This requires a system shift, where measures of student development and growth are equally valued as modes of standardised testing.

Collaboration and partnership among educators, schools and government is vital

5 Moving away from a hierarchical structure where the Department has all the answers, and towards more of an ecosystem that values all contributors.



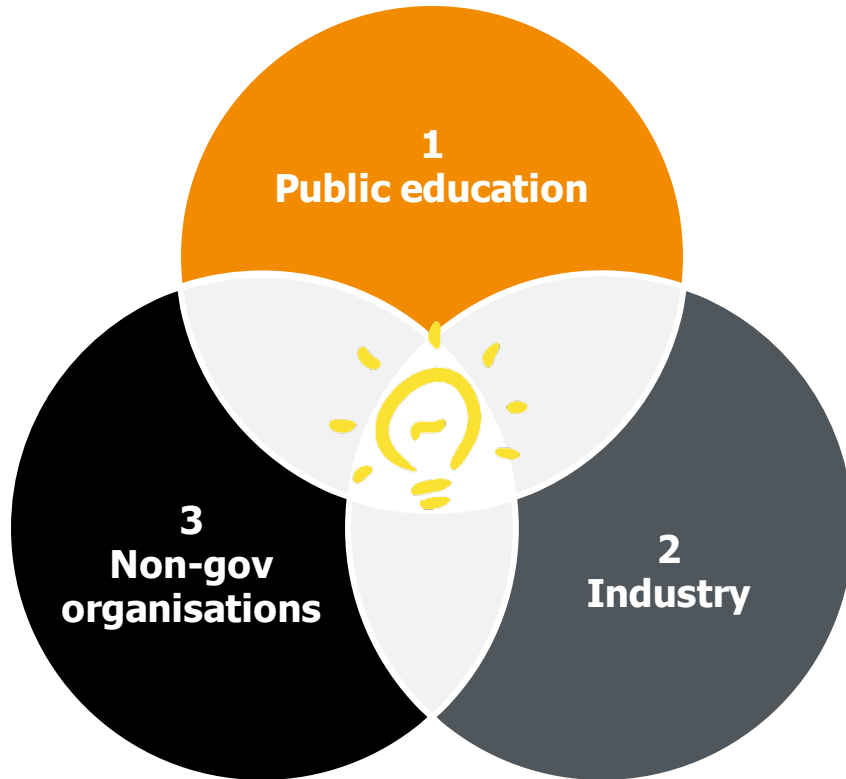


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It is really important that the narrative around transforming education and being a world leader in this space considers both the systemic / political changes needed. Otherwise, we simply push the equity and excellence agenda back down to leaders and teachers in schools and this becomes a 'practise' exercise only.

Corporate Leader

Preparing students to participate in the industries of the future



Develop **life-long learners** with the capacity and drive to contribute as **global citizens**, providing relevant opportunities and access to individual passions

- 1. Role of public education:** Ensure students are being nurtured as problem solvers and with life skills, thinking creatively and critically, whilst developing the core foundations of numeracy and literacy. Creating an environment of safety and comfort where all students feel confident to engage.
- 2. Role of industry:** Establish the link between schools and industry, including career guidance, mentoring, pathways and work-experience.
- 3. Role of non-government organisations:** Education collaborators, support systems and information networks. Can provide opportunities such as volunteer programs, mentoring, inclusion training and inform emerging research, innovation and best practices.



Considerations for strategic plan development

1. **Strategic direction requires holistic buy-in** across all stakeholders (moving from a hierarchical structure to a more dynamic ecosystem). Development should be firmly led by the Department but informed by those working on the ground level (e.g., teachers, support officers, principals, preschool directors, families). Leaders must be motivated to engage, not told what to do.
2. The **vision and principles must be bold, actionable and clearly communicated**. The conversation must shift away from being abstract to concrete. Identifying real possibilities will help the proposed direction feel real and may increase engagement and illuminate effective next steps.
3. The **education sector and those within are not homogenous**. Differences should be accounted for and handled with care, to create an equitable and fair framework that supports and values everyone within it.
4. **School contribution to student growth and factors beyond standardised methods of testing** should be at the core of a new strategic vision and evolved measures of success. Current models do not fully capture the impact of education on holistic student development
5. **Be cognisant of potential widespread 'strategic plan fatigue'**, ensuring communications and consultation are not another burden for already overworked teachers and leaders



Survey results



Summary

1. Parents, community members and students are in agreement as to the importance of foundational skills needed for work, further study in life. Also desired is a focus on helping children be creative, innovative and resourceful and developing life long learners in a safe and inclusive environment
2. Many hope that public education provides an encouraging environment where it is okay to make mistakes and pursue individual interests, where students feel confident to learn
3. Much feedback around changes to public education centred around increased funding, greater wellbeing practices, more support for teachers and tailoring personalised learning and building on foundational skills as well as more holistic capabilities

62%

of parents believe **ensuring students graduate with the foundational skills needed for work, further study and life** is the most important purpose of public education

56%

of staff believe **helping students to be creative, innovative and resourceful,** able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas, disciplines and deep content knowledge is the most important purpose of public education

55%

of community members believe **ensuring students graduate with the foundational skills needed for work, further study and life** is the most important purpose of public education

62%

of students **want to learn more life skills at school** and think these are most important

47%

of parents **hope school encourages an environment where it's okay to make mistakes**

71%

of staff **hope that children and students develop a love for life-long learning, a passion for problem solving, an ability to collaborate and have respect for all adults and peers**

44%

of community members **hope school encourages an environment where it's okay to make mistakes**

38%

of students **hope for people to be confident in learning**

5 changes to public education

1. Funding / resource allocation
2. Student wellbeing / safety
3. personalisation / inclusion
4. Teacher support / workload
5. Foundational skills / thinking



What do you think the purpose of public education in SA should prioritise?

	Parent and carer	Staff	Community
Ensure students graduate with foundational skills needed for work, further study and life, such as numeracy and literacy.	62%	41%	55%
Help children and students to be creative, innovative and resourceful, able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas, disciplines and deep content knowledge.	55%	56%	53%
Help children and students develop as successful and confident lifelong learners.	39%	45%	40%
Help children and students learn practical life skills and responsibilities needed as citizens.	34%	31%	33%
Support children and students develop social and emotional wellbeing.	30%	29%	21%
Support children and students learn about themselves and how they could contribute to a vibrant, thriving community while acting with moral and ethical integrity.	29%	42%	34%
Help students find a pathway to a specific job, career or further education opportunity.	17%	12%	13%
Build resilience and the ability to respond to feedback.	11%	18%	8%
Help children and students develop global perspectives and understandings.	9%	11%	11%
Other	3%	3%	6%
Column n	3,849	2,288	182



How school might help children and young people in our community have a bright future

	Parent and carer	Community
By teaching children and young people how to problem solve and not just with lessons – with other things too	57%	57%
By teaching children and young people different skills that will help them throughout life	47%	46%
By teaching children and young people how to be social, communicate and build relationships	45%	45%
By giving children and young people heaps of opportunities and ways to explore what they love	45%	26%
By helping children and young people support their mental health and build resilience	29%	25%
By pushing children and young people out of their comfort zone so that they can be more successful	25%	15%
By teaching children and young people valuable learning skills	22%	24%
By helping students learn the qualities they need for a particular job	10%	9%
Other	3%	12%
Column n	3,663	177



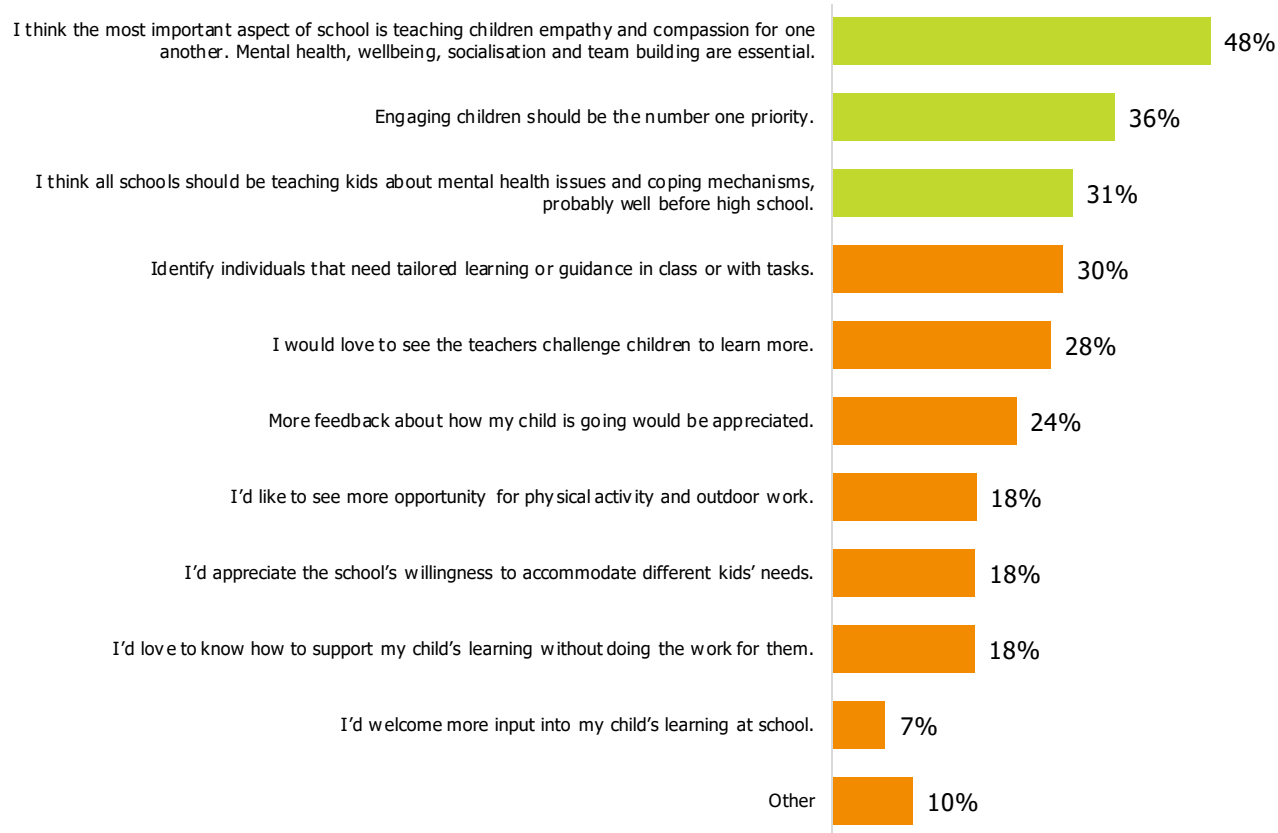
In a series of forums last year, students shared their hopes about public education for students of the future

	Student	Parent and carer	Community
I hope for people to be confident in learning.	38%	26%	25%
I hope that everyone is not afraid to give something a go.	36%	36%	30%
I hope school encourages an environment where it's okay to make mistakes.	29%	47%	44%
I hope that people enjoy learning.	26%	27%	34%
I hope that there are more subjects to choose from.	26%	10%	6%
I hope everyone feels part of a group to help each other learn.	25%	26%	22%
I hope mental health and wellbeing is prioritised over grades and exam scores. Students are more than a letter.	24%	31%	34%
I hope schools are more hands on. Like doing more outside things.	22%	17%	8%
I hope that in the future school is a place where every student gets their own individual ways to learn and improve their learning.	21%	41%	38%
I hope that students are more involved in discussions in and out of the classroom (e.g., that students have more of a say in how they learn).	20%	19%	19%
Other	2%	4%	10%
Column n	3,864	3,534	159



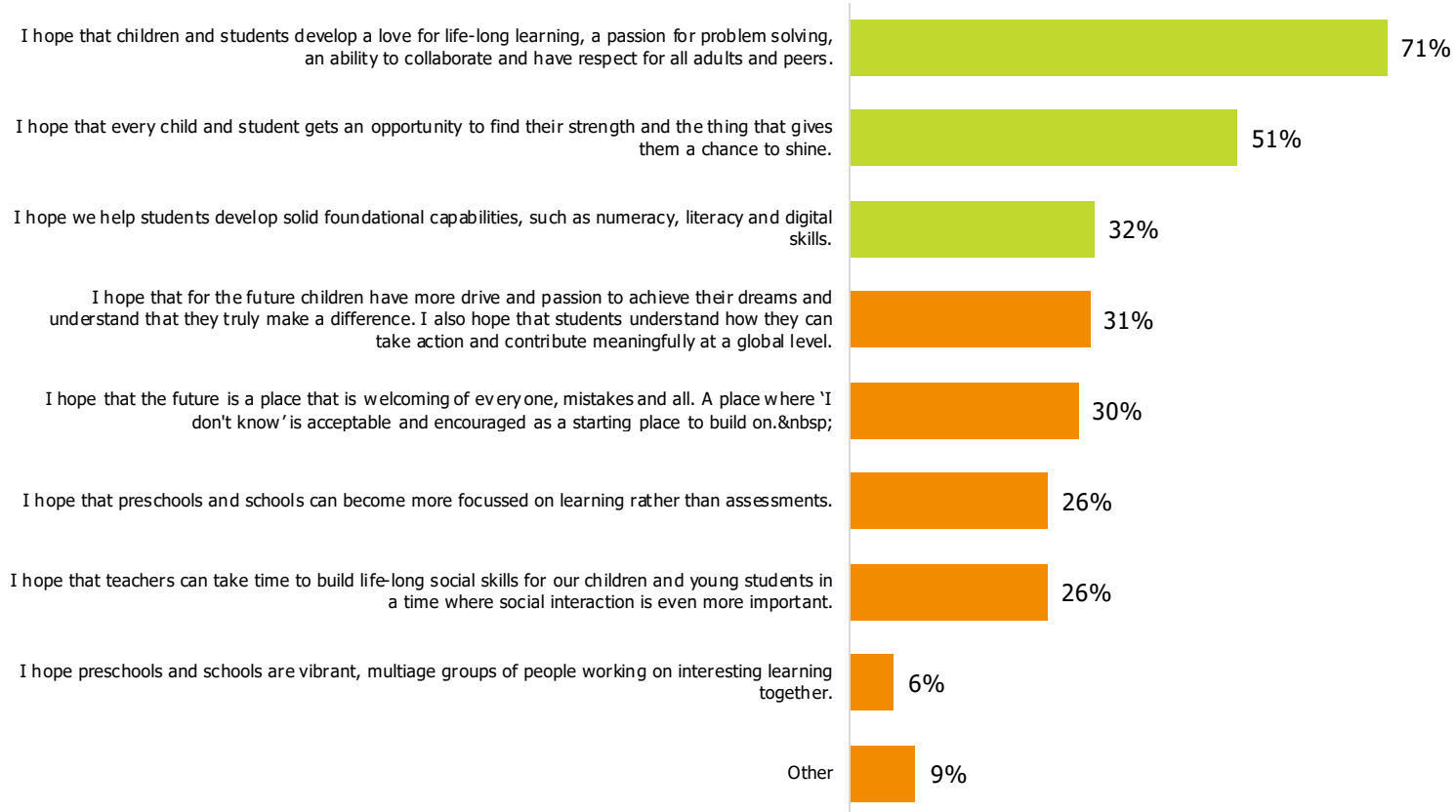
How could education help your child or young person further?

