2019

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SCHOOLS EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

FINAL REPORT

Presented by Yvette Berry, MLA

Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development

October 2019

# SCHOOLS EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE - **SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS**

**August 2019**

# Contents

# Executive Summary

The Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development established this Schools Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to provide advice to the ACT Government about opportunities to strengthen safe and supportive school culture in every ACT public school.

SEAC was asked to advise on opportunities to strengthen practices in schools and the Education Directorate, with a focus on the Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) framework and targeted interventions.

This report provides the Minister with several key issues, findings and opportunities identified by SEAC.

In recent years, the ACT Government has invested significantly in supporting, managing and responding to children with complex needs and challenging behaviours and the safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

From its observations, research and thorough discussions with stakeholders, SEAC came to the view that the positive culture of a school – along with engagement with and support from parents and the broader community – is fundamental to reducing bullying and violence in schools. Bullying and violence are, unfortunately, community-wide issues.

Following consideration of a literature review, advice from other Australian and overseas jurisdictions, and engagement with interested parties, SEAC believes that PBL is a sound framework upon which to build a safe, supportive and inclusive school culture. It was made very clear to SEAC that PBL is an overarching framework which encompasses whole school practices and programs. It is not a specific practice, program or curriculum, nor is it limited to any particular group of students. It is a general approach for building a culture of universal positive behaviours for all students. Although it will necessarily take time to embed and become "the way we work around here" it should not be diluted by the addition of new or different overarching frameworks or approaches.

SEAC heard from a wide variety of stakeholders, and confirmed that in most cases, PBL is having the desired impact. For example, the Australian Education Union stated that the ACT is leading the nation in relation to the management of violence in schools, commenting that "*the employer is doing almost everything they can do at this stage*".

A number of themes emerged through SEAC's work. For example, the importance of fidelity to the principles of PBL as a key indicator of success in managing and responding to bullying and violence in schools was highlighted. SEAC believes that ongoing commitment to and investment in PBL including continued implementation, training, in-class mentoring and support across all ACT public schools will ensure the success of the framework.

A Literature Review supported SEAC's view that at least another three- to five-year commitment to the implementation of PBL is required to ensure sustainable success. This includes an extension of the current coaching program across all schools, a commitment to ensuring beginning teachers are well prepared and ensuring that all staff have access to quality, timely and relevant professional learning to further embed positive cultures in ACT public schools. This will provide consistency in managing incidents effectively and may also reduce incidents.

A common theme emerging from the material considered by SEAC is the importance of schools working with parents and communities to support positive school experiences. Increasing authentic engagement and collaboration with students and families, developing quality and regular communication and developing feedback processes to "close the loop" on issues brought to the school's attention are all opportunities that the Directorate may wish to explore further.

It was evident that the Directorate has made significant progress in capturing quality data and supporting schools in making evidence-based decisions. This continues to be an area in which the Directorate is increasing capability and SEAC is confident that information collected will continue to enhance a school's ability to manage and respond to incidents of bullying and violence.

Despite significant interest in banning mobile phones in schools and after examining numerous studies and hearing from a number of researchers and the eSafety Commissioner's Office, SEAC came to view that prohibition is not likely to reduce violence and bullying and that children and young people are likely to find a way around prohibition. Children and young people need to be educated both at school and in the home on the appropriate use of digital technology.

SEAC considers that PBL is an appropriate universal framework for use by the Directorate as part of its approach to Safe and Supportive Schools. The focus on improved data collection and analysis to assist leaders to make informed and timely decisions is important. The emphasis on developing teachers' capabilities in relation to trauma-informed teaching within the PBL framework will enhance learning outcomes for students. Harnessing the value of the digital environment while teaching young people the importance of thoughtful and appropriate use of the technology is already built into the curriculum. Expanding on this knowledge to develop strategies to build resilience and self-esteem in students will assist them in dealing with bullying and violence. A focus on enhancing and simplifying communication with the school community will improve understanding of the direction being taken by schools in relation to Safe and Supportive Schools, along with the role of the community in helping schools to achieve their goals.

