

Governance framework

This is a mandated framework under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this page must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

Overview

The Department for Education's governance framework describes the elements of good governance that support our purpose, principles and values and shape our decision making and practices to achieve our strategic intent as outlined in our Strategy for Public Education in South Australia.

This framework references the [Governance Institute of Australia's definition of \(corporate\) governance](#) as 'encompassing the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account'.

This framework details governance mechanisms including:

- strategic planning and management, and the policy settings that support delivery of our strategy
- the legal and authorising environment in which we operate
- organisational structure and practices that enable and support our work, including risk management and improvement approaches
- stakeholder engagement principles and mechanisms including the Aboriginal Voice Framework.

The framework is updated at least annually to ensure that it continues to be in line with our strategic priorities, service delivery, corporate obligations and legislative requirements, while recognising change and the need for ongoing improvement.

Links to further information are provided throughout the framework. This includes publicly available websites as well as links to EDi (where access is only available within the department).

A [governance framework guide \(PDF 288KB\)](#) is also available that aims to support implementation of our governance framework by providing an overview of some of its key aspects.

Questions about governance or policy matters should be raised with the relevant division or directorate within the department.

Scope

This framework applies to all department employees in corporate office and education and care sites.



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Detail

Message from the Chief Executive

Through our Strategy for Public Education in South Australia, we aim to ensure that our public education system can unlock every child's potential now and in the future. This governance framework supports our strategy as a lever for change to manage risk effectively in the system, as well as through creating opportunities that help our learners thrive.

The framework sets out standards of accountability and transparency that stakeholders and I expect of our department. Specifically, it outlines the principles, elements and mechanisms we use for effective governance.

The tone for good governance is set from the top. The department's Senior Executive Group is committed to continuing to measure and align our behaviours to the values and principles set out in this framework. Building a culture that lives and breathes the values and principles of this framework will contribute greatly to our shared efforts to build a world-leading public education system in South Australia.

Governance is everyone's responsibility. This framework has been designed to inform and guide all staff about their role in governance. The behaviour of every person in our organisation not only contributes to the achievement of a world-leading education system, it also ensures that we continue to have a culture that clearly and consistently demonstrates our values in action, rewarding and encouraging good practice.

This framework will help us to assess the strengths and weaknesses of all business practice and improvement efforts, enabling us to respond quickly. The pace and quality of our response ensures our stakeholders have confidence in our ability to deliver quality educational services to South Australians.

Every organisation must continually evolve their governance arrangements to ensure that service delivery and key objectives continue to be met effectively and efficiently. The department reviews the framework annually to reflect changes to our strategic priorities and structural alignment.

Context

Purpose and Strategy for Public Education in South Australia

Public education is for every child and young person in every community across South Australia.

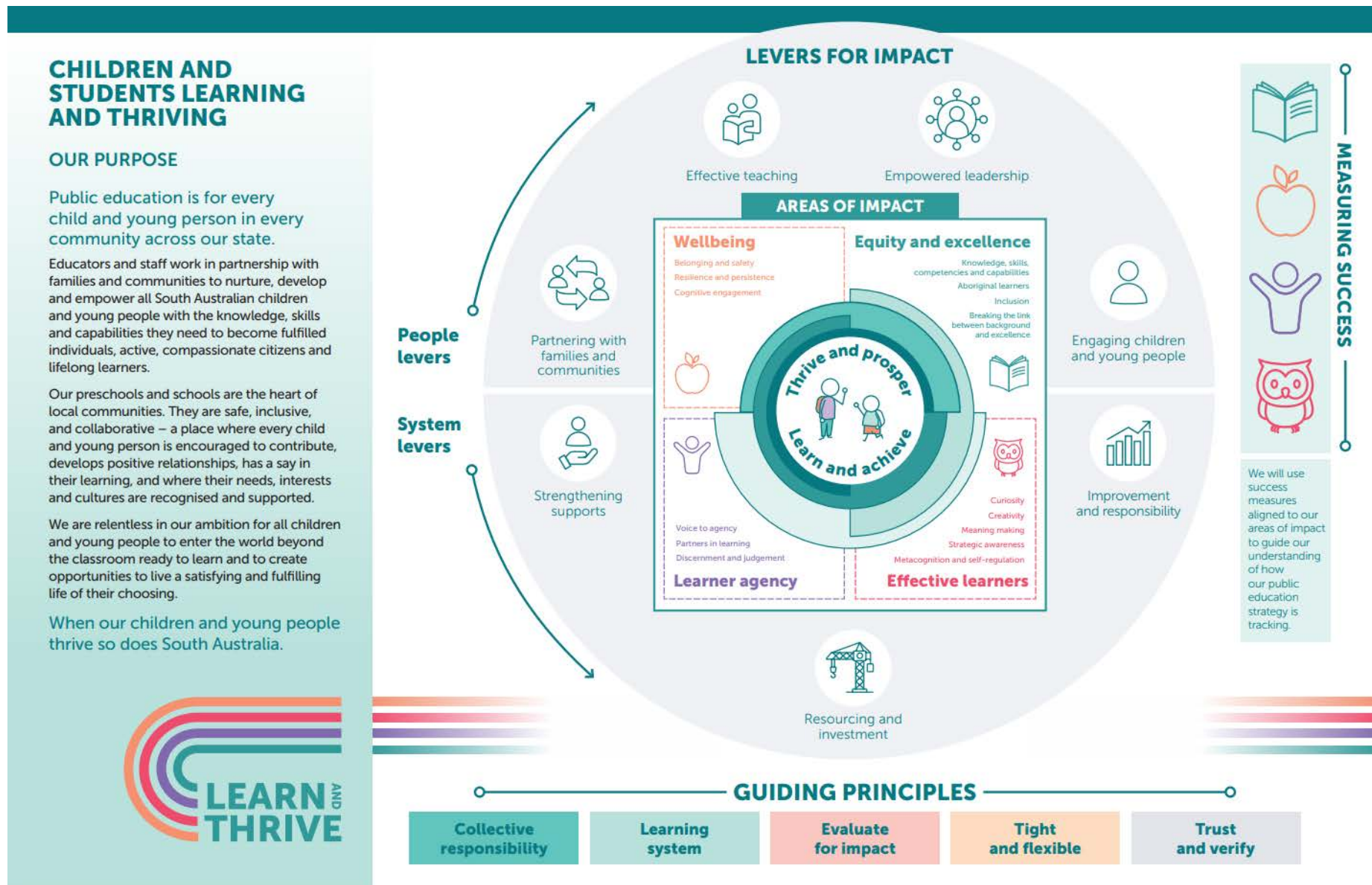
To help us build a world-leading public education system for South Australia, we led a state-wide conversation, starting with our learners. This included over 10,000 preschoolers and school students, staff, families, the community, and employers across the state. We also engaged with a range of local, national and international experts.