[parents, n=3,734]



Below are based on comments staff shared about their hopes about public education for students of the future

[staff, n=2,300]



Improving staff joy in their work...

Recurring themes

Address teacher workload

(admin and paperwork)

- "Let us just passionately teach and develop rapport with our kids rather than tick boxes and worry about the red tape and paperwork etc.
- Allow teachers to teach and not allow the constant stream of administrative duties bog them down and cause them to lose the joy of teaching. Too many wonderful educators are leaving the classroom.
- Stop overloading with units of work & teaching by PowerPoint."

Greater support for students and teacher ability to deal with issues

(students with challenging behaviours and special needs)

- "More behaviour help. Easier access to IESP. Stop making it harder and cutting support. Helping make the job easier, enjoyable over constant roadblocks for needing students.
- Solve behaviour management issues. They are the biggest issue. We love teaching but are stopped from doing so because of the behaviour issues.
- Have more support for kids with behaviour issues so that students and teachers feel safe, and that learning can happen. Relief teachers need better support in this area as well."

More time to plan, collaborate and engage with students

(teacher empowerment and autonomy)

- "Increase NIT time as complexities of the students requires the time, it's not the class size, it is its complexity that takes time to address.
- TIME for collaborating and designing learning. More admin support (excursions, preparing resources). Less complexity. You're failing the needs of students who need more than we can give in mainstream."

Other recurring themes

- Greater resources and facilities
- Support for teacher wellbeing and a community / school culture which values and respects educators
- Job security





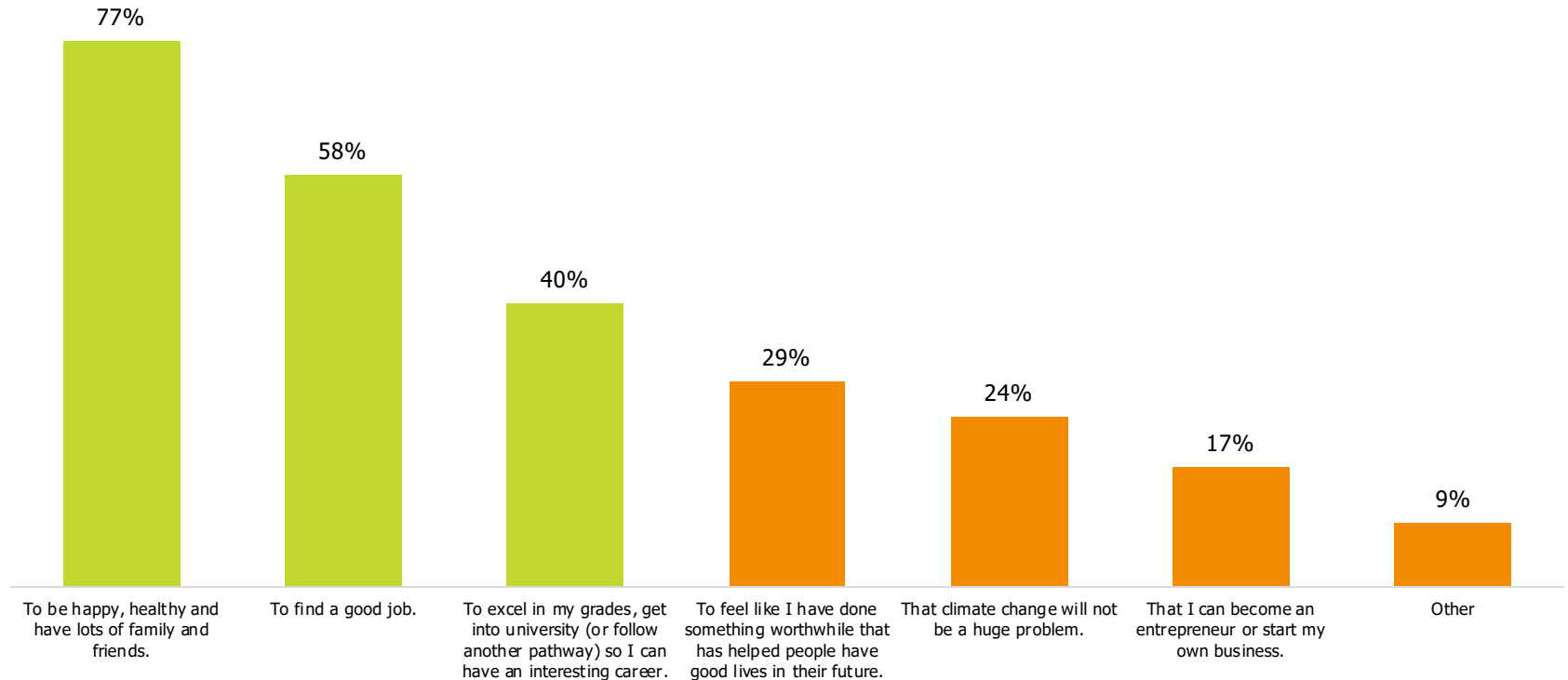
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Continue to encourage (and provide funded time) for me to be an instructional leader! Visibility and a connection to students about learning is what brings joy to the role.

Staff

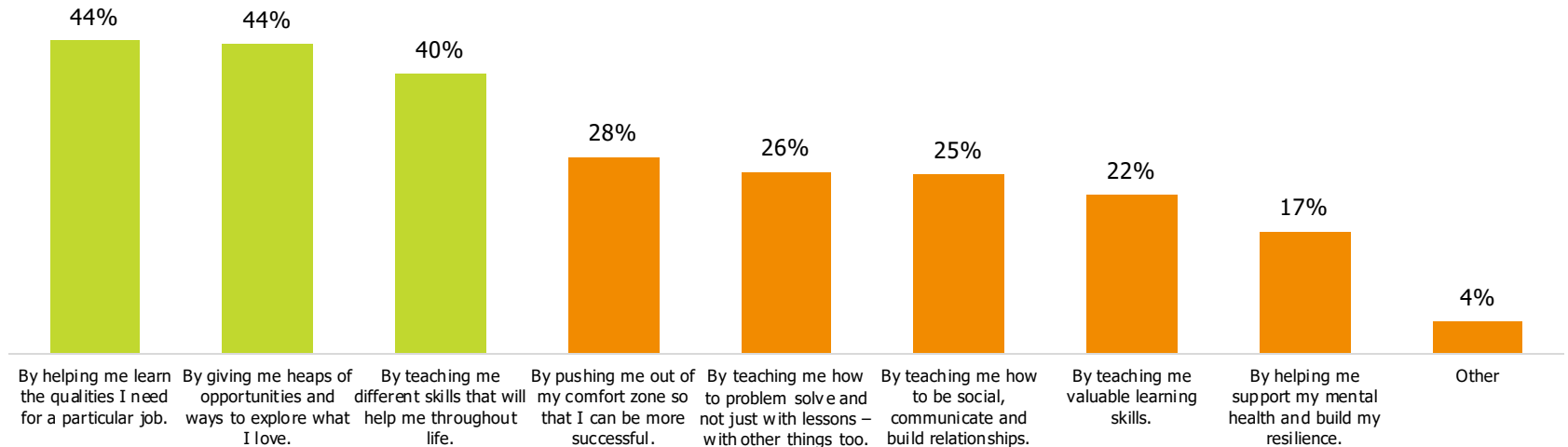
What are your hopes for the future?

[students, n=4,275]



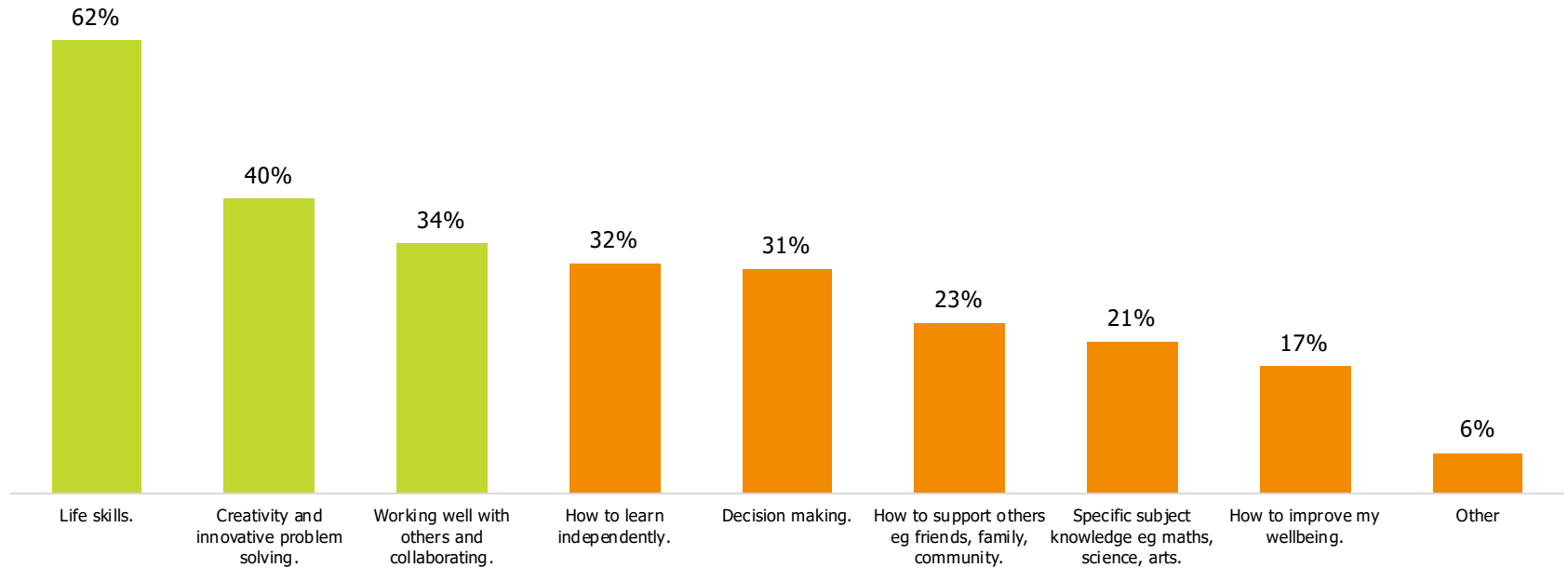
How might school help you to achieve that?

[students, n=4,159]



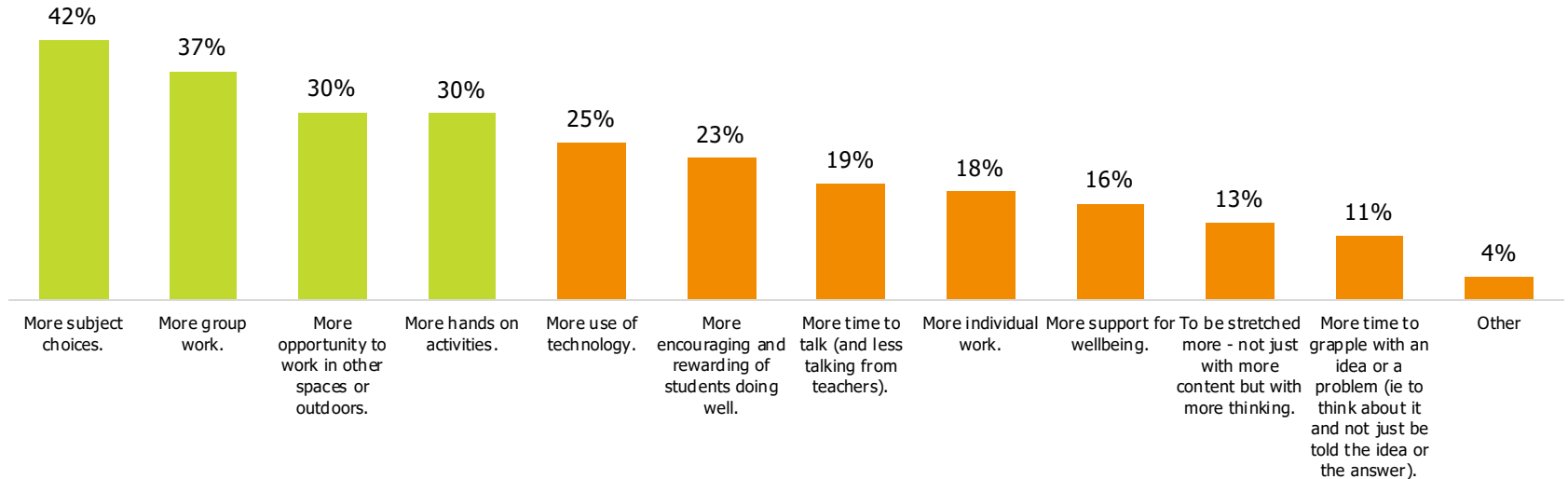
What types of things do you think you should learn more of at school?

[students, n=4,067]



What other things do you think schools should do more of to help you learn?

[students, n=4,030]



What would you change (or not change) in public education that would make the biggest positive impact on the children and young people of SA?

Recurring themes

Recurring themes indicate a strong desire for systemic changes in education that address issues related to funding, content / education delivery, teacher support, inclusivity, and equity. The goal of improving education requires collaboration and partnership from all involved (students, teachers, schools, parents, and communities) to achieve a quality education that meets the individual needs of all students. Increasing funding, reducing class sizes, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills, providing mental health support, enhancing teacher capability and training, and ensuring equal access to education regardless of background or socio-economic status are specific changes that stakeholders would like to see implemented. Overall, there is a desire for a more holistic and inclusive approach to education that emphasises student well-being, fosters creativity and innovation, and promotes social justice and equality.