SEAC considers that many of the necessary levers are in place, but that there are also opportunities to enhance, modify or expedite some levers. This report provides detail on these observations and findings.

In summary, SEAC considers that the successful ongoing implementation of the PBL framework must focus on communication, education of and engagement with all stakeholders. It is also important to continue to ensure schools have access to other targeted resources to support children and young people.

# Introduction

Under the *Education Act (2004)*[1] (the Act), in March 2019 the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA (the Minister), established a Schools Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to provide advice to the Government on opportunities to strengthen safe and supportive school culture in every ACT public school.

This followed a number of incidents relating to bullying and violence in ACT public schools. SEAC was requested to provide the Government with assurance that its response to bullying and violence in schools is robust and that the occurrence of instances is minimised to the extent possible. The Terms of Reference for SEAC are at Attachment A.

In particular, SEAC was asked to consider how the Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) framework and more targeted interventions are supporting the implementation of the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (Attachment B) in ACT public schools.

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[1] www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-17/current/pdf/2004-17.pdf

# Background

The Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (the Policy) has been implemented in a staged approach since April 2016 and provides guidance for ACT public schools on how to promote safe, respectful and supportive school environments. The Policy was developed based on Recommendation 4.1 from the *Schools for All Children and Young People Report of the Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour Report*[2] (the Shaddock Report). The Shaddock Report was released in November 2015 and made 50 recommendations about policy and practice in all ACT schools.

Recommendation 9.1 of the Shaddock Report, which sought agreement for *School-Wide Positive Behavioural Supports,* saw the ACT Education Directorate negotiate with NSW to implement the Positive Behaviour Support in Schools program in 2016. Nationally, also in 2016, the Australian Government commissioned a review and update of the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), which was originally developed in 2003 and remains the central national reference point on student safety and wellbeing for all state and territory governments. Following the review, the NSSF was renamed the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework[3] (the Wellbeing Framework) with Education Services Australia (ESA) noting that the new name reflected the "*need to address both the safety and wellbeing of school communities and to acknowledge the intrinsic relationship between these two core concepts".* (Education Services Australia, 2018)

It is evident that the ACT Education Directorate (the Directorate) holds the health, safety and wellbeing of both its students and its workforce at the core of its education and school improvement agenda. In August 2016, the Directorate commenced work to identify and treat risks associated with occupational violence in ACT public schools. SEAC considered the *Independent Assessment – Occupational Violence Final Report* (the Caple Report)[4], conducted by David Caple and the alignment of recommendations and subsequent actions as they apply to the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy. The Policy plays a key role in ensuring the safety of both students and staff, reflects the principles of high-quality education outlined in the Act and addresses student safety and wellbeing practices outlined in the Wellbeing Framework.

Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) is the ACT's framework that supports schools to implement the Policy. PBL is an international evidence-based, whole school culture approach for creating safe and supportive school environments. As a framework, PBL includes procedures for teaching and practising expected behaviours, a clearly defined set of expected behaviours, a continuum of procedures for acknowledging expected behaviours, coaching and ongoing support for teachers and school leaders, and procedures for data collection and decision making. The ACT Government has determined that all public schools will adopt this approach. The Directorate is part way through implementation of PBL in ACT public schools. Implementation needs to be expedited and adequately resourced so all schools commence the PBL journey as soon as possible; no school can opt out of it.