Their voices were used to create our [purpose statement and Strategy for Public Education in South Australia](#).

The strategy includes areas of areas of impact that describe what we will prioritise and resource to deliver our purpose. We will activate our levers across the system to create the biggest impact for our learners and our guiding principles describe how we make decisions and approach our work (**Figure 1**).

We continue to work in partnership with learners, students, parents, and the wider South Australian community to build an interconnected, world-leading public education system that is equitable and prioritises learning and wellbeing.

Figure 1. Strategy for Public Education in South Australia – Strategy on a page



Guiding principles

The guiding principles in our Strategy for Public Education in South Australia describe how we make decisions and approach our work. These principles underpin each element of our governance, describing:

- **Collective responsibility** and how we work together to deliver on our purpose, shown across our organisational structure, communications and decision making
- how we learn with and from each other in a **Learning system**, supported by appropriate governance processes including risk management and regular review and improvement
- how we **Evaluate for impact** on and for our learners, with performance and improvement measures in line with our strategy
- **Tight and flexible** approaches, where we all work towards our agreed purpose within our governance structure and processes, with consideration for scoping within a local context
- **Trust and verify** as a principle to provide support and structures to enable staff to make informed decisions as we deliver on our purpose.

Closing the Gap and Reconciliation commitments

We aim to build on our reconciliation efforts through our [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#), supported by good governance, in the 3 areas of:

- relationships built on trust and respect, and free of racism
- respect through understanding of Aboriginal cultures, rights and experiences, and
- opportunities for equal participation.

The department has responsibility for actions identified in [South Australia's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#) launched by the South Australian Government in partnership with the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON). The implementation plan is aligned to the 4 Priority Reforms identified in the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#): Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making; Building the Community-Controlled Sector; Transforming Government Organisations; and Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level.

Values

The South Australian [Public Sector Values](#) guide the way we work, including our decision making, organisational practices and how we behave as individuals.

Our induction process includes online training modules developed by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment to ensure all employees understand their responsibilities as public sector employees and commit to following the standards of professional conduct set out in the [Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#).

The [Integrity Framework](#) sets out how employees and leaders can strengthen integrity in our sector and adhere to the values and the Code of Ethics. It aims to achieve improved and sustained trust, with a culture of integrity reflected in employees' decision making across all levels in the South Australian public sector.

Governance foundations

While noting there is not one conclusive definition of (corporate) governance, the [Governance Institute of Australia defines \(corporate\) governance](#) in these terms:

‘Governance encompasses the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements of governance.’

This framework is influenced by the following [4 components of governance](#):

- **Transparency:** being clear and unambiguous about the organisation’s structure, operations and performance, both externally and internally; and maintaining a genuine dialogue with, and providing insight to, stakeholders and the community generally.
- **Accountability:** making sure there is clarity of decision making within the organisation, with processes in place to ensure that the right people have the right authority to make effective and efficient decisions, with appropriate consequences for failures to follow those processes.
- **Stewardship:** developing and maintaining an enterprise-wide recognition that the organisation is managed for the benefit of children, young people and their families, taking appropriate account of the interests of our workforce and stakeholders.
- **Integrity:** developing and maintaining a culture committed to ethical behaviour and compliance with the law.

Governance elements

Six interrelated elements help us to achieve a governance standard for a world-leading public education system in South Australia. These elements of governance are underpinned by our values and guiding principles to support our purpose.

These inter-related governance elements that guide our practices are:

1. **Legislative grounding:** a shared understanding of legislative compliance and authorising requirements that we need to operate within to deliver our functions and meet our obligations at a state and national level.
2. **Organisational structure and decision making:** a robust organisational structure and clear lines of reporting and accountability that support open, transparent communication and effective decision making.
3. **Strategic planning and management:** aligned business, financial and budget planning processes and policy management that are prioritised to achieve our strategic intent.
4. **Stakeholder engagement:** a commitment to consistent engagement with relevant stakeholders in decision making that will affect them.
5. **Risk management:** a risk intelligent culture where the management of opportunities and risk are embedded throughout strategic planning and delivery.

6. Performance and improvement: a commitment to review and measure the impact on our learners, in line with our strategy, to ensure trigger control mechanisms occur early enough to maintain improvement.

A summary of these 6 interrelated elements is shown at **Figure 2**, along with the 4 components (Transparency, Accountability, Stewardship and Integrity) that provide a foundation for good governance.

Figure 2. Governance foundations and our interrelated governance elements



The relevant governance structures, mechanisms and practices are mapped against each of the 6 elements below. A brief overview of each is provided with links for further information.

Element 1: legislative grounding

The department's legal and authorising environment includes mandates from a number of Acts, regulations and determinations as well as the Common Law.

The department's policies and procedures are written to ensure consistency and compliance with relevant legislation. The department's website references the relevant [education Acts, Regulations and other legislation](#). All department employees have a responsibility to uphold the legal and mandated requirements relevant to their roles.

Legislation

Section 5(7) of the [Public Sector Act 2009](#) requires public sector agencies to implement all legislative requirements relevant to the agency, and properly administer and keep under review legislation for which the agency is responsible.

Treasurer's instructions

Issued under the authority of the [Public Finance and Audit Act 1987](#), Treasurer's instructions specify certain procedures in relation to financial management and require each public authority to develop, implement, document and maintain policies, procedures, systems and internal controls to help chief executives with their financial management responsibilities. The Chief Executive must establish and maintain effective policies, procedures and systems for identifying, assessing, monitoring, managing and annually reviewing financial and tax risks.

Treasurer's instructions are binding on the department and require implementation and monitoring as per individual stipulations. Schools and preschools are required to comply with separate instructions approved by the Executive Director, Finance. These separate instructions specify the policies that schools and preschools are required to follow to comply with the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019](#) and the [Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020](#) (where these legislative instruments refer to matters relevant to finance) as well as incorporating a number of the principles consistent with the Treasurer's instructions.

Memoranda and agreements that affect governance

To advance the purpose and strategic intent of the department, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) may be entered into with external parties. The MoU should set out the understanding of the mutual aspirations of the prospective parties in working together towards a common end. The MoU sets out in broad terms the understanding between the parties and is generally not a legally binding document. The MoU should align to the approved strategy with suitable governance arrangements to monitor the outcomes.

There are a number of state, national and international agreements and memoranda that ministers and chief executives enter into from time to time. Formal agreements may, amongst other things, set out joint policy and program areas, decision making authorities for practice, monitoring and compliance and funding arrangements.

Ministerial Councils

Education Ministers Meeting

The Education Ministers Meeting is a forum for collaboration and decision making on early childhood education and care, school education, higher education and international education.

Australian, state and territory government ministers responsible for education attend the meeting. The Australian Government Minister for Skills and Training is the Chair.