Parent or carer	Community	Staff	Student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritising student mental health and well-being ▪ Providing better resources and funding for schools ▪ Creating a safe and secure learning environment ▪ Emphasising life skills ▪ Customising learning, increasing personalised and tailor-made study plans ▪ Fostering an inclusive environment ▪ Greater recognition of teacher importance ▪ Improving communication between schools, teachers, and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater funding and resource allocation ▪ Curriculum evaluation and holistic student development, desire for a greater focus on life skills, critical thinking and creativity ▪ Teacher support and working conditions ▪ Personalisation and inclusion ▪ Equity and access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding and resources ▪ Student and staff well-being ▪ Inclusion and diversity ▪ Focus on foundational skills (literacy and numeracy) ▪ Personalised learning ▪ Reduction of administrative workload on teachers ▪ Equitable education for all ▪ Early intervention and support for students with learning difficulties ▪ Teaching and learning practices ▪ Evaluation of standardised modes of assessment and testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on student well-being ▪ Personalised learning ▪ Balancing academic and non-academic pursuits ▪ Focus on teacher training ▪ Inclusivity and mental health ▪ Future readiness, real-world skills and knowledge ▪ Student empowerment ▪ Customised learning ▪ Student choice and flexibility





“

More funding for general classroom support. Ensuring teachers have support to assist children at different learning levels and provide additional support or extension based on the individuals needs.

Parent and carer

Leaders' Day



- Equity and fairness
- Inbuilt well-being support
- Revised measurements of success
- Personalisation
- Holistic student development
- Student agency and critical thinking
- Trusted relationships between educators, students and families
- Progressive practices and modes of education delivery



What is the purpose of public education in South Australia?

Recurring themes emerged from the individual leaders' groups of early education professionals, primary and secondary leaders and corporate stakeholders around the shared ideals for public education in the state. A desire for equity and fairness for all students was chief among those principles, with mental health and well-being support for both students and staff inbuilt into the system. There was a call for a new system of metrics to measure success beyond standardisation and ranking, that honours a refocusing within classrooms on the personalisation of learning with the aim to support the unique development of each learner. This shift from a content-focused curriculum to a more developmental progression-focused one would be geared towards building the skills, dispositions and capabilities needed to prepare students for a rapidly changing world. Early educators highlighted the importance of teaching equity, diversity and a passion for contributing to the community early on in a child's education, with the majority of contributors agreeing on the necessity of play-based learning throughout a child's education. The importance of strong relationships between educators, students and their families is listed as a key component to a healthy education system, which allows teachers and institutions to provide targeted intervention for students that are struggling within the structure. Many leaders agreed on the significance of student agency, resilience, and critical thinking as signifiers of a strong education system. Lastly the utilisation of technology and innovative practices was discussed as a way to keep students and teachers engaged and informed about the tools of tomorrow.





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The shared, valued ideals about what education should achieve for our children reflect a commitment to personal, social, academic and lifelong development that prepares them for a fulfilling and successful life.

Primary Leader

Shared, valued ideals we hold about what education can and should achieve for our children and young people

Early

- Importance of relationships – all parties feeling trusted and valued
- Mould global citizens that have a sense of belonging to society and value learning
- Purpose of preschool education to set children up with dispositions such as cooperation, communication, self-regulation, independence, and problem-solving to grow good humans and students
- Holistic development of students –nurturing social skills and well-being, alongside agency, confidence and competence
- Closing the gap between preschool and school pedagogies – the jump can be unsettling to students
- All education levels should be looking to build a supportive, inclusive and safe learning environment for all

Primary

- Strong focus on meeting the individual needs of students, promotion of well-being, and creation of inclusive and equitable learning environments
 - Importance of building skills and competencies beyond just core literacy and numeracy – with a strong focus on nurturing critical thinking and creativity
- Mostly positive about growing use of technology and AI, some concern about how to balance usage with other forms of engagement and collaboration
- Call for ongoing evaluation and re-evaluation of assessment methods and priorities to ensure they align with these broader goals
 - Shared vision of building a world-class education system that prioritises student growth and success, while also celebrating diversity and community involvement



Secondary

- Equity and fairness (including vulnerable students and those in rural areas)
- Discussions around the need for mental health and well-being support for both students and staff – becoming more evident post pandemic
- Personalisation of learning, secondary leaders calling for a system that values the individual identity, capabilities, and unique development of each learner
- A call to shift from a content-focused curriculum to a more developmental progression-focussed one – which utilises evolving technology and innovative practices to keep students (and teachers) engaged and informed
- New system of metrics to measure success beyond standardisation and ranking, that honours that same individual approach to student learning and development
- Focus on building skills, dispositions, and capabilities to prepare students

Corporate

- Evolving role of our educators, and the need for education institutions to focus on incorporating new ways of thinking on a global scale – including the utilisation of new technologies and modes of teaching
- Importance of developing a futures-oriented curriculum that is adaptable and tailored to meet the needs of diverse learners
- Need for alternative measures of success (alongside standardised modes of testing), also targeted intervention for students who are struggling within the system
 - Importance of school being a place that supports students' well-being, through developing their sense of identity, personal resilience and autonomy
- Collaboration and partnership among educators, schools and government is vital, change needs to start at government / community level so that consistency can be managed across sites, and teachers don't bare the brunt without being supported



Shared, valued ideals we hold about what education can and should achieve for our children and young people

Early

“The purpose of preschool education starts with the emotional and social well-being of young people. It is personalised and inclusive and relationships play a key element. It is **not about getting children ready for school; schools need to be ready for children**. It is about setting them up with dispositions such as cooperation, communication, self-regulation, independence and problem solving.”

Primary

“To **provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to fully engage in society**, have autonomy over their life pathway and develop the ability to express themselves in a meaningful manner.”

Secondary

“**Every learner engages with an education that values their identity, capabilities and unique rhythms** of development whilst supporting them from where they are at, along the next step in their journey.”

Corporate

“The purpose of public education is to **build competencies, thinking skills and positive learning dispositions** in children and young people within and across diverse communities. Through developing empathetic, empowered and inspiring citizens, a shared future can be shaped by building belonging that drives innovation and opportunities to influence events and their world.”



Attributes, dispositions, capabilities and knowledge needed to enact these shared values

Key attributes that remained consistent across the different groups of leaders included self-regulation, resilience, critical thinking, curiosity and empathy.



Attributes, dispositions, capabilities and knowledge needed to enact these shared values

Top 10 Recurring Attributes

Early Years	Primary	Secondary	Corporate Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curiosity Resilience Self-regulation Critical and creative thinking Connectedness to community and natural world Empathy Communication Kindness Problem solving Lifelong learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical and creative thinking Empathy Resilience Self-regulation Problem-solving Kindness Belonging Collaboration Curiosity Adaptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical and creative thinking Resilience Empathy Collaboration Global citizenship Self-efficacy and belief Emotional regulation Holistic wellbeing Lifelong learning Communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience Empathy and kindness Problem-solving skills Creativity and curiosity Literacy and numeracy Identity, belonging, and connectedness Self-regulation and executive function Global citizenship and contributing to society Learning how to learn Confidence and self-worth



Mentimeter: 7 shared insights developed by AI on Leaders Day

1. **Relationship-building and trust** are essential for creating a safe and supportive environment in our schools, pre-schools & sites. Children & young people need to feel valued and understood in order to develop trust and take risks.
2. **Understanding:** Understanding young people, their culture, and diverse backgrounds is crucial for educators to effectively support and enable student success.
3. **Student agency, resilience, and critical thinking** are key elements of a strong education system that prepares young people for lifelong learning and success beyond school.
4. Schools should be **flexible and responsive** to the needs and wants of children, young people and families, valuing diversity and providing opportunities for all.
5. **Impact:** Education has the power to change lives, open doors, and create opportunities for empowerment. Educators need to believe in their students and understand the impact of their work on young people's lives.
6. **Collaboration, partnerships, and empathy** are crucial for creating supportive environments that enable success for children & young people.
7. **Educators need to believe** in the abilities of all students and provide genuine care and support to help them achieve their goals, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.



Mentimeter: 7 shared insights developed by Square Holes

1

The importance of **lifelong learning**, with a focus on developing skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration that are essential for success in the modern world. This includes providing opportunities for continued learning and growth beyond the classroom.

2

The importance of a **holistic approach** to education that recognises and values the diverse needs of each student. This includes addressing not only academic needs but also social, emotional, and physical needs.

3

The need to create an **inclusive and diverse** learning environment that values and celebrates differences, promotes cultural competency, and challenges bias and discrimination.

4

The need to **engage with the wider community**, including parents, caregivers, and other stakeholders, to support student success and foster a sense of belonging and connectedness.

5

The importance of promoting **personal growth and development**, including building resilience, self-awareness, and a growth mindset, as well as encouraging students to pursue their passions and interests.

6

Preparing students for the workforce, including developing skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, as well as providing opportunities for work-based learning and career exploration.

7

Promoting a **global perspective** and preparing students to be global citizens, including valuing cultural diversity, understanding global issues, and promoting empathy and understanding.



Written Submissions



Written submission responses

Written submissions and responses were received from the following organisations. Note, a number of submissions were received from individuals, however names have not been included for privacy reasons:

- Australian Education Union (SA)
- Australian Schools Plus
- Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research
- Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee
- Child Development Council
- Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People
- Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Department for Child Protection
- Department of Human Services
- Education Standards Board SA
- Flinders University
- Green Adelaide
- Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment
- Philanthropy Australia (SA)
- Preschool Directors Association of South Australia
- Purple Orange
- Rationalist society of SA
- Shine SA
- Social Ventures Australia (SVA)
- South Australian Area School Leaders Association
- South Australian Association of School Parent Communities
- SA School Business Association
- South Australian Secondary Principals' Assoc
- SA Specific Learning Difficulties South Australia (SPELD)
- Teach for Australia
- Teachers Registration Board of SA
- The Smith Family
- University of Adelaide
- University of South Australia
- Youth Affairs Council of South Australia
- Youth Opportunities



Overarching themes

Prepare students for the future

1. Respondents emphasised the importance of instilling critical thinking, problem solving, and practical life skills in students to prepare them for the adult world. There was also a focus on building resilience, empathy, and social and emotional robustness in students.

Provide essential skills and capabilities

2. The respondents identified a handful of skills and capabilities that are essential for students to learn, including strong collaborative, time management and organisational skills, computer/digital literacy, leadership development, adaptability, and work/life balance.

Nurture personalised learning

3. There was a call for personalised learning to recognise and utilise individual strengths and needs, provide access to industry-specific subjects, and move away from impersonal and demotivating standardised testing systems. Also advocated for was smaller class sizes, more NIT time, and specialised professionals to help students with various needs.

Engaging and meaningful learning

4. The respondents suggested making learning engaging and tied to students' interests, implementing project-based learning, and decreasing the emphasis on written assignments and tests. They also emphasised the importance of deep thinking and activities that showcase individual students' strengths.

Support teachers

5. Respondents signalled a need for collaboration and knowledge sharing among teachers, better mental health support, investing in technology integration and professional development, and reducing administrative workload for teachers to build relevant and engaging lessons tailored to their class. Teacher recruitment and retention was also touched on, with higher salaries and attractive benefits needed to attract and retain highly skilled educators.



Written submission feedback

What should be the overriding purpose of public education in SA?

To **provide students with the tools and experiences needed to evolve into adults capable of critical thought, problem solving and socialising**. There was a strong theme around preparing children for the adult world, while also instilling a passion for learning that they can carry into adulthood. In terms of content, the respondents believed that schools should be teaching basic skills like reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as practical life skills such as personal finance and budgeting. There was also an understanding that schools should be a safe space for students to explore and experience new concepts and disciplines, while also learning about the structures and systems that make up our world.

What skills and capabilities should public education encourage so students can thrive and navigate the world after they complete school?

Every respondent highlighted **critical thinking** as a key capability that should be fostered in public education – be that applied to media literacy or building political beliefs. There was a **strong push towards the teaching of practical life skills and their application** (taxation, calculating interest rates, getting a loan from the bank), as well as helping to guide students in forming their own political beliefs and how to enact their ethics in community via civic participation. There were also recurring themes around the building of resilience and empathy and social and emotional robustness.

What do you expect from the public education system to support students to thrive emotionally at school?

Key themes that recurred in the discussion around **helping students to thrive emotionally** at school included greater focus on teaching physical and mental health tools, and being embedded in community. There was an understanding that **teachers also need to be empowered with the tools to support students** – with greater funding allocated so there are more teacher hours dedicated to the emotional support of children outside of class time, and greater education for teachers on how to guide students through tough times.

What specific skills and capabilities do you think students will need to thrive at work in the future?

The respondents agreed on a handful of skills and capabilities that they felt were essential for students to learn to thrive in their future working lives, **including collaboration, time management and organisational skills**. **Computer/digital literacy** was seen as vitally important in this current day and age, as well as leadership development and adaptability. A focus on maintaining work / life balance was preferred, as well as learning to work autonomously when needed (seen as a growing issue with WFH options post COVID).



Written submission feedback

What specific skills and capabilities do you think graduates need to thrive in further education?

Responses to this question were similar in nature to what skills and capabilities students need in the previous question. **Adaptability** was again mentioned as an essential skill, along with **organisation and time management**. Work life balance was once again mentioned as important for students to learn, along with themes of self-motivation and discipline as they move onto other learning institutions (i.e., tertiary education). Good critical literacy and the ability to think laterally were also highlighted as useful skills.

In preparing students to participate in the industries of the future, what is the role of: - public education?- business and industry?- non-governmental organisations?

Participants highlighted that in public education's role of preparing students for the future, **providing the knowledge and opportunities for various pathways was key**. This included **embracing technology (AI) and providing a strong teaching environment that encourages diversity and ideas**. There was some fear around the idea of business and industry being able to access students, as it was assumed that they wouldn't have the students' best interests at heart – especially in the area of influencing curriculum design and corporate sponsorship. However, most of the participants agreed on the **need for apprenticeship schemes and cross-over skills to prepare students for changing job markets**. The suggestion for business and industry was to provide basic entry level employment opportunities and paid traineeships for young workers to help them upskill and enter the workforce.

How can we encourage joy in learning for students to help them build a love of life-long learning?

The respondents highlighted that **schools and teachers should be making learning engaging and tied to students' interests**. As an extension of this idea, they also argued for the **implementation of project based learning, while decreasing the emphasis on written assignments and tests**. Most agreed that the focus should be on the encouragement of deep thinking and activities that showcase individual students' strengths, rather than high-stakes testing models that don't suit all children. Encouraging play-based learning, in both younger years and older was suggested, along with empowering teachers to be creative and critical in their approach to education.