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[2] www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/856254/Attach-4-Expert-Panel-Report-Web.pdf

[3] www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0

[4] www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1288526/Caple-Review.pdf

# Membership

The members of SEAC were appointed by the Minister as they represent a broad stakeholder group and bring extensive expertise and knowledge to the process, independent of the Directorate.

| Role | Member | Relevant background |
|---|---|---|
| **Chair** | Sue Chapman | Former Deputy-Director-General in the Community Services Directorate and First Assistant Secretary, Portfolio People Services in the Department of Human Services. |
| **Deputy Chair** | Chris Redmond | Former Chief Executive Officer of Woden Community Service. |
| **Member** | Dr Sue Packer | 2019 Australian Senior Citizen of the Year, a Paediatrician and a Community Paediatrician with a special interest in child abuse and abuse prevention and a member of the Expert Panel into Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviours. |
| **Member** | Dennis Yarrington | Former principal with extensive experience in public and Catholic education, including the positions of teacher, executive teacher, consultant and principal. |
| **Member** | Nick Maniatis | Current high school teacher and AEU sub-branch president. |
| **Member** | Kirsty McGovern-Hooley | Current president of the ACT Council of Parents and Citizen's Association. |
| **Member** | Barbara Causon | Wiradjuri woman with extensive experience in the Australian Public Service including Centrelink's Area Manager for North Australia and current Chairperson of *Our Booris, Our Way Review* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection system. |
| **Member** | Philippa Godwin | Consultant with particular interest in leadership, organisational design, and public sector management and member of the Schools for All Oversight Group. |

Full biographies for each member are available on the ACT Education Directorate website[5].

Secretariat and technical support was provided by the Education Directorate.

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[5] www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/minister/school-education-advisory-committees#bio

# Process/Methodology

SEAC met on six occasions from March to August 2019. A wide variety of internal and external stakeholders provided presentations and papers to assist SEAC in forming their views. In addition, a small group of SEAC members met with the Minister's Student Congress Executive to seek their views on the topic particularly in relation to bullying and violence and the implementation of PBL.

SEAC considered a variety of reports and articles related to bullying and violence, as listed under *Research*.

In addition, SEAC considered a number of case studies in order to gain an understanding of how ACT public schools support students and assist in identifying opportunities for improvement. The case studies were developed in consultation with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations and came from parents' personal experiences and their reflections. However, it was recognised by the Council of Parents and Citizens Associations that these case studies were individual cases and did not reflect the experience of everyone in every school. The case studies about incidents were used to highlight processes that could be modified or improved.

*"We need to be careful that we don't generalise. There are great things happening across our schools. We need to take this as an opportunity to improve things."*
- SEAC member.

The Directorate provided a range of real time data sets for SEAC's information. This included samples from the Schools Administration System (SAS) where SEAC saw how schools can make evidence informed decisions based on information entered into the central database. SEAC also received a paper about how data collected via the School Climate Survey is being used to inform system-level and school-level decision making and how that information is integrated with other data sets available in schools. The specific data/information supplied remains in-confidence to protect the identity of individuals.

# Research

## Literature Review

In April 2019, SEAC issued a Request for Quote to a number of research providers for the provision of a Literature Review. The purpose of the Literature Review was to provide SEAC with a report that outlines the elements of key policy and practice being implemented in other countries and Australian jurisdictions which aim to respond to student violence and bullying in the context of inclusive schools.

The successful supplier was the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). The Literature Review is available at Attachment C. Of significant interest to SEAC was the statement that:

> *"ARACY's review indicates that SEAC can have a level of confidence that the PBL approach remains a valid means of managing complex needs and challenging behaviour in ACT schools. The evidence suggests that consistent implementation of all tiers can be expected to take up to 3-5 years and ongoing commitment to the program will reap the benefits of the approach in time."*

## Other jurisdictions

As indicated in the Literature Review and confirmed by SEAC's desktop research, PBL is being implemented across most Australian jurisdictions. The key difference is that in some jurisdictions, such as New South Wales and Queensland, PBL is being supported by the system and is being progressively rolled out across schools, whereas in jurisdictions such as the Northern Territory and South Australia, individual schools have implemented PBL without explicit system support or structure. Attachment D provides the state by state comparison.