The Education Ministers Meeting is primarily supported by a group of senior officials with responsibility for school education, early childhood and higher education who meet as the [Australian Education Senior Officials Committee](#) (AESOC). The department supports the Minister and Chief Executive's participation at the Education Ministers Meeting and AESOC meetings, with a strong focus on the interactions of matters being considered nationally, and South Australian policies and practices. National agreements, along with related policy and program actions, are agreed through the Education Ministers Meeting.

AESOC is also responsible for the operations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group (ATSIEAG) and the establishment of its replacement to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to the Education Ministers Meeting.

Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council

The Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council is a forum for national cooperation and stewardship across the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and on the intersection of skills and training policy with workforce issues. The Council collaboratively progresses items of national importance within the portfolio to achieve agreed objectives and priorities.

The Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council consists of portfolio ministers with responsibility for skills and training in their jurisdiction, including the Australian Government Minister for Skills and Training as the Chair.

The scope of the Council is to provide stewardship for the VET system through strategic policy, priority setting, planning, performance and evaluation, and aligning key cross-sectoral issues.

The Council is supported by the Skills Senior Officials Network (SSON), is made up of senior Australian, state and territory government officials with responsibility for VET. The department provides support to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills and Chief Executive's participation at the Council.

Element 2: organisational structure and decision making

We make change and impact through the most influential parts of our system: our people and the ways we work together. The department's corporate office [organisational structure](#) is designed to align functions and operations to ensure fidelity to the department's Strategy for Public Education. The structure promotes clear lines of reporting and accountability within and between the organisational groups, to support appropriate, open and transparent communication and decision making.

Governing bodies, committees and working groups

Governing bodies, committees and working groups are often used to oversee development and implementation of major initiatives or programs. When determining governance arrangements for an initiative, it is essential to consider whether the issue could be governed by an existing governance body, committee or working group to maximise existing structures and ensure efficient and effective governance.

At the discretion of the Chief Executive, short, medium or longer-term boards, committees or working groups may be established to provide direction and advice to the Chief Executive and the Senior Executive Group.

Considerations when forming governing bodies, working groups and committees are outlined at [appendix 1 – key considerations when establishing a governing body, working group or committee](#).

Local education teams

Local education teams are responsible for supporting improvement within individual schools and preschools, in addition to providing leadership to the partnerships and portfolio. In this context, local education teams have the following decision making functions:

- identification, selection and recruitment of site leaders
- educational leadership, inclusive and reflective of cultural approaches, to achieve improvement across all sites within the education partnership, in consultation with school and preschool colleagues
- monitoring of the effectiveness of individual site improvement within the context of the department's strategy and supporting improvement model
- drawing on local priorities to inform system coherence and build consistent quality practice, state-wide
- providing monitoring, tailored intervention and support, and partnering with key teams centrally, in the effective management and prevention of critical incidents
- leading schools and preschools through quality school and preschool improvement practices based on local and system-wide, and local experience, data and evidence to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for all children and young people.

Partnerships

A partnership is a collective of geographically defined preschool and school sites and the communities they serve. All South Australian government preschools and schools participate in an education partnership, with the support of local education teams.

Each partnership has its own governance arrangements aligned to the Partnership Governance Guideline (currently under review), and appropriate to the local context. The focus of shared work is the promotion of shared learning within and across the partnership.

Local governance arrangements that support decision making connect back to the department's corporate governance structures via education directors, through line management by the Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools.

Partnerships provide the following decision making functions:

- designing and implementing structures and processes that facilitate the strategic collaboration between sites to effectively support improved outcomes for children within each school, preschool and children's centre for early childhood development and parenting
- sharing knowledge and expertise between sites on effective practice in identifying and understanding the needs and aspirations of children and young people
- developing strategies tailored to individual sites to support the learning improvement and wellbeing of all children, with a particular focus on priority population groups, such as Aboriginal students, students with disability or those under guardianship
- identifying strategic and evidence-based opportunities to effectively organise resources to improve quality outcomes.

Preschools, schools, children's centres for early childhood development and parenting and other governance structures

The [Education and Children's Services Act 2019](#) sets the functions, roles, powers and operational rules of governing councils of schools, preschools and children's services centres. The Act allows binding administrative instructions to be issued to governing councils by the Chief Executive.

The governing council and the site leader are jointly responsible for the governance of a site. The Act and governing council constitution outline the functions and powers of a governing council, which include:

- strategic planning for the school (setting the broad direction and vision of the site, and monitoring and reviewing the site improvement plan)
- determining policies for the school
- determining the application of the total financial resources available to the school
- presenting operational plans and reports on its operations to the community and the Minister for Education, Training and Skills
- involving the school community in the governance of the school

- establishing and conducting, or arranging for the conduct of facilities and services to enhance the education, development, care, safety, health or welfare of children and students (out of school hours)
- being an employing authority of some non-teaching services, including out of school hours care and canteen.

More information on these arrangements is on the [governing councils](#) page on the department's website

Standalone preschools and children's services centres operate under the [preschool model constitution](#), as per the *Education and Children's Services Act 2019*. The constitution outlines the roles, functions, and powers of preschool councils.

Schools

School sites have local governance structures in place in line with the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019](#).

Local governance arrangements that support decision making connect back to departmental corporate governance structures via site leaders, through line management, to the Chief Executive, and the governing councils' accountabilities to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. A school governing council structure is directed by its [constitution](#), administrative instructions and council members are required to adhere to a [code of practice](#).

A typical school governing council structure also includes:

- mandated sub-committees: governing councils must have a finance advisory committee and, if a site has a canteen or an out-of-hours care program or other service (ie residential facilities), a committee must be established to support that service
- other sub-committees: can be established to help the governing council to carry out its functions more effectively and engage with the school community (ie fundraising, grounds).

Some sites may also have affiliated committees, such as parents and friends clubs, old scholars associations, and Aboriginal community networks. Affiliated committees operate under their own constitution and are separate governance structures to governing councils.

The South Australian Skills System

Skills SA discharges certain functions and powers under the [South Australian Skills Act 2008](#) in relation to the regulation of the state's apprenticeship and traineeship system under delegation from the South Australian Skills Commission. This is supported by and Delegations Policy and Compliance Framework, an Annual Compliance Plan and Regulatory priorities and Quarterly and Annual reporting to the SA Skills Commission.

The Skills SA [Quality and Compliance Framework for Training Providers and Project Proponents](#) supports governance and administration associated with the subsidised vocational education and training market.

Organisations that receive funding through Skills SA are guided by the Quality and Compliance Framework. This includes registered training organisations (RTO), TAFE SA, Adult Community Education (ACE) providers and project proponents.

The Quality and Compliance Framework provides guidance on expectations for becoming, and remaining, a

government-funded VET provider in South Australia. It does not replace or supersede existing legal or regulatory requirements. Providers remain responsible to the appropriate regulator (for example, Australian Skills Quality Authority) for ensuring they fulfil these obligations.