What research and experiences from other places can SA learn from?

It was suggested that the South Australian education system can learn from **different country models like Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark and Germany**, while also looking at Montessori School models and cultures like Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri groups.



Written submission feedback

How can our education system be flexible enough to build on the strengths of individual students while ensuring all students receive a high-quality education experience?

Participants suggested that **personalised learning** was an important way forward for the education system – recognising and utilising individual strengths and needs, providing **access to industry specific subjects, implementing project-based learning** and moving away from impersonable and demoralising standardised testing systems. **Teacher support and opportunities for professional development** were also mentioned, with the respondents advocating for smaller class sizes, more NIT time and specialised professionals on hand to help students with various needs. A focus on student well-being and mental health was outlined as an important component of a system designed with student success in mind. Many of the respondents felt that the education system needs a complete overhaul – moving away from tradition grading systems and more towards a holistic approach to student development and focus on varied skills and interest areas.

“Teachers need to be supported to teach! Support to free up time for our educators to work in collaboration to design learning and assessment to meet the needs of their students should be a priority for our public education system. Building the professional capacity of our educators through structures and programs that focus on quality teaching and learning would require our education system to look inwards at how processes can be improved to free up time for what should be seen as the central work of educators. Assessment and reporting processes need to change, again this is a cultural shift not only for our public education system but for our society. Using different metrics to capture student progress and success (holistically) and broaden the data we use to inform beyond just the narrow numeracy & literacy to be inclusive of personalised learning goals – how do we capture progress in terms of the next step in learning developmentally and highlight the achievement.”

SASPA Written Feedback





“

As the world becomes more complex and interconnected, public education systems must be able to adapt to meet the changing societal needs and expectations among students, families, communities, and employers. This requires an agile workforce, ongoing research and innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvements in teaching and learning, with sustained engagements with communities and employers.

Uni SA Written Feedback

Written submission feedback

Is there any change in the skills, tools and support our staff need to apply their profession for the benefit of each student?

The key themes that cropped up in response to this question were **reducing workload and increasing support for teachers, providing better mental health support for students, investing in technology integration, professional development, and inclusion and wellbeing**. The respondents signalled a need for collaboration and knowledge sharing among teachers, as well as mental health support given the sometimes emotionally draining nature of the work. **Teacher recruitment and retention** was also touched on, with the participants stating that high salaries and attractive benefits were needed to attract and retain highly skilled educators, including professionals from other fields who would bring new insight. Better funding for mental health support for schools was suggested, along with a reduced workload for teachers so that their time could be freed up to focus on building relevant and engaging lessons tailored to their class. **Technology integration and training was supported for both teachers and students** – so that both could efficiently and comfortably use digital technology. Also as with students, the participants reinforced that opportunities for professional development should be regularly made and encouraged for teachers to stay up to date with advances in research and digital technologies.

How would you or your organisation like to be involved in any future opportunities for discussions about public education in South Australia?

Volunteer programs, mentoring, and inclusion training for staff were all mentioned as positives here.

“Education in the current era is a collective responsibility and requires deep collaborative effort. Education staff need more systemic and supportive ways to learn together and collaborate effectively and efficiently, to both share and develop their expertise and knowledge informing their practices. The growing complexities facing education systems in teaching and learning practice is a shared concern. Responding to complexity requires the application of collective expertise and knowledge in new ways.”
Social Ventures Australia Written Feedback

“Support for educators needs to be on-going and collaborative in nature. Support needs to be tailored to contextual needs and involve a range of educational contributors. Time is precious in school environments and is more commonly being dedicated to a multitude of testing regimes and data gathering mechanisms that narrowly measure what students know at a given point in time rather than being concerned with how successfully they are engaging in learning.”
Flinders University Written Feedback



Emphasising the purpose of public education

1

There are several recurring themes that emerge from the responses provided, including the need for education to **foster the motivation for learning throughout a student's life** (lifelong learning), along with **preparing students for their future careers** by providing opportunities for diverse skill development and knowledge acquisition. This includes **creating a safe environment** that fosters personal and social development and wellbeing with an aim to promote responsible citizenship and ethical understanding.

2

Equity was an overriding theme, with many respondents outlining a need for public education to be available and culturally safe for all members of society, and that the system enacts practices that actively break generational social and economic inequalities. That every child has the support to develop the skills, capabilities and dispositions to personally thrive and contribute meaningfully. There was also a stated requirement for public education to remain secular and to be fully funded by government.

3

Collaboration and trust were also key themes between public schools and stakeholders to build the strength and quality of the whole public education system. The importance of **building connections with community** was highlighted as vitally important and enriching for student learning. Some respondents point to the access to public education as a natural right of all children and young people, while others advocate for a whole-of-state commitment to high-quality inclusive education. It was stressed that education should not be reduced to a single purpose, but should **serve diverse learners in diverse communities**, while enabling and enhancing connections between individual and society.



Illuminating the way forward

Health and wellbeing	Holistic and varied approach	Collaboration across sectors	Equity	Investment into learning	Agile and adaptive
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Addressing mental health concerns affecting students and their families through a consolidated approach, quality HR, and improved funding for wellbeing and support services 2. Promoting children and young people's rights, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive wellbeing and development, and meaningful connections and relationships within and beyond the classroom 3. Young people's whole well-being, beyond academic or skill attainment, and the importance of partnerships between schools and local services and organisations to provide holistic support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diversity in teaching styles and evaluation methods to ensure a more joyful educational experience for all, and the need to build trust in the system 2. Holistic approach to education that recognises and considers students' physical, emotional, and social conditions and their impact on learning, as well as the importance of health and wellbeing as learning outcomes in their own right 3. Personalised learning and wellbeing plans for all students, with opportunities for co-design and engagement in things that matter to them, and the need to embed health and wellbeing consistently in the curriculum and school routine 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The complexity of education as an ecosystem involving numerous stakeholders with differing views, but a shared aspiration for SA Education to lead the world in innovative practices that support all students and demonstrably address inequality 2. Parents being trusted partners within education rather than stakeholders 3. Collaboration, coordination, and information sharing across multiple support delivery services for students with complex needs 4. Effective partnerships with specialist education deliverers and complementary teaching paradigms such as Project-based Learning and Design Thinking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence-based interventions that address the root causes of disadvantage and promote social justice, as the current public education system is reinforcing social and economic stratification 2. Provide additional support for students with complex needs, reduce curriculum and red tape, examine the use of inquiry pedagogy and explore the use of learning levels 3. A dequate support for schools and teachers working with children who have complex needs, including the establishment of an Education Health Liaison Officer role 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investing in educational leadership quality through capacity building as an important leverage point in the education system, with high-quality leaders balancing the overarching importance of equitable access to quality education with the needs and strengths of the students and communities they work with daily 2. High-quality teaching and learning practices that support all children and young people, with teachers and school leaders being supported to use high-level evidence to inform their decision making. The need for extra support for children and young people to reduce with high quality teaching and learning practices in place 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need for public education systems to adapt to changing societal needs and expectations, with an agile workforce, ongoing research and innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvements in teaching and learning, with sustained engagements with communities and employers



Small Group Student Discussions



Summarising the purpose of public education

1

When queried about what elements of school that are most important to students, a common theme emerged of learning and language acquisition in order to achieve their individual career goals. Socialisation and the building of relationships (both with peers and teachers) is also highlighted as key factor in the enjoyment of school, as well as a support mechanism to assist when struggling against difficult to solve problems and issues outside of school.

2

Sports, extra-curricular activities and creative pursuits featured heavily in how participants find enjoyment and engagement while at school. One of the strongest themes to come through in terms of the importance of schooling was preparation for the future. Most of the students saw a direct correlation between school and achieving their future goals, as well as an environment to learn skills that will prepare for life outside of education, including life skills and cooking.

3

In terms of how they would like to see their schools improved, all of the students called for a divergence from traditional markers of success towards more hands-on, practical learning that prepares them for the realities of life. They also shared a desire for better behaviour management by schools and cultural sensitivity training for teachers.

4

The improvement of school facilities was also mentioned across the different groups, with a call for upgrades in classrooms, technology and play spaces. CALD students advocated for a more inclusive school environment that caters to their cultural and religious needs, such as Muslim-friendly uniforms and halal food options. Students with concentration and overstimulation struggles requested quiet, safe spaces for them to decompress and re-engage in learning, while students with disabilities want to be engaged through their interest areas, like Pokémon.

5

Aboriginal students highlighted a need for greater focus on indigenous culture and language in the school syllabus, as well as stronger connection building to the community. They also wanted a greater voice in their learning, with a focus on creative approaches and personalised career / further study goals. Anangu students wanted a deeper connection through their schools to elders in the community and their knowledge, as well as upgrades to their learning spaces, a kitchen to learn to cook in and greater focus on topics that use their creativity



What is most important to you about your schooling?

CALD Students	Children in Care	Students with a Disability	Anangu Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">When asked about what was most important to them in their schooling, the participants indicated that learning and language acquisition (English) were key among those predominant aspectsWithin their learning, students were particularly concerned with career prospects and reaching their future goals – with an understanding that school is meant to set them up for their lives outside of studyMany of the participants also indicated that school was an environment that they could socialise in and create meaningful relationships with their peers, while also being exposed to different culturesTeacher-student relationships were also of high value, and were seen as the key to a safe and comfortable learning environmentSports and extra-curricular activities also featured prominently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participants saw a direct connection between school and their future, with the belief that their education would help them to achieve their specific hopesSchool was also safe space away from the difficulties experienced at home, with teachers providing supportThey also outlined the purpose of school as helping them “to learn how to live and how to do things that will lead you to be a better person. To learn how to grow.”The participants indicated that they want to learn to be able to teach the next generation, and understood that education was the key to a successful life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many of the students indicated that friendship and being able to socialise in a safe environment was most important in their schooling. This included help from SSO’s in developing those social skillsOthers indicated that the role of school is to prepare you for life in the “real world” through the teaching of useful information like taxes, as well as hands-on skills like cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For Anangu students the most important aspects of their schooling includes learning new things, gaining the necessary skills for the career they want, and access to equipment and tools for sports and art activitiesThey also highlighted their friends as a key driver to coming to school, along with a feeling of safety and access to foodClass discussions and learning cooking skills were also chief among the reasons they viewed school as important



What would you change about your schooling experience?

CALD Students

- When asked about what they would want to change about their schooling experience, the issue of **school uniform** came up, specifically the **need for a Muslim/hijab-friendly uniform**
- Students also wanted access **to expanded canteen options** that also catered to their faith (halal options etc.) or cultural diversity.
- Participants felt that **phone policies in school were unnecessarily harsh**, and also advocated for a later start time and shorter school hours
- While at school, many of the students championed **more free time for relaxation, play and switching off** between classes, as well as a greater focus on physical education and sports activities.
- They also reflected on **a need for improvement in school facilities and resources** – including upgrades on/access to computers and comfortable chairs. Still on school environment, the students called for greater acceptance and celebration of cultural difference (through history, language, food)
- There was also discussion around how schools address **conflict and bullying** within the schools.

Children in Care

- Many of the participants referenced struggling with concentration and overstimulation in the school environment – and the **need for quiet safe spaces for them to decompress and re-engage** in the learning environment

Students with a Disability

- Some suggestions for change included allowing students to bring their own laptops to school, as well as engagement in their particular interest areas (Pokémon etc.). This follows a common theme of students **wanting to be engaged through the things they are interested about**
- They also talked about **having larger play and outdoor areas**, and more engaging content



What would you change about your schooling experience?

Aboriginal Students

- When discussing the themes of accessibility and responsiveness, the participants once again called for a **greater focus on indigenous culture and language in the school syllabus**, along with a greater connection to community through elders visiting and excursions
- There was also a focus on **greater cultural understanding and respect from the teachers**, which in turn promotes a feeling of belonging in the students
- The participants wanted **more of a voice in their learning**, with teachers urged to listen to student suggestions
- Alike to other student sessions, first nation students want a **greater focus on creative approaches to learning** – including hands-on activities and music in classrooms
- When asked about accountability, the participants pointed to **moving away from traditional markers (NAPLAN, tests, essays) and towards hands on learning, and learning that prepares for life outside of school** (teaching about taxes, how to pay bills etc.)
- The students expressed a desire for **more flexibility in their learning**, as well as a greater individual focus on how to prepare students for their unique career/further study goals. This included an acknowledgement of different pathways (even when they diverge from the traditional), as well as space for students to lead lessons and be more active in sharing their views and opinions in class
- They also called for **better behaviour management**, and more in-depth cultural sensitivity training for teachers

Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre

- Students at the Kurlana Tapa Justice Centre indicated that they would **prefer a change to the daily routine in school**, so that students could start with something active like PE or relaxing like listening to music
- They also shared a **desire to learn skills that are transferrable to life outside of school**, like handling money, being able to run household finances and taxes
- There was also a call for **more hands-on learning as well as career pathway type progression to learning** that helped students prepare for the career pathway they want and engage them in topics that interest them.

Anangu Students

- When asked for suggestions around how they would change their schooling experience, Anangu students called for a **great focus on creative subjects**, like music, art, dance and cooking, along with clothing design and sewing
- They also wanted **more connection and learning from elders in the community**, as well as the introduction of new and updated technology like computers and interactive whiteboards
- An upgrade in the school grounds though **new play equipment, updated classrooms and a kitchen** to learn cooking skills was preferred, along with more sports equipment.



Summarising perseverance and engagement

1

When asked about what helps students to feel happy at school, participants indicated that positive and open communication with teachers and school support staff, along with creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for students from diverse backgrounds was essential. Feeling understood and valued by teachers was almost as important as the value placed on their friendships and connections with their peers.

2

Access to sports, physical activities, excursions and out of classroom events help participants to feel engaged and excited about school. The sense of achievement they feel when they see an improvement in their academic performance adds as a driver for enjoyment in their subjects.

3

Participants also indicated that a school's successful handling of bullying and conflicts helped to make them feel safe in school, along with access to quiet, calm spaces when they need to decompress. Investment into technology and meeting students at their interest level (with games etc.) were also named as elements that help students to feel enthusiastic about their learning.

4

The participants had a few different techniques to try when they were not ready to learn, with most of their solutions revolving around taking physical space to give their brain a break, and using fresh air, water, movement or engaging in an activity that they enjoy (Lego building, computer games, listening to music) to re-focus themselves.