# Themes

## Positive Behaviours for Learning

Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) is an evidence-based whole school framework to improve learning outcomes for all students. Researchers report that the most frequent problem behaviours encountered by teachers are low level disruptive and disengaged behaviours (Sullivan, Johnson, Owens, & Conway, 2014). The philosophy behind PBL is that creating environments that are guided by a core curriculum and implemented with consistency and integrity increase the likelihood that students will learn and behave. To be successful in creating these environments, systems of support are necessary for both students and adults. Adult behaviour must be consistent and systematised in order to change behaviours and environments.

It was made very clear to SEAC that PBL is an overarching framework which encompasses whole school practices and programs. It is not a specific practice, program or curriculum, nor is it limited to a particular group of students. It is a general approach for building a culture of universal positive behaviours for all students. The key focus of PBL as a preventative tool is the consistent application and implementation of universal supports. As outlined in the Literature Review, PBL is not new and is based on a long history of behavioural practices and effective instructional design strategies.

As at 1 July 2019, 51 ACT public schools were implementing PBL.

As described in a presentation to SEAC from the Directorate, PBL establishes a continuum of support that is proactive in supporting students with diverse academic and social needs. The continuum is aligned with Trauma and Neuroscience Informed Education practices. There is a consistent data driven approach to develop and implement appropriate interventions. Layers of support include:



ACT POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING
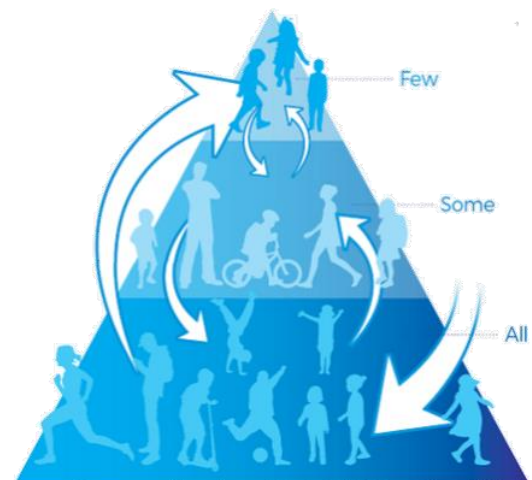
**Targeted Supports**
Few students
Wrap-around support
Collaborative response
Early intervention is the focus.

**Selected Supports**
Some students
Small group instruction
Rapid response
Early intervention is the focus.

**Universal Supports**
All students, all settings
Learning, teaching and leading
Proactive
Prevention is the focus.

## Universal Supports (Tier 1)

At the universal level all students are exposed to a social skills curriculum. Universal prevention focuses on preventing problems and creating an environment that supports student learning and wellbeing.

Effective, evidence-based classroom management and instruction are critical components of universal prevention. The school, supported by the PBL team, works to prevent problem behaviour and increase the likelihood of academic success by creating positive learning environments for all.

Establishing strong systems of universal prevention for all students helps to reduce the number who need additional support. This then helps the school to work more intensively with students who have additional learning and support needs.

## Selected Supports (Tier 2)

Some students, approximately 10-15 per cent, will respond to Tier 1 supports but will still need some additional support. These students may have academic and/or social-emotional learning needs that require more targeted supports. As with Tier 1 supports, Tier 2 targeted support is a team driven process designed to enhance and build upon what has been taught to students at the universal level.

Tier 2 interventions address students' social-emotional skills through evidence-based programs delivered to small groups of students or individual students. The involvement of the classroom teacher helps the student to use new skills and builds the teacher's capacity to better understand and effectively respond to students with unproductive and challenging behaviours. Students are taught to self-regulate and learn from natural consequences. Small-group targeted interventions include a skill building and a self-monitoring process. For example, students may check-in and out at a central location with an adult across the day with the aim of increasing productive behaviours such as attendance, work completion and academic engagement.

## Targeted Supports (Tier 3)

A smaller group of students, approximately 1-5 per cent, may need more individualised and intensive supports, in addition to the Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports. In many cases, the problem behaviour has become "chronic" as these students have experienced academic and behavioural difficulties over an extended period of time.