Before an RTO is approved to deliver subsidised training in South Australia it must hold a Funded Activities Agreement (the FAA) with the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. The FAA sets out the contractual obligations for the provision of training and skills development.

As part of its skills system stewardship role, Skills SA provides advice in accordance with the [Public Corporations Act 1993](#) to support a Ministerial Charter and Performance Statement for TAFE SA with the Minister, Treasurer and TAFE SA.

An operational arrangement for TAFE SA's government funded activity in training delivery, reform delivery, funding, compliance and reporting is also facilitated by Skills SA.

Children's centres for early childhood development and parenting governance structures

Governance arrangements for children's centres for early childhood development and parenting (children's centres) are designed to support collaborative decision making between partners, including relevant government agencies and non-government service providers in the local community. Partners may include, but are not limited to, agencies such as Department of Human Services, SA Health, Child and Family Health Services (CaFHS), local councils, and non-government providers. Children's centres operate within existing legislation and requirements for each partner agency.

Standalone children's centres are managed by a director and report to an education director. Leaders in school-based children's centres report to the school principal. The director or school principal has oversight of services and programs operating within a children centre. However, in most instances, the department only governs programs within a children's centre such as preschool, occasional care, Learning Together communities playgroups, universal and targeted playgroups or crèche services.

The overarching partnership group brings together agencies to provide integrated services around the family and child.

The Children's Centres Advisory Group provides a key mechanism to help streamline communication, contributing to strategic direction setting, and facilitating purposeful collaboration and engagement on behalf of all children's centres. The group, consisting of directors from a range of children's centres, representatives from corporate office, an early childhood leader and an education director, provide advice on consultation and communication processes between corporate office and sites with specific focus on system-wide policy and operational matters.

The [Children's Centre Outcomes Framework \(PDF 303KB\)](#) provides guidance and consistent alignment to the vision, values and goals for children's centres. The framework supports children's centres and partners to jointly plan and take action to improve the learning, health, development and wellbeing outcomes for young children and families within their communities.

Aboriginal education governance structures

Following the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) endorsed in 2017 at the National First Nations Constitutional

Convention, the South Australian Parliament passed the [First Nations Voice Act 2023 \(SA\)](#) establishing a First Nations Voice in South Australia, including Local First Nations Voices divided into (initially 6) regions. In partnership with South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council (SAAETCC), the department is establishing consultative structures that mirror the Aboriginal Voice to Parliament. This will enable the voices of local communities, families and young people to be heard and to help shape educational policy and procedures that directly impact upon them.

Through the [Aboriginal Education Strategy](#), the department has committed to seeking Aboriginal voice and expertise from internal and external stakeholders to ensure that our policies, procedures and practices enable every Aboriginal child to achieve their highest potential. This includes formalised structures and partnerships that support the progression of individual projects and initiatives and SAAETCC.

The mandatory [Aboriginal Voice framework \(PDF 283KB\)](#) recognises that, for the department to be a more culturally responsive organisation, the expertise, cultural knowledge, and experiences of Aboriginal employees need to be included in the design and delivery of all strategies, policies, projects, and services. This aims to strengthen relationships, foster and embed respect, and improve outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people, staff and communities. The Aboriginal Voice Framework sits alongside of the department's requirement for an Aboriginal Impact Statement when developing new policies or conducting a major review.

Our Stretch [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) commits to partnering with SAAETCC, the peak body for parent and carer advocacy and engagement with education and child development services for Aboriginal children and students in South Australia, and South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON).

The department is the lead agency for Schedule 4 of the [Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap \(PDF 604KB\)](#) between SAACCON and the South Australian Government. The department is also a lead agency for actions contained in Schedule 6 and the Overarching Schedule. This agreement sets out the actions, agreements timeframes and partnerships that will be established between the department, SAACCON and their members to help achieve the agreed priority reforms, targets and goals within the South Australian Government's refreshed Closing the Gap framework. The schedules are under negotiation with SAACCON and are expected to form the basis of a refreshed SA Closing the Gap Implementation Plan in early 2024.

Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the commitment to Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making (Priority Reform 1) includes reviewing existing partnership arrangements to assess how they meet the elements identified for stronger partnerships with Aboriginal organisations.

Through the Aboriginal Education Directorate, the department is represented on a range of governance and consultative committees to promote greater collaboration between public sector agencies and advisory groups. Through these mechanisms the department aims to improve the quality, efficiency and targeting of services for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities.

Student Support Services

Student Support Services provides an integrated, multidisciplinary service to help schools and preschools to meet the needs of children and young people who have additional learning and wellbeing needs. Student Support Services has site based allied health staff within Children's Centres, and on an ad hoc basis in preschools and schools through the department's school-buy-in service. These staff are provided with clinical

supervision by Seniors and/or Discipline Leads within Student Support Services.

There are discrete teams for the Social Work Incident Support Service (SWISS), the Social Work Duty Line, the Children in Care Service, the Self-Regulation Service and the EALD Bilingual Cultural Support Service.

The School Mental Health Service has practitioners located in up to 65 secondary schools in which the department is currently seeking accreditation against the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

Administered items

The governance and functions of administered items (funds administered but not controlled by the department) vary. They include:

- discrete grant programs: providing individual grants to government and non-government entities and governed by their own policies, guidelines, and grant agreements.
- funding to boards: the Education Standards Board and SACE Board, governed by their own Acts of Parliament.
- advocacy bodies for children and young people: Commissioner for Children and Young People, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, Child Development Council; Guardian for Children and Young People governed by the [Children and Young People \(Oversight and Advocacy Bodies\) Act 2016](#).
- arts entities: Carclew, the History Trust of South Australia, Windmill Theatre
- on-passing of Commonwealth Government funds: to non-government schools for recurrent grant funding in line with and governed by the [Australian Education Act 2013](#).
- on-passing of other Commonwealth Government funds: to government and non-government preschools for universal access funding, governed by funding deeds, and for chaplaincy funding for all 3 education sectors, governed by terms of reference.

Element 3: strategic planning and management

Strategy for Public Education in South Australia

Our [Strategy for Public Education in South Australia](#) was developed following a state-wide conversation with learners, parents, staff and the wider South Australian community.

The strategy outlines our purpose and the areas we will focus on to achieve a world-leading public education system.

The strategy details 4 areas of impact that we will prioritise, levers we will activate across the system, and the guiding principles that will be used to ensure this strategy can be delivered as it was designed – starting with our learners.

The full version of the strategy and the strategy on a page are both available on the department's website.

Strategic management framework

The department has committed to delivering on key reforms in support of our strategy, election commitments and priorities identified by the Minister for Education, Training and Skills.

The strategic management framework supports the planning, implementation and delivery of our strategy. It provides a cohesive, coordinated, transparent approach to connecting strategic planning, operational planning, performance review and the implementation of strategy and system reforms within the governance, risk and performance development frameworks.

An overview of the strategic management framework is shown in **Figure 3**.