5

Some students noted that when they felt pushed by teachers to participate when they were struggling, their reaction was to disengage and walk out. Relationships with staff was also key when struggling with a problem that they can't solve, having patient, supportive teachers that allow their students to try things their way without pressure or judgement. Being able to tackle problems via group work and with their peers was seen as positive.



What helps you feel happy at school?

CALD Students

- When asked what helps them to stay positive about school, **friendship and socialising** with classmates and peers was a key theme for many respondents
- They also highlighted **positive and open communication with teachers and school support staff (SSOs)**, that helped them to feel safe and supported in the school environment. Once again, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for students from diverse backgrounds was pinpointed as essential to a positive school experience, along with expanding their knowledge on new topics
- **Sports and physical activity, alongside excursions and out of classroom events** proved popular once again, combined with a sense of achievement when students could perceive an improvement in their academic performance
- The **successful handling of bullying and conflicts** was also noted in helping students to enjoy their learning environment

Children in Care

- Children in care highlighted the value and importance of **feeling understood** in their school environment
- **Teacher and support staff being attuned to their needs, strengths, experiences, and behaviour** was a key factor in helping them to feel that they are valued for who they are and what they have endured. This understanding can be built on to increase attendance and learning – people that care about them can push them further

Students with a Disability

- Personal **relationships with friends and teachers** stood out as a key component in helping students to feel comfortable and valued at school
- **Technology and game playing** was again highlighted as methods to keep students interested and satisfied with their education experience
- Some participants also pointed to **support from SSOs and teachers** and access to quiet, calm spaces as much needed elements



What do you do when you're not ready to learn?

CALD Students

- When asked what strategies they utilise when they aren't ready to learn, the participants listed various methods including **taking a break, asking help from peers or teachers, drinking water or taking a nap**
- Mostly their solutions revolved around **taking space** to give their brain a break and using fresh air, water or movement as ways to help refocus

Children in Care

- Participants said that when they feel they are being pushed by teachers to participate too much, their reaction is to **walk out and disengage**

Students with a Disability

- Participants indicated that **circuit breakers** were needed when they struggled to concentrate. These included going outside, finding somewhere quiet for a moment to themselves or having a nap or rest
- Other students indicated that they would usually **ask for help from teachers when struggling, or engage with an activity that they enjoy** that re-focuses them (Lego building, computer games etc.)



What do you do when you're trying and can't get something?

CALD Students

- When asked about their strategies when facing a difficult task, the respondents suggested that they generally **seek help from teachers, parents, friends, or counsellors**, find another way around it, or try again with a different method
- Some students prefer to ask questions or talk to friends before approaching the teacher, while others go directly to the teacher for help
- **Group work** is also mentioned as a possible strategy for tackling difficult tasks
- The **importance of perseverance, listening to instructions**, and looking at the problem from different angles was also mentioned

Children in Care

- The participants highlighted the **need for spaces in school that they could go to, to relax and calm down**, away from other students. This space away from noise and overstimulation of a regular class room helped them to get back into "the learning zone"
- A n **understanding of different children's abilities** and the tools they need to learn (alone time vs group discussion etc.) was also highlighted

Students with a Disability

- When students are struggling to do something, they indicated that usually they will **listen to music, ask for help from support staff or teachers or take a little break** before coming back to the task

Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre

- When struggling with something in their school work, students at Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre say **having good, patient teachers** who let you try it out and see how you go without pressure as the key





“

I hope that in the future students will be excited to go to school every single day. I also hope especially Indigenous students feel as though they've finally found where they belong.

Year 9 Aboriginal Student

Summarising hopes for the future and the role of schooling

1

When asked about how to improve school in the future, many responses focused on giving students greater agency in their learning, as well as individual support and focus on helping them to achieve their unique goals and aspirations.

2

Students also called for a safe and supportive learning environment – this includes the addition of 'safe spaces' around the school for kids that are struggling (overstimulation, bullying etc.) and more frequent brain breaks, as well as teachers that have an understanding of the unique challenges faced by individual students.

3

There was an across-the-board desire for greater focus in the curriculum on cultural learning, language and diversity. This included a call for teachers to undertake cultural sensitivity training, and for there to be understanding / support for students from different family dynamics.

4

A need for less rigidity in school structures, along with greater opportunities for student led learning, along with active classrooms, where students are encouraged to express their ideas and flesh out/debate their opinions.



What do you hope for the future?

CALD Students	Children in Care	Students with a Disability	Youth Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre	Anangu Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Varied depending on individual goals ▪ Studying for and working in their chosen vocation ▪ Being successful and earning enough money to be able to live the lifestyle they desire ▪ Some students (predominantly female) also expressed a desire to be independent and to make their parents proud ▪ When asked about how school can help them to achieve their goals, most of the CALD students highlighted teaching life skills and giving them confidence as key elements. Many of them mentioned support from their teachers to learn the skills needed to advance in their chosen career, as well as preparing them for life outside of the school environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most of the participants indicated that they wanted to go into the care industries ▪ Working with either people or animals ▪ Many had aspirations for further study, either at university or TAFE ▪ There was a strong understanding that school's role in helping them to achieve their goals is to provide them with the useful knowledge they need to succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many of the students indicated that they wished to work in fields that directly related to their special interests (e.g., gaming) ▪ Some indicated that they just hoped to be able to make enough money to be financially secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work in their chosen field, including starting their own business, and working in a trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hoped to work within their chosen fields of health, law, trade or the arts / creative



What do you think might make school better for the future?

CALD Students	Children in Care	Students with a Disability	Aboriginal Students	Anangu Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many responses focused on giving students greater agency in their learning, as well as individual support and focus on helping them to achieve their unique goals and aspirations They indicated a need for more support staff on hand, as well as a greater focus on cultural learning including alternate history, languages and faith Investment into sports clubs and physical activity that help promote team work and bonding were suggested, as well as the implementation of a stronger discipline structure to stop racism and bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the CIC participants touched on the hope that school could be a safe place for children to explore and learn, and were excited to attend This included the introduction of more 'safe spaces' around school, teachers having an understanding of the unique challenges faced by individual students and rewards or goals that helped to engage them in learning One student suggested a class just for sleeping, as well as a greater focus on different cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants had a number of suggestions around making schools better for the future, including making the school environment feel safer, as well as more time for reflection Students pointed to a desire for less planning and rules in their days, as well as calm spaces to retreat to when need be A greater focus on individual interest areas was voiced, as well as access to new media like YouTube etc. for learning Some children liked the idea of having animals in the school, and others suggested leaders from the community coming to visit to talk about different vocations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students from years 8 – 12 outlined a few key 'blue sky' expectations around their learning. The students outlined a hunger for opportunities to spearhead their own learning and develop their leadership skills through independent activities and projects A desire for diversity in their learning environments, with a call for more learning outside of classrooms in community and through excursions More active and vocal classrooms, where students are encouraged to express their ideas and debate/flesh out opinions, with the option to listen to music while they work A need for teachers to survey students to work out how they best learn and adapting lessons to individuals using different methods like scaffolded, visual and hands-on learning Need for a greater understanding from teachers on family dynamics and a focus in school on cultural learning and support Students also highlighted that frequent brain breaks during lessons, where students could get up and move their bodies was needed to aid in focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater understanding and patience from teachers when kids struggle to concentrate/understand, and somewhere to chill out with activities for boys and girls



Flexible Learning Options (FLO) students

Students recently enrolled in Flexible Learning Options also gave feedback on their experience, which gives insight into what they value and appreciate in education. Themes such as creating an environment in which students are confident to engage and personalised learning were consistent across FLO students and the forums:

Theme	Student feedback
High skilled educators, youth workers and social workers are needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The teachers here explain every thing very well, doesn't matter what level you are'. ▪ "The teachers understand me more than in a mainstream school" ▪ "If you're not doing your work the teacher won't get mad at you" ▪ "A teacher in the mainstream schools have too many students to manage"
More intimate than large mainstream settings – welcoming, dignifying, encouraging of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "With FLO you want to attend more than mainstream school as there is a sense of community " ▪ "You don't have to worry about being bullied as every one is going through the same stuff" ▪ "Being treated as an adult and having more independence"
Delivered in smaller groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I feel like I have a lot more support" ▪ "Being able to go at my own pace with work"
personalised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Being treated as an equal with the ability to take control of your own learning experience" ▪ Able to choose subjects of interest, with more opportunities available than at previous school ▪ Accessibility to a range of programs
Optimising SACE Flexibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "There are more opportunities to do different activities like volunteering and work experience" ▪ Hands on learning experiences ▪ Differentiated and personalised programs ▪ "Less boring and less stressful"
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "If you want to know what needs to change talk to us, the students. We know what works best for us." ▪ "I was suspended a lot previously. Since being in FLO my grades have picked up and I don't get suspended." ▪ "Without FLO I'd be in bed."

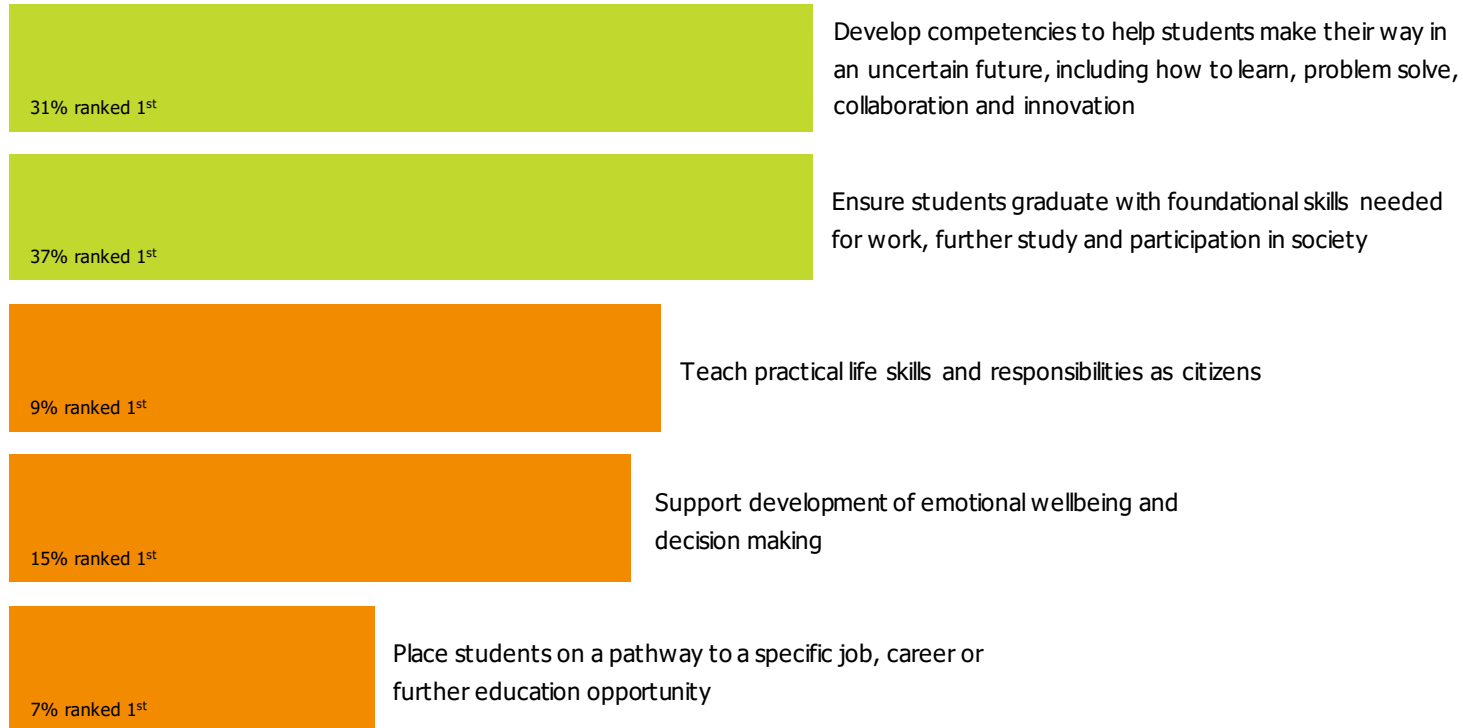


Industry Skills Councils



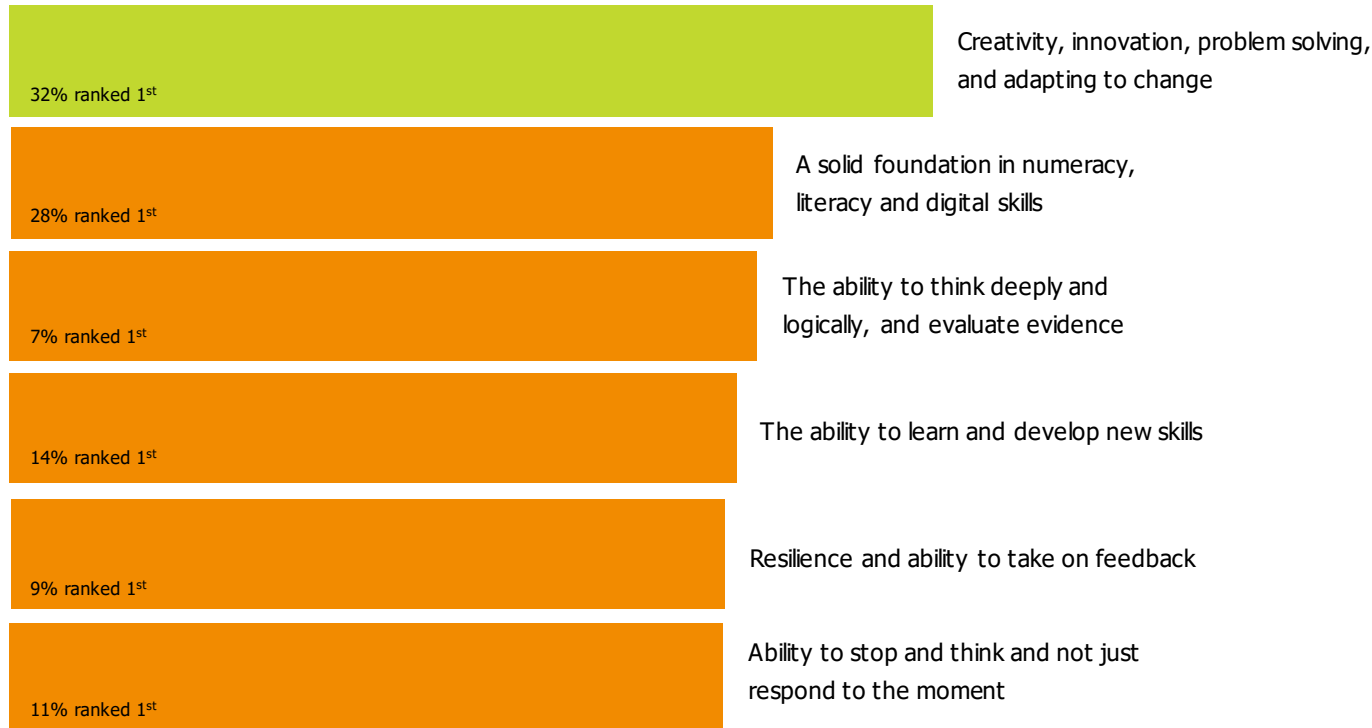
Ranking purposes of public education

- Both the development of competencies to help students make their way in uncertain futures (i.e., how to learn, problem solve, collaboration and innovation) and foundational skills are essential to the purpose of public education



Skills and capabilities needed for students to create a vibrant industry and economy in South Australia?