As with the Tier 2 level, schools build on the foundations of school-wide universal prevention to support these students. Using data-based decision making to rapidly support these students is important. Interventions focus on creating and implementing individualised behaviour support plans that are linked to the universal system. For example, the individual plans are based upon the school-wide expectations; the identification of students in need of Tier 3 supports uses the established data decision making framework.

Intensive and individualised behaviour intervention plans are developed and implemented to reduce the intensity and severity of challenging behaviours. These plans are devised using functional behavioural assessment. This assessment looks at contextual, learning and relationship factors to help explain the purpose of the behaviour. The evidence shows that understanding the function of behaviour is essential to make the problem behaviour ineffective, inefficient and irrelevant.

> *"The key message is there are lots of things out there, but there is no one thing that actually fixes this issue. Universal is the key."*
> - Executive Branch Manager, Student Engagement.

SEAC noted the importance that from the very beginning, schools need to be welcoming and engaging for students and families with a key driver of success being when a school knows its students well. All schools should have a clear strategy on developing and sustaining a positive learning environment. In addition, the physical environment such as the administration building should look open and supportive.

This is particularly important for families who have had unhappy experiences during their own schooling.

The ACT has a unique opportunity as a small and connected system. When looking across the country, the ACT has a similar approach to all other jurisdictions in relation to managing and responding to bullying and violence in schools. However, the ACT is able to more easily address this issue at a system level, rather than a school-by-school approach

Fidelity of implementation

What became apparent to SEAC was the singular importance of implementation fidelity. This includes fidelity to both the approach to, and the principles of PBL.
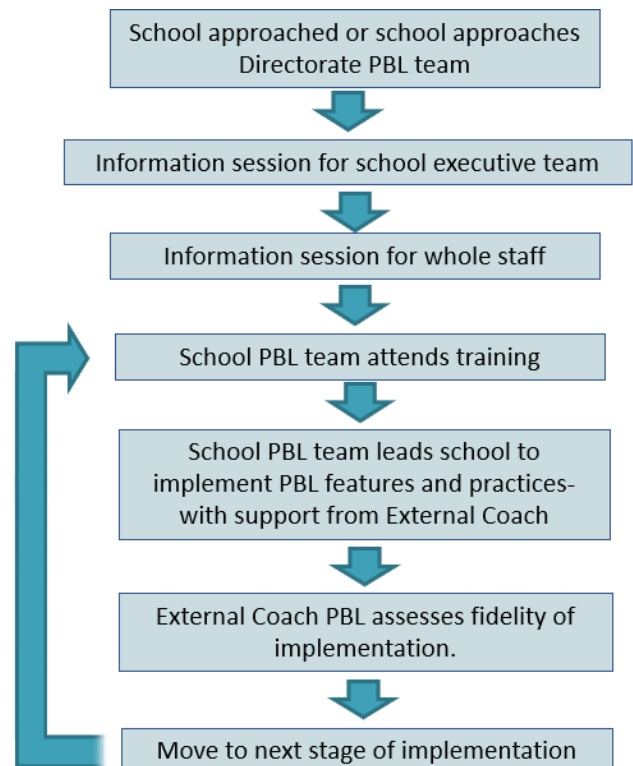
*"The literature indicates that positive behavioural interventions and supports programs with high 'implementation fidelity' – whether a program is implemented accurately by the educator, as designed and tested by the developers – will have a more positive impact on student outcomes. If implementation fidelity is not maintained, then suboptimal outcomes may occur" (Yeung, Craven, Mooney, & et al., 2016). Literature Review, ARACY.*

This image outlines how the PBL framework is currently being implemented in the Directorate.

ACT Education Directorate model for PBL implementation

School approached or school approaches Directorate PBL team

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Information session for school executive team

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Information session for whole staff

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School PBL team attends training

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School PBL team leads school to implement PBL features and practices- with support from External Coach

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External Coach PBL assesses fidelity of implementation.