Through the establishment and maintenance of the strategic management framework, the department undertakes strategic and operational planning to assist it to:

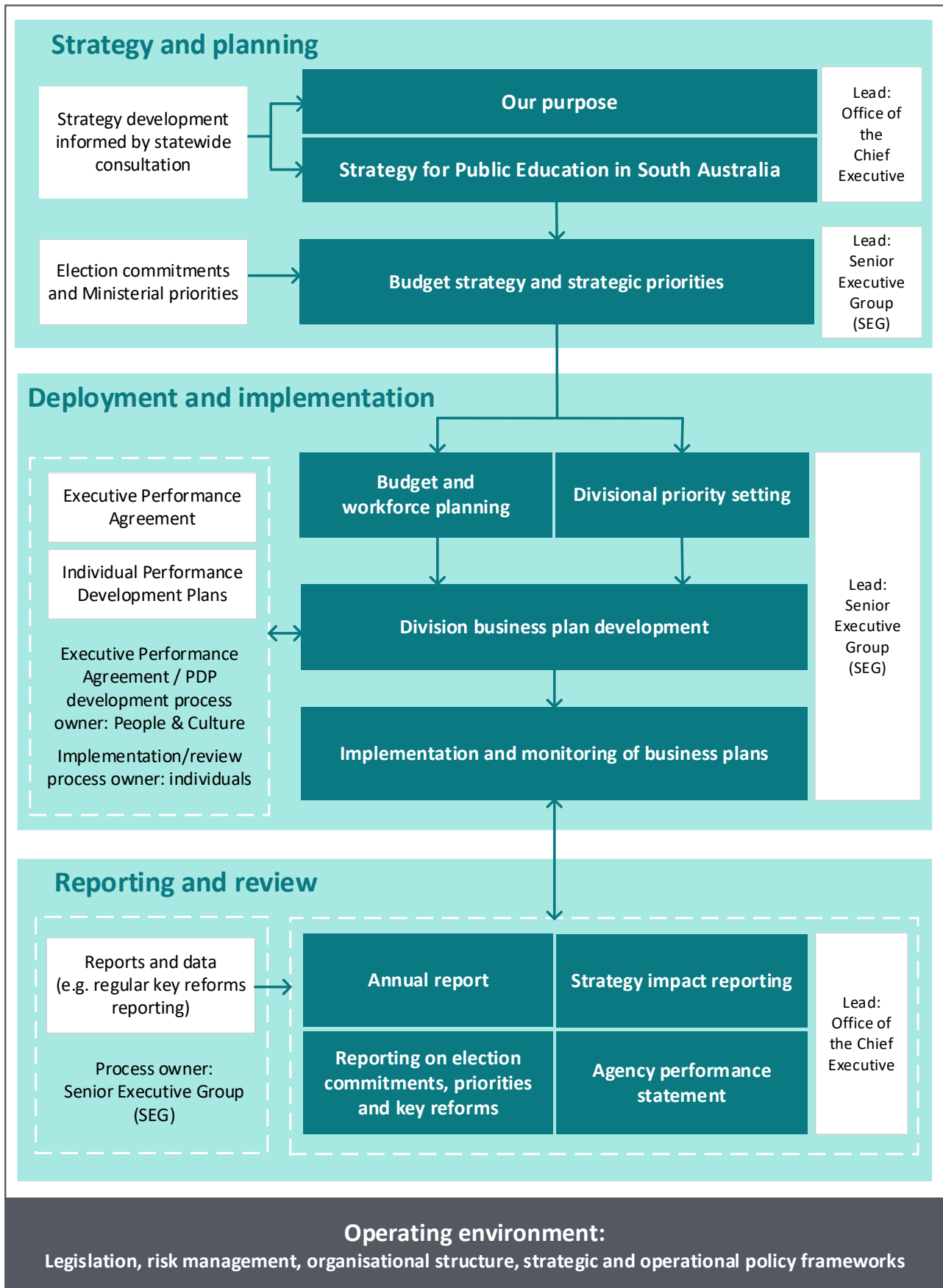
- ensure delivery of election commitments and ministerial priorities
- fulfil its purpose and achieve its strategic intent
- integrate planning, risk, reporting and budgetary processes
- operate proactively rather than reactively, and
- effectively discharge its responsibilities in accordance with its legislative requirements.

The strategic management framework establishes a clear line of sight from the strategy through to each of our divisions and all members of our workforce. This includes:

- our [Strategy for Public Education in South Australia](#)
- divisional business plans that outline key initiatives and targets each year, demonstrating how the division aligns and delivers on the department's purpose and areas of impact within the allocated budget
- individual Performance Development Plans (PDPs) that are developed and reviewed in accordance with the [performance and development policies and guidelines](#), demonstrating how each individual supports the delivery of the department's strategy.

These complementary planning, reporting and accountability processes provide a frame for how we measure impact for our learners and define the department's public value.

Figure 3. Strategic management framework



Policies, procedures, guidelines, frameworks and standards

[Departmental operational policies](#) (procedures, guidelines, frameworks and standards) provide guidance around the application of specific Acts and regulations and the core business and objectives of the department to deliver on the strategy.

The department's corporate office, in collaboration with sites and services, is responsible for developing all strategic, operational policies and policy instruments. All department employees are responsible for complying with the departmental policies.

Schools and preschools can create local policies using the templates at [local policy development for schools and preschools](#) as a guide. The simplified or summary templates are linked to and align with mandated and approved department policies, procedures or guidelines.

Strategic policy can be described as policies that align the organisation's vision and set the overarching direction, while **operational** policies (like this governance framework) tend to focus on what and how the organisation carries out its day-to-day functions aligned to the strategic objectives or policy.

Strategic policy

The [Strategic Policy Model](#) (SPM) is a scalable approach that provides the department with practical advice for planning, designing, implementing or evaluating strategic policy.

The model can be used:

- in a sequential start-to-finish process
- in individual elements of a process
- to support point-in-time tasks
- to provide an expectation for how strategic policy is commissioned and approved by the department's Senior Executive Group (SEG).

The SPM has 3 components that combine to support staff to develop high quality strategic policy.

1. **Practical advice** for designing and delivering strategic policy (Plan, Design, Implement and Evaluate)
2. **Standards** for high quality strategic policy (policy skills framework, policy advice framework, stakeholder engagement framework, culturally responsive framework, policy outcomes and impact)
3. **Foundations** for strategic policy (governance and accountability, project management and change management).

Use of the SPM is recommended when developing strategic policy, but is mandatory for all system strategies, SEG ultimately decides what is a system strategy. System strategies need ongoing oversight and SEG approval, which the SPM facilitates.

Operational policy

Operational policies must be developed, updated and reviewed in line with the department's [operational policy framework \(PDF 221KB\)](#). The term 'policy' used in the 'operational policy framework' refers to

operational policies, procedures, guidelines, frameworks and standards.