- Most important to respondents is the development of creativity, innovation and problem solving skills, as well as the ability to adapt to change
- Equal importance is often placed on other capabilities, yet a solid foundation in numeracy, literacy and digital is critical



Analysis of verbatim responses

Core feedback provided from Industry Skills Council respondents centred around one of five key theme areas, these being:

1. Focus on personal needs and support for success
2. Life skills and real-world experience for workforce readiness
3. Smaller class sizes and individual attention
4. Collaboration between education and industry for career guidance, mentoring and pathways
5. Emphasis on literacy, numeracy, and resilience as foundational skills

“**Teaching life skills** - like sleep, nutrition, physical and mental development, safe environments, citizen, exercise, red flags, where to go for help, financial literacy, etc.”

“**Support for students to develop skills and pathway options.** Too often students are “too hard” for teachers to manage and are just passed through the system.”

“Show **stronger link between school and a productive positive future** involving work and contribution to society.”

“**Focus on the individual** and how to support them to succeed.”

“A complete redesign of the education, skills and training system. **A system that supports life-long learning, enhancing creativity and opportunities.**”

“Engagement across all sectors to support our kids. **Integration and well-being.**”



Artwork from Kindergartens

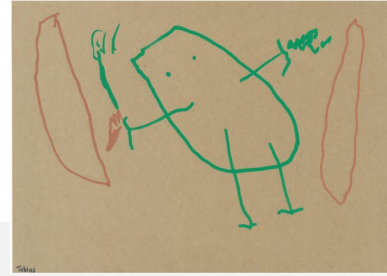


Artwork examples



Provocation: Why do you come to kindy? Why will you go to school?

We come to kindy to learn and we'll go to school to learn too. I've learned not to yell or kick or hit people. We play.



Provocation: If you could do any job you want when you are an adult, what would it be? Why?

The same thing as Daddy. He chops wood with a knife that cuts it nicely. It's a chainsaw. Because I love cutting wood.

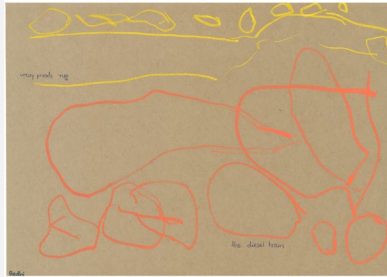


Provocation: If you could do any job you want when you are an adult, what would it be? Why?

I want to be a vet because dogs are there. They go to see if they are ok.

How will coming to kindy help you?

By learning how, by listening. I could get a book of the vets or get a teddy and tools to see if I could fix it



Provocation: What's something that you know lots about?

I know lots about trains. Like there's steam trains and diesel trains. I can tell people at kindy that I know about trains.



Provocation: Why do you come to kindy?

We come to kindy to learn stuff like how to push a swing and how to read and how to plant things



Provocation: If you could do any job you want when you are an adult, what would it be? Why?

Mummy's job. She works with children, she tells them what to do. She's a teacher.

How will coming to kindy help you?

I'll learn about being a teacher at kindy.

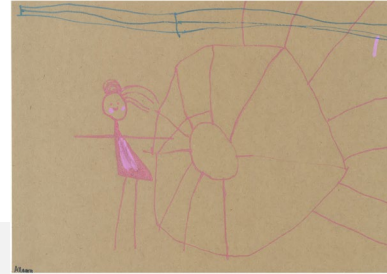


Artwork examples



Provocation: What have you learned so far at kindy?

I learned how to climb onto the swing. I put my knee up and hold onto the sides and pull up then put my other knee up.



Provocation: What do you do when you are trying to do something tricky and you just can't do it?

I just want to ask my mum.

What else could you do?

I can just keep on trying heaps of times and then I'll get it.



Provocation: Why do you come to kindy?

When you're 4 you go to kindy



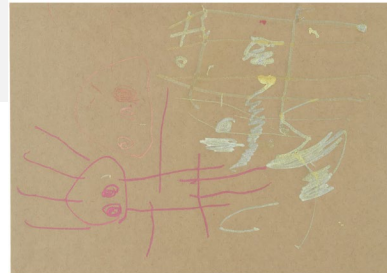
Provocation: If you could do any job you want when you are an adult, what would it be? Why?

A fireman because I like the sirens



Provocation: What is your favourite thing about kindy?

Playing with Harry and Elliot and Lily and Alister. We do running and digging in the sandpit

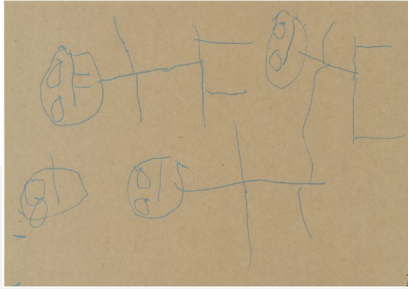


Provocation: What helps you feel happy at kindy?

Going on the swing makes me feel happy, and the slide



Artwork examples



Provocation: If you could do any job you want when you are an adult, what would it be? Why?

A police officer because I could catch bad guys.

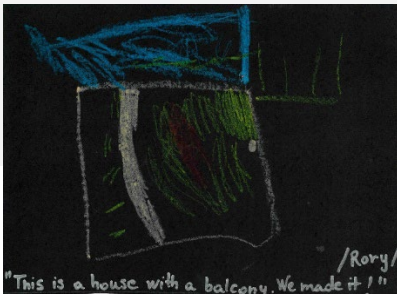
Follow up: How will coming to kindy help you?

Pretending being a police officer at kindy will help me.



Provocation: What is your favourite thing about kindy?

Playing on the swing is my favourite



Provocation: What is your favourite thing about kindy?

When we play with my friends and they play with me.



Provocation: What makes you feel happy at kindy?

I love dancing together.



Artwork examples

Julia

Provocation: What's the most important thing about kindy and school for you?

Helping people

Follow up: Why is that important?

If someone's hurt nurses can come or doctors and we can help people



REAL

Provocation: What's the most important thing about kindy and school for you?

Listening to the teachers so you can learn
I hope I get to learn tricky plusses. I can do some but not the others



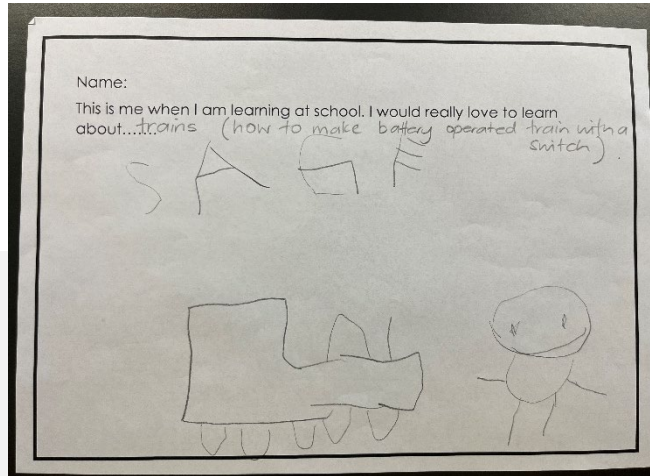
Addie

Provocation: What's the most important thing about kindy and school for you?

Learning is important about every single thing about maths. You have to know how to count

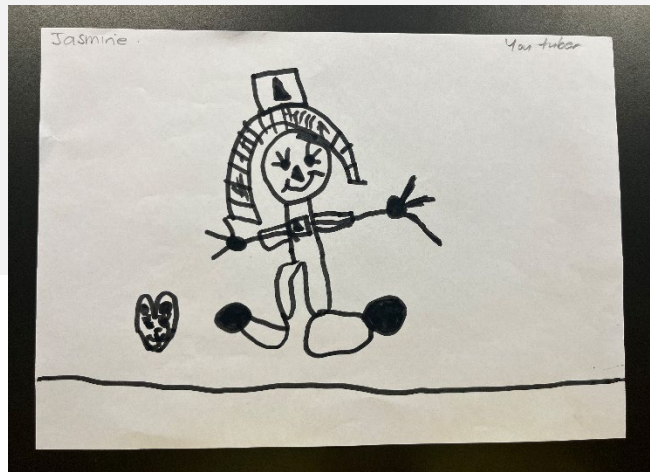


Artwork examples



Provocation: This is me when I am learning at school. I would really love to learn about...

Trains. How to make a battery operated train with a switch



Provocation: What do you want to be when you're an adult?

YouTuber



Analysis of comments and artwork



- Children go to Kindergarten to learn
- They most enjoy the play aspects of kindergarten, such as the swings, slides and sandpit and connecting with others

WHY

Do you come to kindy?

“We come to kindy to learn stuff like how to push a swing and how to read and how to plant things.”



- When considering a job for the future, children provided defined jobs (e.g., vet, teacher, police officer, fireman), some following the pathway of their parents

WHAT

Do you want to be?

“I want to be a vet because dogs are there. They go to see if they are ok.”



- Kindergarten provides the environment for children to be able to learn the skills and foundations necessary to pursue their dream jobs

HOW

Can kindy help?

“By learning how, by listening. I could get a book of the vets or get a teddy and tools to see if I could fix it.”



Forum and Meeting Feedback



Educators SA forum

“Bring the joy back to being an educator.”

“There is an **appetite for change.**”

What is the most important purpose of public education in South Australia?

1. A broad focus on social and emotional wellbeing
2. Developing positive learning dispositions
3. A changed focus on learning
4. A feeling of belonging and being valued
5. Fairness and equity
6. Support learners as individuals

What would have to be true or in place to enact this purpose?

1. Shared core values linked to the purpose
2. Circular rather than hierarchical
3. Schools at the centre of communities
4. Assessment that is aligned to the purpose
5. Equitable resourcing
6. Shared responsibility between the system, educators and families

What would it feel like as a public educator in a system focussed on achieving this?

1. Being supported by the system
2. Being respected as a professional
3. Less instructional focus
4. Having autonomy and choice in their job
5. Having time to do what they love
6. Connectedness with learners and families

“Our government and department are part of our team and **support us.**”



Consultation with Principals and Leaders' Associations

What is the most important purpose of public education in South Australia?

- Cultivating **connectedness and belonging** was viewed as being an important role of schools. Exploring the correlation between connectedness and outcomes was thought to be worthwhile
- The main difference in public education compared with other sectors is the aim to **'equalise'** across society. The purpose should be about helping young people to discover their possibilities, helping them learn what motivates them to grow the desire to direct their own futures, rather than feeling like their life is directed by their background, experiences or by other
- There was **hope the new purpose would give staff permission to get to know each child as an individual and knowing what their different outcomes could be**. Without this effort, knowing can be replaced with assumptions. Really knowing a child could raise the expectations of some of our children

What would it feel like to be a leader in a system focused on achieving this?

- **Joyous**, creative and free
- **More in control**. Exists a perception that leaders in education no longer have the autonomy they need to do their jobs well
- **Time and flexibility** needed to do the job that they love, rather than being weighed down by reporting and administrative burdens (IRMS were specified)
- Time to get to **know the children** they teach
- Communities of schools where people can lean on, and learn from. **More sharing of information and knowledge** and skills sets, in the classroom and beyond
- **Curious**, with leaders and teachers who can try new things and be allowed to fail
- A diversity of **professional development opportunities** and teachers and leaders have the agency to seek the support they want

Issues to consider

- How will the new purpose for the whole system translate into **changes in how teachers work?**
- Purpose needs to be transformed into values that will **motivate leaders to engage and contribute**
- In a **hierarchical structure**, positive intent and change coming from the system can result in prescribed tasks and compliance for teachers and leaders, which will not achieve the desired purpose
- **Draw on the knowledge of people who have been long-time leaders** in education in SA and existing good practice across the state
- **Bravery will be needed** to dismantle solutions that have been put in place to make teachers' lives easier but that are detrimental to students
- The contribution a school has made to a student's growth needs to be a key measure. **Literacy, numeracy and SACE data do not provide a good indication of impact**

How to progress the purpose discussion and development of a new strategy

- **Firm leadership** will drive leaders and staff to make change
- Clearer articulation of the fact that **literacy and numeracy are a given**
- Conversation needs to shift away from being abstract to concrete. **Identifying concrete possibilities** might be helpful, for example how the curriculum is delivered
- Communicate the values that shape the purpose so that it can **guide and motivate leaders to implement** it without needing to be told what to do
- **Communicate** with leaders in schools about **how the Department and EDs can or will make changes**
- **Re-frame the strategic plan into something less bureaucratic**. Participants were sceptical about the effectiveness of creating another strategic plan as the output of the review. Currently there may be a widespread 'strategic plan fatigue'.
- **A change journey needs to be a shared journey** between the department and schools





“

Participants raised the issue that many teachers have become used to being compliant. To remedy this, and encourage creativity in teaching, people need to learn how to teach with compassion. They need to be allowed to try new things and be allowed to fail. However, experimentation should be executed with care, ensuring that vulnerable students are not unfairly impacted.

Summary note from consultation with Principals and Leaders' Associations

Oversight and Advocacy Bodies forum

“The **system currently defines what is important narrowly**, (e.g., phonics, NAPLAN SACE, attendance, school improvement plans). Everything else that schools are doing is seen as secondary and unrewarded. Leaders will respond to what is being measured, **identifying the right measures is critical.**”

What is the most important purpose of public education in South Australia?

1. Children at the centre and the system should be flexible around them
2. Priority should be on supporting young people to grow up mentally strong to be prepared for their future, yet literacy and numeracy cannot be lost
3. Be the safety net for children
4. Ensure interaction and connection with other government areas and other services
5. Support future inclusivity and cultural awareness in the community

What are the outcomes that the public education system should achieve for children, for the community and for families?