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Move to next stage of implementation

When implemented:

- students respond positively as they have been taught what is expected of them
- students respond positively through acknowledgment of what is expected of them
- staff deliver consistent responses to student learning and behaviour
- students feel safe and cared for at school; their parents, family and community are more involved in their school
- problem and challenging behaviour can be significantly reduced for most students
- teachers spend less time on problem behaviours and more time on teaching.

Implementation of PBL is a journey for a school community. This requires ongoing support to ensure the framework is embedded across the whole school. To sustain the journey, strategies need to be in place to respond to changes in staff and school leadership, and induction for new students and parents and carers. The introduction of PBL to a school community requires not only "buy in" from staff, but also genuine support from students and parents or carers. The importance of ongoing support, particularly in classroom coaching for teachers, was highlighted in the Literature Review.

SEAC described PBL as a necessary requirement, but not necessarily of itself sufficient, for every situation, describing it as a "foundational philosophy". An understanding of the framework and philosophy behind the approach should be a whole of system responsibility. This will ensure all staff, including non school-based personnel have a clear understanding of how schools are working to ensure all students can feel safe and included.

School leadership support for any initiative is vital and requires that leaders have ownership of, and empowerment in, the process. In the ACT, schools can't opt out of PBL, however schools can seek more support in addition to foundational PBL supports if there are specific student or staff needs not being met by the PBL framework at a point in time. Principals should be in a position to provide clarity to school leaders about the framework and have the knowledge of how to access additional support and draw on other resources to ensure a positive and safe learning environment.

The Directorate meets with schools to discuss PBL implementation when required, scheduling meetings at times that work best for the school.

**Observations**

PBL is an appropriate approach on which to build a positive environment for all students. It should continue to be a framework that all ACT public schools implement.

PBL as a framework provides the opportunity for schools to access additional support, strategies, and resources to address individual student and/or family needs as they arise.

Time

PBL was first introduced to ACT public schools in 2016. It is an iterative and interactive approach to changing school culture and therefore, ACT public schools that have commenced PBL are at different stages of implementation. SEAC considered how long it should take to see the impact of PBL in a school community. It appears that it often takes several years which is the norm for culture change within any organisation.

It was apparent to SEAC that the ACT is in its infancy of implementation, with research indicating that *"although most schools overall may achieve implementation within one to three years, multilevel implementation support for three to five years is recommended in order for implementation to be sustained long term.* (Nese, Nese, McIntosh, Mercer, & Kittleman, 2018)*."*

As confirmed by the Literature Review and given the relatively short passage of time since the implementation of PBL in some schools, the Directorate can have a level of confidence that the PBL approach is a valid means of managing complex needs and challenging behaviour in ACT schools. SEAC heard consistently from stakeholders that there is a need to "stay the course" and commit to giving PBL the time it needs to have the impact desired.

One stakeholder asked whether 'behaviourism' or 'behavioural analysis' would be more appropriate or contemporary than PBL for achieving a safe and supportive school. The philosophy of behaviourism is based on the *premise that attempting to improve the human condition through behaviour change (e.g., education, behavioural health treatment) will be most effective if behaviour itself is the primary focus...techniques generally involve teaching individuals more effective ways of behaving and making changes to social consequences of existing behaviour[6].* It seems that behaviourism fits within the PBL framework so a change to this approach overall would not be beneficial although the techniques might have use for particular behavioural issues.

SEAC believes that the principles of PBL are a sound framework on which to base work in the development of a safe and supportive schools culture, and that it would be premature and in fact counter-productive for PBL to be replaced by new frameworks or approaches in ACT public schools.