The 'operational policy framework' provides structured and mandatory steps for the development and review of operational policy within the department to ensure the integrity, currency and reliability of all departmental policies. This includes a cyclical 3-year review period, legislative compliance review and completion of an Aboriginal impact statement declaration for a new policy, major edit or policy deletion.

Element 4: stakeholder engagement

The South Australian Government is committed to supporting a culture of high-quality and effective stakeholder and community engagement. Good engagement helps create better decisions by bringing the voices of citizens and stakeholders into the issues that are relevant to them. The government is committed to embedding good engagement practice as an integral part of the way it operates.

Established in 2013, [Better Together](#) is centred on the following 6 engagement principles to provide a consistent approach across government and to guide best practice:

- we know why we are engaging
- we know who to engage
- we know the history
- we start together
- we are genuine
- we are relevant and engaging.

Building on these principles, the department's [Stakeholder Engagement Framework \(PDF 149KB\)](#) outlines the importance we place on engagement, and how we engage with stakeholders to improve outcomes for children and young people.

[Stakeholder engagement corporate guidelines](#) provide practical advice on implementing these principles when engaging with department stakeholders.

Legislation, the [Strategic Policy Model](#), [Aboriginal Voice framework \(PDF 283KB\)](#) and the [operational policy framework \(PDF 221KB\)](#) specify engagement in certain circumstances.

Element 5: risk management

The department is committed to embedding risk management in all of its operations and its business culture. Risk management is an integral part of the department's planning and management processes and an essential function of good governance. The department's [risk management policy \(PDF 169KB\)](#) and [risk management procedure](#), describe the department's commitment to managing risk across the organisation. It acknowledges the department's governance and responsibilities to effectively manage opportunities and risks.

The department's effectiveness is enhanced when risk management practices and business processes exemplify and reinforce its values. The management of risks and opportunities is the responsibility of all employees, including contractors, business partners and volunteers.

The department's Chief Executive is accountable to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills for developing and implementing the department's risk management policy and procedure which embeds risk management into the governance and practices of the department and manages uncertainties to achieve departmental objectives.

The South Australian Government has issued the [Risk Management Guide](#) which is based on AS/NZ ISO 31000 Risk Management Standards and provides practical advice to agencies on best practice risk management within a South Australian government context.

An overview of the characteristics of a risk intelligent culture is provided at [appendix 2 – risk intelligent culture](#).

Assurance framework

The department's Assurance Framework outlines our approach to assurance using the three lines of defence model, establishing clear and consistent expectations, structure and guidance for effective decision making. The framework:

- aims to enhance assurance outcomes by providing a comprehensive view of assurance across the organisation, supporting an integrated and coordinated approach to ensure effective targeting of assurance based on risk level
- defines processes and activities established across the department to ensure the internal control environment is fit for purpose, corporate objectives are achieved, and relevant laws, regulations and standards are complied with
- offers a structured approach to provide assurance over the effective management of the department's risk and control environment, outlining organisational structures supporting assurance activities, guidelines on key assurance activities department-wide, and defining roles and responsibility for risk management, internal controls and assurance activities.

This fosters confidence in the department's performance, commitment to improvement and risk management.

Element 6: performance and improvement

A guiding principle of the department is to 'evaluate for impact' which is driving a culture of measuring and monitoring impact and using information, evidence, research and data to inform policy and practice at every level to support continuous improvement.

At a site level, enhanced organisational performance is possible due to a [school and preschool improvement model](#) that ensures a differentiated approach to literacy and numeracy improvement, based on high-quality support from education directors and local education teams. The cycle sets out 5 steps for continuous improvement:

1. Analyse and prioritise
2. Determine challenge of practice
3. Plan actions for improvement
4. Improve practice and monitor impact
5. Review and evaluate.

The School Improvement Model is currently being refreshed, however both the current school and preschool model are still referenced whilst this refresh is underway.

Public confidence in the department requires the department to be open about its policies, decisions, actions and achievements. This encompasses public accountability and reporting on activities and expenditure that support accountability to the government and to the South Australian community.

Information management

The department must comply with relevant state legislation and policy, and in some cases federal legislation, regarding the gathering, use, retention and sharing of personal information. This is detailed in a number of [departmental operational policies](#) (procedures, guidelines, frameworks and standards) that consolidate requirements relating to:

- information privacy
- information sharing
- information security
- freedom of information
- records management.

Data governance

The department considers data governance to refer to the decision rights and accountabilities for information-related processes, describing 'the exercise of decision making and authority for data related matters' ([Data Governance Institute](#)). The department's [Data Governance Framework \(PDF 492KB\)](#) supports the development and implementation of relevant and appropriate data governance management practices in compliance with data related laws, regulations and policy. It sets the standards for behaviour and decision

making across the department when using data.

The department is committed to formalising data governance arrangements as per best practice data principles, to improve data quality and governance with the responsibilities of a Chief Data Officer vested with the Executive Director, System Performance. The Chief Data Officer leads the department's implementation of data governance policies and improvement initiatives and our compliance with requirements to record and report on how data is used and shared.

The department's Data Governance Policy provides the governance necessary for managing our data assets. This includes having a set of defined responsibilities, accountabilities and business practices to ensure data assets are properly managed and that trusted, secure data is available for responsible use, to achieve legislative compliance and business objectives.

The department's data sharing obligations are stated in legislation. Consideration must also be given to Aboriginal data sovereignty, where Aboriginal people exercise the right to govern the creation, collection, ownership and application of their data.

Reporting mechanisms

The department publishes regularly requested information as part of the government's commitment to transparency and accountability reflected in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet [Circular PC035 – Proactive Disclosure of Regularly Requested Information](#). The information made available under this Circular includes details of ministerial and Chief Executive expenditure on credit cards, mobile phones, and overseas travel.

In line with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet [Circular PC045 – Disclosure Logs for Non-Personal Information](#) the department must also publish the non-personal information it has released in response to requests under the [Freedom of Information Act 1991](#) (FOI Act). Refer to [disclosure logs](#) on the department's website.

In accordance with the [FOI Act](#), the department is also required to report annually statistical information relating to FOI applications received by the department to the Attorney-General.

Note: this is not an exhausting list of reporting by the department as to data sharing.

National reporting

South Australia participates in national reporting and data collection activities as part of the [National Cabinet](#). The results can be located on the Productivity Commission's [performance dashboard](#), providing a single, streamlined source of information on progress towards the National Cabinets National School Reform Agreement key commitments in education, early childhood and 'Closing the Gap'.

The performance dashboard reflects the measures in the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA).

The department is responsible to the Australian Government to provide annual information to inform the Report on Government Services (ROGs). The ROGs is a vital tool in providing information to the community and holding all Australian governments accountable for the effectiveness and efficiency of government services. It includes performance reporting for early childhood education and care, school education and vocational education and training.