1. Create trust to achieve outcomes of support stability, belonging and safety of students
2. Focus on nurture and continuity care
3. Address high turnover of teachers and employees
4. Provide a flexible system (address issue of students starting at a disadvantage, focus on varied student needs, respond to crises and incorporate positive changes)
5. Provide the following skills; digital technology, critical thinking, ethical decision making and reasoning, social skills and cultural awareness

What should be the measures to assess if public education system is achieving these outcomes?

1. Include how students are maintained and sustained in the schooling system
2. Be applicable to all students and not designed to compare students
3. Include how schools are making a difference to students. Attendees agreed the best schools make the 'biggest difference' to students, not the best grades
4. Include measures focus on improving the wellbeing of children. It was felt the system doesn't measure personal qualities
5. Need to lead a shift in parent's expectations of success measures



All Our Ideas



Summary of themes

The All Our Ideas tool was used to generate discussion and share the thinking from various forum participants.

Overall, the participants suggested prioritising the following elements:

- Help students be **creative, innovative and resourceful** and solve problems by drawing upon learning areas and deep content knowledge.
- Students need the ability **to develop dispositions for lifelong learning** and to be able to contribute in their communities.
- Develop student **critical thinking**, problem solving and exploration skills.
- Support students learn about themselves and **contribute to a thriving community** while acting with moral and ethical integrity.
- Work towards social justice; empower students helping them develop empathy, **intercultural understanding & take agency** in their lives.
- Students become creative, critical thinkers and problem solvers who work to **create a just world for others**



Mentimeter Polls (Phase One)



Cognitive strategies

1. Students don't always feel supported to take risks or voice opinions when learning (a consistent theme across year levels)
2. Less than half of those in Year 7 – 9 always think first about how to approach a task before starting
3. Independent and diverse problem solving is seen to decrease with age

30%

of Year 5 - 6's **always** feel safe to take risks or voice opinions

41%

of Year 7 – 9's **always** think first about the best way to approach a task before starting

28%

of Year 10 – 11's are **very often or often** asked to share what they already know about a new topic with their peers

I try my own way of problem solving before seeking help

1. Year 5 – 6: 74%
2. Year 7 – 9: 59%
3. Year 10 – 11: 50%

[% = those who stated very often or often]

I am expected to show MORE THAN ONE way to solve problems

1. Year 5 – 6: 69%
2. Year 7 – 9: 50%
3. Year 10 – 11: 35%

[% = those who stated very often or often]

62%

of Year 5 – 6 **very often or often** have their teachers help to connect new learning to what they already know



Cognitive strategies

	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Before starting to work on a task, I think first about the best way to approach / answer / solve it [% = those who stated always]	41%	41%	48%
When I learn, I feel safe to take risks or voice my opinion [% = those who stated always]	30%	23%	38%
I am asked to think about what I ALREADY know about a topic [% = those who stated very often or often]	49%	69%	58%
I am asked to SHARE what I already know about a new topic with my peers [% = those who stated very often or often]	54%	63%	28%
My teachers MODEL ways of approaching tasks through talking aloud [% = those who stated very often or often]	58%	68%	43%
My teacher helps me CONNECT my new learning to what I already know [% = those who stated very often or often]	62%	56%	60%
I am expected to show MORE THAN ONE way to solve problems [% = those who stated very often or often]	69%	50%	35%
I am asked GUIDING QUESTIONS about where I can go next, rather than being told [% = those who stated very often or often]	47%	50%	48%
I get step-by-step INSTRUCTIONS for how to solve problems [% = those who stated very often or often]	43%	50%	30%
I try my own way of solving problems BEFORE seeking help [% = those who stated very often or often]	74%	59%	50%



Collaborative learning

1. Most (74%) of those in Years 5 – 6 felt challenged in a good way about their learning yesterday
2. Less than half of Year 10 – 11's feel that school is preparing them for their future, with 71% recalling being bored yesterday
3. Whilst majority of students (from all year levels) learn by talking and sharing ideas with others, approximately only a third worked on challenging problems with their peers in the past week

74%

of Year 5 – 6's were challenged in a good way about their learning yesterday

45%

of Year 7 – 9's **frequently** ask questions about what they are learning

43%

of Year 10 – 11's feel school is preparing them well for the future they want

I learn by talking and sharing ideas with others

1. Year 7 – 9: 88%
2. Year 5 – 6: 83%
3. Year 10 – 11: 83%

[% = those who stated yes]

In the LAST WEEK at school I worked on challenging problems with my peers

1. Year 5 – 6: 35%
2. Year 7 – 9: 35%
3. Year 10 – 11: 24%

[% = those who stated very often or often]

71%

of Year 10 – 11's were bored at school yesterday



Collaborative learning

	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Yesterday I was EXCITED about something I was learning [% = those who stated YES! I experienced this!]	73%	72%	64%
Yesterday I was BORED at school [% = those who stated YES! I experienced this!]	57%	65%	71%
Yesterday I was CHALLENGED in my learning in a good way [% = those who stated YES! I experienced this!]	74%	55%	71%
In the LAST WEEK at school I worked on challenging problems with my peers [% = those who stated very often or often]	35%	35%	24%
In the LAST WEEK at school my peers helped me understand something that was challenging me in my learning [% = those who stated very often or often]	22%	25%	24%
In the LAST WEEK at school I worked mainly by myself [% = those who stated very often or often]	46%	58%	63%
We help each other learn at school [% = those who stated yes]	94%	98%	88%
We discuss and question why people think the way they do [% = those who stated yes]	74%	73%	68%
I learn by talking and sharing ideas with others [% = those who stated yes]	83%	88%	83%
I ask questions about what we are learning [% = those who stated YES – This happens FREQUENTLY]	40%	45%	41%
I contribute to group tasks where everyone must contribute in order to succeed [% = those who stated YES – This happens FREQUENTLY]	72%	63%	66%
I give answers to teachers questions [% = those who stated YES – This happens FREQUENTLY]	61%	60%	44%
When working in groups, are the learning goals about developing collaboration skills made clear like the subject learning goals? [% = those who stated Yes, always]	22%	5%	22%
I think that school is preparing me well for the future I want [% = those who stated yes]	53%	44%	43%



Feedback

1. Spoken feedback is the preference for those in Year 5 – 6 and 7 – 9. Older age groups are more equally split between spoken and written
2. Year 10 – 11's observe the lowest agreement for the statement 'the feedback I receive encourages me to reflect on my learning'
3. Receiving feedback is important to challenging students as a learner, yet less than half receive feedback that includes clear steps about what to do to improve (lowest amongst Years 10 – 11)

61%

of Year 5 – 6's feel spoken feedback helps them learn the most

82%

of Year 7 – 9's very often or often carefully look at teacher comments and feedback

53%

of Year 10 – 11's believe the feedback they receive encourages them to reflect on their learning

Getting feedback challenges me as a learner

1. Year 5 – 6: 86%
2. Year 10 – 11: 85%
3. Year 7 – 9: 84%

[% = those who stated Yes! It does!]

The feedback I receive includes clear steps about what to do to IMPROVE

1. Year 5 – 6: 44%
2. Year 7 – 9: 38%
3. Year 10 – 11: 27%

[% = those who stated yes]

Teachers

the leading source of feedback for all year levels



Feedback

I receive feedback **IN WRITING**

[% = those who stated very often or often]

I receive **SPOKEN** feedback

[% = those who stated very often or often]

Feedback clearly outlines a way I can **IMPROVE**

[% = those who stated very often or often]

I receive feedback **DURING** a task

[% = those who stated very often or often]

I look **CAREFULLY** at my teacher's comments and feedback to see how to demonstrate improvements in my learning

[% = those who stated very often or often]

Which type of feedback do you feel most helps you learn?

Giving feedback challenges me as a learner

[% = those who stated Yes! It does!]

Getting feedback challenges me as a learner

[% = those who stated Yes! It does!]

Who do you get feedback for learning from the most?

[top three sources]

The feedback I receive includes clear steps about what to do to **IMPROVE**

[% = those who stated yes]

The feedback I receive encourages me to **REFLECT** on my learning

[% = those who stated yes]

	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
I receive feedback IN WRITING [% = those who stated very often or often]	61%	77%	76%
I receive SPOKEN feedback [% = those who stated very often or often]	54%	51%	54%
Feedback clearly outlines a way I can IMPROVE [% = those who stated very often or often]	69%	85%	56%
I receive feedback DURING a task [% = those who stated very often or often]	47%	49%	53%
I look CAREFULLY at my teacher's comments and feedback to see how to demonstrate improvements in my learning [% = those who stated very often or often]	73%	82%	80%
Which type of feedback do you feel most helps you learn?	Spoken: 61% Written: 39%	Spoken: 59% Written: 41%	Spoken: 49% Written: 51%
Giving feedback challenges me as a learner [% = those who stated Yes! It does!]	89%	92%	93%
Getting feedback challenges me as a learner [% = those who stated Yes! It does!]	86%	84%	85%
Who do you get feedback for learning from the most? [top three sources]	Teacher: 52% Parents: 21% Peers: 20%	Teacher: 51% Peers: 20% Parents: 20%	Teacher: 57% Peers: 21% Parents: 15%
The feedback I receive includes clear steps about what to do to IMPROVE [% = those who stated yes]	44%	38%	27%
The feedback I receive encourages me to REFLECT on my learning [% = those who stated yes]	66%	72%	53%



Active learning

1. Year 5 – 6's are encouraged to keep working through tasks until they are finished
2. Less than half frequently check and reflect on their work whilst completing tasks
3. Majority of students agree they get more involved in learning when they get a choice about how they learn. Whilst many appreciate being told exactly what to do for assignments, those in Year 10 – 11 especially find a balance between this and critical thinking

81%

of Year 5 – 6's **very often or often** encourage themselves to keep working on tasks until they are finished

44%

of Year 7 – 9's **always** check their work and thinking throughout a task not just before handing it up

49%

of Year 10 – 11's **very often or often** reflect on their learning and think about what they could do differently

I get more involved in learning when my teacher gives me CHOICE about what or how I learn

1. Year 7 – 9: 100%
2. Year 5 – 6: 89%
3. Year 10 – 11: 86%

[% = those who stated YES, that's true for me!]

I like to be told exactly what I need to do for my assignments

1. Year 7 – 9: 73%
2. Year 5 – 6: 61%
3. Year 10 – 11: 51%

[% = those who stated always]

35%

of Year 10 – 11's **very often or often** remind themselves to check work against set learning goals during tasks



Active learning

DURING tasks, I remind myself to check my work against set learning goals

[% = those who stated very often or often]

I ENCOURAGE myself to keep working on tasks until they are finished

[% = those who stated very often or often]

I give up on tasks BEFORE they are finished if I find them hard

[% = those who stated very often or often]

I REFLECT on my learning and think about what I could do differently

[% = those who stated very often or often]

If I am stuck, I stop and think about how I can approach a task DIFFERENTLY

[% = those who stated very often or often]

When faced with a task I don't know how to complete, I usually ...

I am ENCOURAGED to keep asking questions and persist until I am satisfied that I understand

[% = those who stated Yes! I experience this!]

I get more involved in learning when my teacher gives me CHOICE about what or how I learn

[% = those who stated YES, that's true for me]

When I am working on a new topic, I try to work out how all the ideas I have from previous learning fit together

[% = those who stated always]

I check my work and thinking throughout a task, not just at the point right before handing it in

[% = those who stated always]

I like to be told exactly what I need to do for my assignments

[% = those who stated always]

	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
DURING tasks, I remind myself to check my work against set learning goals	46%	36%	35%
I ENCOURAGE myself to keep working on tasks until they are finished	81%	87%	70%
I give up on tasks BEFORE they are finished if I find them hard	8%	-	9%
I REFLECT on my learning and think about what I could do differently	57%	64%	49%
If I am stuck, I stop and think about how I can approach a task DIFFERENTLY	55%	51%	49%
When faced with a task I don't know how to complete, I usually ...	Ask someone for help: 55% Try some different ways on my own: 45%	Ask someone for help: 64% Try some different ways on my own: 36%	Ask someone for help: 58% Try some different ways on my own: 42%
I am ENCOURAGED to keep asking questions and persist until I am satisfied that I understand	85%	87%	76%
I get more involved in learning when my teacher gives me CHOICE about what or how I learn	89%	100%	86%
When I am working on a new topic, I try to work out how all the ideas I have from previous learning fit together	40%	43%	47%
I check my work and thinking throughout a task, not just at the point right before handing it in	47%	44%	42%
I like to be told exactly what I need to do for my assignments	61%	73%	51%



Open end text analysis



What do you hope for the future?

"I **hope I am able to get an enjoyable and well-paying job**. I hope to become an actor and have a good long life."

"I hope that I **continue to succeed in years such as 10, 11 and 12** and I find a career that I really enjoy."

"I **hope that my future is full of fun experiences**. I hope that I have lots of great opportunities. I think that my school can help me throughout my future because I can learn new things and have a good education, helping me create a better fortune."

"I hope to complete my schooling to a high standard, and **follow through with the career path I intend using the knowledge and skills developed**."

"I want to go to uni and **have a career that I really enjoy** and have fun doing. Don't know what that is yet, but I feel positive about the future."

"To be **successful & happy**."



How might school help you achieve that?

"By making more certificates available even if that is over long distances. **Trying to apply to my interests a bit more**."

"During school I have been involved in a lot of coding and computer classes and **with the help of those classes, I have been able to code things like robots that solve rubik's cubes** and I believe with that knowledge I can go on to code robots."

"**Personalised learning and goal planning**. The year level principals to be more like industry leaders checking in on learning progress. Overall the education system is outdated, the teaching should be more personalised."

"**Providing a healthy and positive environment where I am able to grow as a leader, learner and person**. This can be achieved by staff support, mental health services and activities and not taking everything as seriously."

"School can help me achieve this through education, and **allowing me to build the habits and systems that lead to success**."



I Hope Cards (Phase One)



A student with long dark hair is sitting at a desk, leaning forward and writing on a piece of paper with a pen. To the right of the student is a laptop computer. In the foreground, there is a pen holder containing several pens and pencils. The background is a plain wall. The entire image has a warm, orange-toned overlay.

“

I hope that students get more involved in their learning (like choosing what we work on through the year) and for more people to take pride and to work harder in school.

Year 4 – 6 Student

I hope...

Recurring themes by year level

Years 4 - 6

Collaboration and supportive learning environment

- Every body can help others when they need help even if they have a disability and be respectful to everyone
- I hope we work in schools to help the environment and to help with as many opportunities as possible
- That students around the state will be confident in their learning and abilities and are given support and time to complete their work without stress and negativity

More active (and fun) learning opportunities

- That students can be included in more activities for learning instead of sitting for two hours just to write 18 sentences when someone could learn the same thing but also have fun
- To see more activities in subjects that interest students. To be able to do more subjects outside. For other students to have lots of help with persevering

Subject choice, student input and learning flexibility

- That there are more subjects and you can choose more subjects than others in primary school and there is more play time
- Kids can have more of a say in their own learning and only 4 days of school so we can have a 3 day weekend every weekend

Years 7 - 9

Safe and comfortable learning environment

- All kids have the equal right to learn and feel confident expressing their ideas in front of their peers, and social members of the community, to create a safe and social environment
- Everyone feels comfortable to be able to share ideas that could end up teaching others, who may need extra help that don't feel safe to ask those questions. That people are willing to help others and not tease them for needing help

Subject choice, student input and learning flexibility

- That I can have more of a say in choosing subjects. And do more outside learning
- That schools let students select subjects at a younger age
- That when I get older, I am able to learn more about the things that I want to learn about

Equal learning opportunities

- That students in the country or outside of a large city receive as much attention and support as they deserve
- That more public schools get more funding. So that the school can improve and keep students and get more teachers

Years 10 - 12

More adaptive education and learning flexibility

- That education is better for the future generation, and that students have the ability to dictate their education better
- Every student can find success in their life and that school can assist them but not force them into a path they don't want to follow. #success
- The education system is more open minded about brain breaks, giving less assignments to senior year levels, as they have other stuff going on outside of school

Comfortable learning environment and emotional support

- The education system helps students more with their mental health challenges to help be successful with their work and future
- Everyone feels part of a close knit community, helping each other learn. As well as being able to give your perspective on things



A1 Posters (Phase One)



COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT



Putting data in the hands of youth Australian students.
 The authors of this document are:
 First name: Prem
 Year level: 5
 First name: Brooke
 Year level: 6
 First name: Pepton
 Year level: 5
 First name: _____
 Year level: _____
 First name: _____
 Year level: _____
 First name: _____
 Year level: _____
 First name: _____
 Year level: _____

Your insights are valuable and valued. Thank you for sharing thoughtfully and generously.

Moving around the classroom
 Teachers being more kind
 More time to finish projects
 They have the skills to slow down tasks

Our school's idea is...
 To have kids put extra effort in
 it could be easier or harder that's why they don't put effort into it.

HASS was fun because we got to build a boat for 108 people
 Does down the more the kids get older.

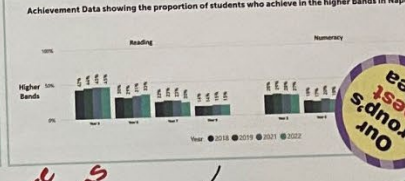
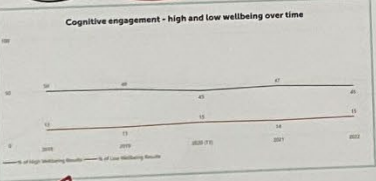
Using technology is fun
 Science is boring because not as many experiments as year 7 and 8
 teachers should stop giving more work and give a break every 20 or 30 min
 When we play other class

Our school's idea is...
 To teach these skills
 Art Because we get to be messy and be creative.

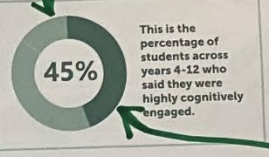
Art Because we get to be messy and be creative.
 We agreed on this
 Year 3's don't give up as easily

Here are some ways to think about Cognitive Engagement

Year	Highly Engaged	Less Engaged
Year 4	65%	35%
Year 5	60%	40%
Year 6	55%	45%
Year 7	50%	50%
Year 8	45%	55%
Year 9	40%	60%
Year 10	35%	65%
Year 11	30%	70%
Year 12	25%	75%



- The questions we ask students:
- I work hard on learning
 - When I found something hard I tried another way
 - I take a lot of care with what I do
 - No matter who you are, you can change our intelligence
 - I am excited to come up with new things.



Maths Because it makes your brain think harder.
 We agreed on this

Have more Health lessons
 The year 3 have more Data then the Year 9.

English When you do big write you have a goal and it's sometimes hard to pursue
 More Excursions!
 More Partner

Our school's best idea
 HASS When we get a chance to research and make things and projects it is really fun.
 When we play other class

More fun activities
 We can do this now!
 More donations
 Art Because we get to be messy and be creative.
 We agreed on this
 Year 3's don't give up as easily
 the re attention from the class and teacher.
 it's boring for them so they lose interest.

When you have a value teacher they can think they can do what they want
 Spanish/Languages it is exciting to learn a second or third or more languages.
 Stop being boring
 make lessons more fun and engaging
 less than half are not engaged it is a little disappointing and they can get better.
 Kids can't manage themselves. When we have been sitting for long everyone gets restless and wants to move around or have a brain break
 More team working
 The most challenging change
 When teachers go on and on for ages.



More learning experiences beyond the school gates - excursions and experiences. Learn how to manage our own feelings and difficult moments. Learning how to have good relationships and how to manage our big feelings, conflicts etc. More room to express ideas.

Taken from Padlet input

Regional South Australia forums

Perseverance and academic self-concept

When reflecting on the statistics around perseverance, regional students highlight a rise in pressure and expectation from teachers and parents for students to perform well in high school years, at a time when teachers become less engaged with individuals and students are expected to be more self-reliant. This focus on grades as the most important learning metric adds to this overwhelming feeling of pressure, which is exacerbated by the overloading of assignments and unrealistic due dates. The students largely agreed that a more collaborative and connective style of learning, where interactions with the larger community and peer to peer reflections at the end of lessons would be more engaging. They also highlighted a need for an understanding of real world correlation to what they are learning as well as frequent 'brain breaks' to disrupt their thinking. There was a strong reflection that old modes of teaching (repetition/rote learning/text book learning) do not inspire students in their learning, and could lead to students disengaging.

Stop	Start	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pressure from teachers and parents on older students▪ Unrealistic due dates/ overloading of work/ assignments▪ Less focus on grades as a learning metric▪ Not enough time or help for complex problems/ ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ End of lesson sharing of ideas/ reflections on the learnings as a group or with a peer▪ Collaborative learning and connecting with community▪ More frequent brain breaks▪ Real world correlation with lessons, practical education▪ Attention to and understanding of different learning styles and how they can be accommodated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Older students are expected to be more self-reliant▪ Lack of connection to what they are learning▪ Repetitive learning turns kids off



A photograph of a student in a classroom, seen from behind, looking towards a teacher at the front. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The student is wearing a grey hoodie. The teacher is standing at the front of the room, and other students are visible at desks in the background.

“

The transition into high school is like being thrown into the learning pit!

Regional student

Regional South Australia forums

Cognitive engagement

Many of the same issues arose in the minds of regional students when focusing on cognitive engagement in classrooms, as perseverance, including a desire for less focus on revision and repetitive learning, and a deeper focus on interactive, hands-on or play based learning (they ascertained that a stronger focus on these styles for primary school children resulted in higher levels of cognitive engagement). Moving learning outside of the classroom was also strongly favoured with a focus on outdoor learning and excursions, as well as more 'active' classrooms full of discussion and debate. The students highlighted that much of the current syllabus feels outdated and unrelated to them as current students, which leads to a lack of understanding around how these lessons actually relate to real life. They also pinpointed that there is a greater acceptance and support for failure in younger students that dissipates as they advance in school – which can act as a block to trying in the first place. COVID and the effect of technology and social media on the mental health and focus of older students was a key theme in discussions, with many students feeling like a more collaborative learning environment where they can have a say in their assignments and projects could act as a remedy to waning interest.

Stop	Start	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Less focus on revision/ repetitive learning▪ Teachers need to 'spread the load' with work assignments▪ Classrooms as quiet, still spaces▪ Grades as the ultimate cognitive priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Interactive/ hands-on/ play based learning▪ Regular brain breaks with active element (get the body moving)▪ Different learning environment (outdoor, excursions etc.)▪ More 'active' classrooms with discussion, talking and collaboration▪ More student choice in learning (assignments, projects etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ More pressure as you get older and less teacher focus▪ Lessons don't feel relevant / haven't been updated▪ More acceptance of failure in younger years▪ COVID / technology (and online learning) has impacted mental health and focus



Regional South Australia: School belonging and school climate

What types of things do you think you should learn more of at school?

	Regional SA school	Metropolitan Adelaide school
Life skills	62%	63%
Creativity and innovative problem solving	38%	41%
Working well with others and collaborating	35%	35%
How to learn independently	33%	31%
Decision making	30%	32%
How to support others e.g., friends, family, community	21%	24%
Specific subject knowledge e.g., maths, science, arts	21%	21%
How to improve my wellbeing	16%	18%
Column n	1,127	2,790



Regional South Australia: School belonging and school climate

What other things do you think schools should do more of to help you learn?

	Regional SA school	Metropolitan Adelaide school
More subject choices	42%	42%
More group work	38%	37%
More opportunity to work in other spaces or outdoors	31%	30%
More hands on activities	36%	28%
More use of technology	23%	26%
More encouraging and rewarding of students doing well	20%	25%
More time to talk (and less talking from teachers)	17%	20%
More individual work	17%	18%
More support for wellbeing	15%	16%
To be stretched more - not just with more content but with more thinking.	10%	14%
More time to grapple with an idea or a problem (i.e., to think about it and not just be told the idea or the answer).	10%	11%
Column n	1,127	2,788



Regional South Australia: School belonging and school climate

In a series of forums last year, students shared their hopes about public education for students of the future. Do you agree with any of the below?

	Regional SA school	Metropolitan Adelaide school
I hope for people to be confident in learning	37%	38%
I hope that everyone is not afraid to give something a go	40%	35%
I hope school encourages an environment where it's okay to make mistakes	27%	30%
I hope that people enjoy learning	24%	27%
I hope that there are more subjects to choose from	28%	25%
I hope everyone feels part of a group to help each other learn	27%	24%
I hope mental health and wellbeing is prioritised over grades and exam scores. Students are more than a letter	20%	26%
I hope schools are more hands on. Like doing more outside things	25%	20%
I hope that in the future school is a place where every student gets their own individual ways to learn and improve their learning	18%	23%
I hope that students are more involved in discussions in and out of the classroom (e.g., that students have more of a say in how they learn)	19%	20%
Column n	1,090	2,653





“

We want time on the things that motivate us to come to school. Want to learn about our interests in more depth... Don't be allergic to fun.

Taken from Padlet input

Metropolitan Adelaide forums

School belonging and school climate

Many students commented on increasing feelings of alienation from their schooling, particularly as they transition[ed] into high school. Diminishing teacher support and outdated assessment methods often fuelling student disengagement. A push towards learning beyond the classroom (through outdoor activities and excursions) may help foster a more positive learning experience, breaking up the monotony of the current uniform structure of teaching. Greater teacher understanding of student issues, in tandem with an effort towards more open student/ teacher relationships (similar to that of their peers) could increase a sense of student belonging and confidence. Students broadly reflected on the syllabus lacking a connection to their personal interests and sense of community in older years, issues they suggested may be bolstered by more overt (fun) community-building activities and opportunities more relevant to their passions.

Stop	Start	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Outdated and irrelevant lessons/ assignments▪ Lack of time given to students to grasp concepts▪ National testing ineffective – encourage personal improvement, not comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ More outside of classroom learning – excursions and activities▪ Activities that build a sense of community (e.g., sports)▪ More collaborative student/ teacher engagement and relationships▪ Greater compassion and understanding of external pressures students may be facing (e.g., mental health, wellbeing, other issues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Less teacher support/ involvement as students age▪ Lack of connection to student interests/ pathways in later years▪ Social media and low self esteem seen as issues in high school▪ Community values and belonging activities more apparent in early years



Metropolitan Adelaide forums

Perseverance and academic self-concept

Similar themes emerged from the school belonging and school climate discussions. There is a call to broaden current assessment and teaching practices, placing greater emphasis on how students engage with their education and the process of learning rather than grades. More 'play' is a predominant theme, and may be satisfied through more engaging (relevant) content, active classrooms, excursions, outdoor learning and student led discussions/ collaboration. Beyond this, students expressed a desire to be able to employ more creative thinking, working through problems/ tasks in a manner personalised to their preferred learning method. Greater teacher (and school) support and nurturing environment which encourages confidence and curiosity is essential to driving student satisfaction and aspirations to learn.

Stop	Start	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Overassessment and reliance on standard forms of testing (NAPLAN, exams, rote learning etc.)Instilling belief there is only one solution / way to problem solveLess focus on grades and more on the process of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More play, engaging content and 'active' classroomsMore excursions and outdoor learningStudent led discussions and collaborationAllow for creative thinking and personalised learning methodsExtra support for students to figure out how they learn best and help in areas where they may be struggling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More nurturing environment in primary school – students become less confident as they age, greater expectations and external pressuresLess play – school becomes less engaging as you ageCreative thinking is restricted, students losing curiosity for learning





“

**Allow curiosity. Let us dare
to be wrong! Let us learn in
contexts that are relevant.**

Taken from Padlet input

Metropolitan Adelaide forums

Cognitive engagement

Again, consistent themes shone through when exploring student cognitive engagement. Adolescent pressures and the complexities associated with the transition into high school were a backdrop to the education experience for many. More hands-on, interactive learning such as student discussions and group work are suggested to boost participation. Flexibility both in terms of content and learning methods were top of mind for students to get the most out of their education, tailoring lessons to what is most relevant to them. More frequent brain breaks and reflection on teachings to real-world applications are important for student focus and connection to the material. Such recommendations would be seen to modernise the learning environment, whilst inspiring greater curiosity and critical thinking.

Stop	Start	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Outdated/ traditional approaches and learning environments (lessons, textbooks etc.)▪ Quiet classrooms▪ Compounding assignments▪ Focus on right and wrong answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ More interactive/ hands-on learning – content and discussions/ collaboration (student participation)▪ Choice and flexibility about how to learn – method of learning and relevant subjects▪ More frequent breaks▪ Connect learning to real life applications and reflect on importance of teachings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Change in thinking from primary school to high school, change from critical/ exploratory to rote/ uninspired▪ COVID, technology and online learning impacts on families and students capacity to focus and engage▪ Adolescent pressures