The ROGs encourages improved service delivery by providing governments, taxpayers and users of services with meaningful, balanced, credible, and comparative information.

The department is required to report to the Australian Government on elements set out in national partnership agreements, including the Preschool Reform Agreement.

Government and non-government schools participate in the collection of data for the [Australian Early Development Census](#), providing population level information about children's early development in communities across Australia.

State reporting

The department's public reporting at the state level includes:

- an agency statement as part of the state budget process
- a government template-based annual report about the department's activities and outcomes for each calendar year, including audited financial statements, human resources, and statutory reporting
- department annual report, required under section 15 of the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019](#)
- data sets published on data.sa.gov.au.

Local reporting

Complaint management reporting

The department is committed to supporting effective [complaint management](#) to improve customer service outcomes and general business practices across the agency.

The department reports on complaints about department public schools, preschools and early childhood services in line with the Australian/New Zealand Standard ([AS/NZS 10002:2014](#)).

Preschool and school complaint management reporting requirements

Both departmental policy and procedure, and the Ombudsman SA require preschool and school sites to document complaints received and maintain a complaint register that outlines volume, nature and results of complaint handling, including whether resolution occurred locally. A summary of the register must be reported by the school or preschool annually.

All department early childhood education and care services that are an approved service are required to notify the regulatory authority of complaints as specified under the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations* within 24 hours.

Central preschool and school complaint management reporting requirements

Customer Feedback (CIS) provides a central preschool and school complaint management service as the escalation point for complaints that cannot be resolved at the school or preschool level. Complaint

management data and a trend analysis is reported to the Senior Executive Group as required by the Ombudsman SA and [Circular PC039 – Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector](#), to drive service improvements in relation to customer services across the department. The directorate also publishes root cause analysis data in the department’s annual report.

Preschool and school reporting requirements

Preschool and school reporting requirements include school and preschool annual reports (under section 60 of the *Australian Education Regulations 2023 Act*), the annual school compliance report, The Reporting Companion, and registration reviews conducted by the Education Standards Board.

Refer to the [statistics, reports and publications](#) page on the department’s website for additional annual preschool and school reporting requirements.

Skills SA customer Infoline

The Skills SA Infoline is a key entry points for customers, learners, workers, businesses and representatives to raise matters related to their experiences within the skills system. If an employer breaches their training contract, or an apprentice or trainee, and it is reported through the Infoline, it is managed pursuant to the South Australian Skills Act 2008.

Performance measurement

Measuring the impact and performance of the education system ensures accountability to the public and is essential to how we identify opportunities to learn and improve. Performance is measured through a range of indicators at various levels of the department.

Measurement framework

Our Strategy for Public Education in South Australia sets out guiding principles that describe how we make decisions and approach our work. The use of the [Measurement Framework \(PDF 110KB\)](#) is intended to contribute particularly towards our efforts to focus on the difference we are making for learners by applying evidence at every level of the education system (Evaluate for Impact) and to provide a basis for adding to and improving the measures and assessments that we use within public education (Learning System).

The Measurement Framework includes the additional principles to guide decisions about measures and assessments, including use of best available evidence, holistic and contextual understanding of children and young people’s learning strengths and challenges, and early, regular and consistent measurement of learning.

Corporate performance measures

The System Performance division is responsible for providing performance reporting that helps the Chief Executive and the Senior Executive Group design, deliver and adapt strategic initiatives required to achieve our strategy.

Partnership performance measures

State-wide partnership performance reviews consider performance in strategically important areas for our preschools and schools, at the education partnership level. These are data-driven performance reviews linked to our strategy, our Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA), and to 4 strategic objectives related to proficiency and academic excellence in numeracy and reading, as well as student engagement.

The objectives of the school improvement model and the improvement planning cycle also guide the review process.

The reviews consider outcomes for all children and students from preschool through to secondary school. Performance is assessed against past results and focuses on improvement. A standard methodology is applied that identifies improvement, decline or no change against a baseline for each partnership or site, for each measure. Partnership leaders also provide an overview of improvement progress, outlining the practices that have been implemented.

Children's centres, preschool and school performance measures

The department's [school and preschool improvement and accountability policy](#) sets out the expectations for all department preschools and schools for quality assurance, and maximising each and every child and young person's learning through a process of continuous review, improvement and accountability. It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of preschool and school leaders in being accountable for clear, measurable improvement goals and plans against standards, effective planning, strategic intervention, evaluation and reporting through quality self-review processes to guide and monitor improvement and meet policy compliance requirements.

The policy requires schools to engage in an external school review at least once every 3 years. The external school review is an evidence-informed external evaluation of an individual school's capacity to improve student learning. The external review report is published on the school's website and supports schools to drive continuous improvement and consistency.

External reviews in preschool are conducted against the [National Quality Framework](#). The framework drives continuous improvement and consistency in Australian early childhood education and care services and applies to most long day care, family day care, preschool, kindergarten and outside school hours care services. Under the National Quality Framework, the department's early childhood services are assessed and rated against the [National Quality Standard](#). Ratings are made public and promote transparency and accountability, helping parents to assess the quality of education and care services available.

The National Quality Framework encompasses the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the National Quality Standard, an assessment and quality rating process and national approved learning frameworks. In South Australia the National Law is appended as Schedule 1 to the [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011](#).

Financial management compliance framework

The department Chief Executive has a responsibility to establish and maintain an appropriate internal control environment in line with the [Department of Treasury and Finance Treasurer's instructions](#), that helps government agencies to comply with mandatory financial management requirements as well as provide

assurance that an effective internal control environment operates within the department.

Financial management in the South Australian public sector is governed by the [Public Finance and Audit Act 1987](#). The Act regulates the receipt and expenditure of public money and for examination of the degree of efficiency and economy with which public resources are used. [Treasurer's Instructions 28 – Financial Management Compliance Program](#) requires a financial management compliance program to provide assurances with respect to financial management.

Ministerial and Chief Executive delegations and authorisations

In accordance with legislative requirements, the department must ensure that Ministerial and Chief Executive delegations and authorisations for specific areas of approval and expenditure are current. Delegation documents are listed centrally on the [instrument of delegations catalogue EDi page](#). Delegation owners are contacted annually to confirm that delegations are up to date and that any approved changes are published on EDi.

External audit and review

The department is subject to external review processes, including those conducted by the SA Auditor-General, including financial and compliance, information systems and performance management systems. Ombudsman SA investigates complaints about South Australian government and local government agencies and conducts freedom of information reviews. The Ombudsman can also receive information about state and local government activities confidentially under the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018](#).

The [Education Standards Board](#) may also consider complaints in relation to schools, preschools and early childhood services under the [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011](#).

In addition, Parliamentary committees investigate specific issues, and play a role in monitoring and reviewing public sector organisations against relevant legislation, or particular areas of activity.

Internal audit

The department's Internal Audit team provides independent and objective audit and advisory services across all areas of the department, including corporate office, preschools and schools. In turn, this improves department service delivery by identifying improvements in risk management, control and governance processes, systems and practices.

The Internal Audit team also manages the Site Financial Audit Program (SFAP) that comprises independent audits of the special purpose financial reports of government schools, preschools, support units and canteens for the calendar year, prior to consolidation into the department's financial statements.

Roles and responsibilities

Chief Executive

Make sure the department complies with its legislative obligations in delivering on the purpose of public education in South Australia and building a world- leading education system for South Australia.

Senior Executive Group, principals and preschool directors

Lead the application of the department's governance framework to make sure the department's legislative, strategic, ethical and financial obligations are met.

Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy and Corporate Services

Review the governance framework annually (in consultation with the department's Senior Executive Group) to make sure it reflects the department's core service delivery drivers, strategic intent and priorities, and structural alignment.

Directors

Help executive directors develop business plans and make sure decisions at the corporate, governing council, partnership, site and service levels are made in line with the department strategy and priorities.

Design and implement processes to make sure the department administers and complies with relevant legislation that its respective divisions are responsible for.

Monitor and review the efficiency and effectiveness of processes implemented to administer and comply with relevant legislation.

Management

Make sure that department employees are aware of and accountable for their responsibilities for compliance within the governance framework. Line managers are responsible for on-boarding all new employees so that they successfully integrate into the workplace and understand their role, responsibilities and performance expectations.

Department employees involved in managing or supporting department committee structures

Make sure that governance committees align activities to those that will assist the department to deliver on our strategy and achieve operational objectives.

See [appendix 1 – Key considerations when establishing a governing body, working group or committee](#) when establishing these structures.

All department employees

Comply with all legislation, policies, procedures and frameworks applicable to them including but not limited to those referenced in the department's governance framework.

Preschool and school governing councils

Jointly responsible with the site leader for governance related matters at their site and must comply with their constitution, administrative instructions issued by the Chief Executive, the *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* and any other relevant State or Commonwealth legislation.

Audit and Risk Committee

Provide independent advice to the Chief Executive (and the Senior Executive Group) on the department's risk, control and compliance framework, and its external accountability responsibilities.

Legal Services Directorate

Review the legislative element of the department's governance framework and communicate changes to relevant legislation throughout the department.

Strategy and Coordination Directorate

Monitor the implementation of the governance framework and coordinate its review with the Senior Executive Group, as part of the Strategy and Coordination Directorate's role to facilitate the planning, implementation and prioritisation of effort for the department's Strategy for Public Education in South Australia.

Supporting information

[Australian Early Development Census](#)

[Australian Government Productivity Commission – Performance reporting dashboard](#)

[Australian Indigenous Governance Institute \(AIGI\) – Governance Toolkit](#)

[Better Together – Principles of Engagement](#)

[Circular PC012 – Information Privacy Principles Instruction](#)

[Circular PC022 – Establishment and Governance Requirements for Government Boards and Committees](#)

[Circular PC035 – Proactive Disclosure of Regularly Requested Information](#)

[Circular PC039 – Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector](#)

[Circular PC045 – Disclosure Logs for Non-Personal Information](#)

[Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#)

[Data Governance Institute – Data Governance Framework](#)

[Deloitte – Developing an Effective Governance Operating Model: A guide for financial services boards and management teams](#)

[Governance Institute of Australia – Good Governance Guides](#)

[Governance Institute of Australia – Governance foundations](#)

[National Quality Framework](#)

[National Quality Standard](#)

[South Australian Public Sector Values](#)

[Review of ANAO better practice guides](#)

[South Australian Government Risk Management Guide](#)

[Standards Catalogue – AS/NZS 10002:2014](#)

[Strategy for Public Education in South Australia](#)

[Treasurer’s Instruction 28 – Financial Management Compliance Program](#)

[Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)

Related legislation

[Australian Education Act 2013 \(Cth\)](#)

[Children and Young People \(Oversight and Advocacy Bodies\) Act 2016](#)

[Construction Industry Training Fund Act 1993](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)

[Education and Children’s Services Act 2019](#)

[Education and Children’s Services Regulations 2020](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011](#)

[First Nations Voice Act 2023](#)

[Freedom of Information Act 1991](#)

[History Trust of South Australia Act 1981](#)

[Public Finance and Audit Act 1987](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018](#)

[Public Sector Act 2009](#)

[Public Sector \(Data Sharing\) Act 2016](#)

[South Australian Skills Act 2008](#)

[State Records Act 1997](#)

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Contact

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Appendix 1 – key considerations when establishing a governing body, working group or committee

Establishing a governing body, working group or committee includes the following considerations:

- There are clear terms of reference or a charter that details the:
 - purpose and role of the governing body or committee and ensures alignment with the organisation’s purpose (if a statutory role, ensure compliance with the enabling legislation)
 - requirement to apply the principles of good governance detailed in the governance framework (for example role-modelling organisational values, transparency, clear outcome measures, and risk management)
 - statement of membership composition
 - overview of Aboriginal voice and perspectives represented within the membership
 - responsibilities of the members and their accountabilities
 - reporting arrangements, including timeframes for reporting and a list of agreed objectives against which performance can be measured
 - sunset or next review date.
- Members have the collective skill set and experience to deliver on the stated purpose.
- The governing body or committee is equipped with the skills and the resources required to play an active role in their deliberations.
- There is an appropriate and skilled secretariat support.
- Briefing papers are sent out in a timely manner so that all members have the opportunity to consider them thoroughly.
- Sound recordkeeping and protocols are in place.
- Review of committee performance and appropriateness on a regular basis, especially when there are organisational changes.
- There is a work plan for the year (as may be appropriate).
- There is a regular schedule of meetings, with prearranged dates and, where appropriate, written agendas, papers and minutes as well as list of actions decided at each meeting.
- Governance arrangements are clear and transparent.

Appendix 2 – risk intelligent culture

According to Deloitte's [developing an effective governance operating model](#), a risk intelligent culture comprises the following characteristics:

- Commonality of purpose, values, and ethics: people's individual interests, values, and ethics are aligned with those of the organisation's risk strategy, appetite, tolerance, and approach.
- Universal adoption and application: risk is considered in all activities, from strategic planning to day-to-day operations, in every part of the organisation.
- A learning organisation: the collective ability of the organisation to manage risk more effectively is continuously improving.
- Timely, transparent, and honest communications: people are comfortable talking openly and honestly about risk using a common risk vocabulary that promotes shared understanding.
- Understanding of the value of effective risk management: people understand, and enthusiastically articulate, the value that effective risk management brings to the organisation.
- Responsibility – individual and collective: people take personal responsibility for the management of risk and proactively seek to involve others when that is the better approach.
- Expectation of challenge: people are comfortable challenging others, including authority figures. The people who are being challenged respond positively.