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*"Policy is bedevilled by the temptation of chopping and changing. It's got to be given time with evaluation and analysis to demonstrate it's worth the effort. You can't keep chopping and changing."*
- SEAC member

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It was evident to SEAC that there is a shift in culture in ACT public schools driven by PBL. There is an increase in real time data and information about what is happening in schools and with more time to develop the maturity of available data and improved analysis of information, the school improvement journey will be enhanced as will the success of the PBL framework. Effective PBL based change will take a number of years to implement. In order for PBL to continue to demonstrate improvements to school cultures, the Directorate must maintain a focus on, and an interest in, PBL implementation and ensure that individualised support is available when requested by schools.

| **Observations** |
| --- |

- It is clear that culture change of any kind takes time, including the implementation of PBL. The improvements being sought from the implementation of PBL in schools will take 3-5 years to show the real changes expected although already some schools reporting improved behaviour and a more positive culture in their schools.
- The ACT Government and are Education Directorate should "stay the course" in relation to the implementation of the PBL as a framework, allowing adequate time for quality implementation and evaluation.
- The ACT Government and Education Directorate should consider requiring all ACT public schools to begin implementation of PBL within a set timeframe.

Trauma informed practice

SEAC is confident that PBL is an effective foundational framework for ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment in ACT schools.

In relation to supporting children with trauma, SEAC sought to better understand how PBL incorporates a trauma-informed approach. SEAC was informed that PBL includes components of mental health and trauma informed strategies to assist in making schools a supportive place for all students. Children who have experienced trauma sometimes have delays in aspects of their development which requires a holistic and longer-term intervention. They often display behaviours that are aggressive towards others, leading to school suspensions and disengagement with their learning. Professional learning for teachers and allied health professionals in schools has been a focus for the Directorate for several years and there has been a considered approach in choosing and endorsing universal programs that meet the needs of all students in school, including students with a history of developmental delay and trauma.

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[6] www.bacb.com/about-behavior-analysis/

A layered approach has been implemented with programs that build professional learning incrementally and on an "as needed" basis.

The Directorate is aiming for a consistent approach across schools which allows for a common language and a repertoire of skills in all teachers and support staff to maximise school participation and learning for students. This universal approach is complemented by a more targeted approach through a team of allied health professionals from the Network Student Engagement Team (NSET) who are trained in Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics[7].

Members of SEAC discussed the definition and understanding of trauma and suggested that although a "pyramid" is the typical way of thinking about these things, trauma may not be confined to the "pointy end". SEAC discussed the risk of focusing targeted trauma support only on Tier 3 students and the importance of the recognition of trauma antecedents (notwithstanding the difficulty of doing so at times), which may be emerging in other cohorts or in individual students in Tiers 1 and 2. The impact on behaviour may range from complete emotional withdrawal to extreme externalised behaviour.

SEAC acknowledged that working to teach students skills to build resilience, while not necessarily reducing bullying or violence, will help them manage the impacts on themselves and potentially reduce their experience of trauma. PBL should assist staff and students to become competent in a vocabulary to describe their feelings and to become confident they will be listened to by others.

Ultimately, the key to supporting students from a trauma background is knowing the students and their families.

*"Invest time in knowing a student beyond academic transcripts".*
*- SEAC member*

Trauma informed practice (TIP) provides an understanding for educators on the impact of abuse and neglect on the developing brain and ways to assist this group of children with their learning and wellbeing. It incorporates frameworks such as neurobiology of trauma and attachment. PBL, combined with TIP, is now in its fifth year in ACT public schools. TIP as a stand-alone professional learning module is also available to schools.

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**Observations**

- All schools need to specifically teach social skills and strategies to support children and young people to build resilience.

- Schools need to be able to identify when a child needs additional support and be able to access the resources to respond appropriately.

- The understanding of the range of presentations of trauma is already clearly defined and communicated and schools should continue to have access to the appropriate professional learning opportunities about trauma-informed practice as and when required.

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Resourcing

Ongoing resourcing of PBL will be key to its success. Implementation of PBL requires both internal and external support services being available and accessible in a timely manner.

Current resourcing was discussed by SEAC and some concerns were raised relating to adequacy of current resourcing, especially as more schools commence PBL. Currently in the ACT there are four PBL coaches for ACT public schools, who are all teachers. The team also includes a senior psychologist who has aligned PBL with TIP to ensure staff understand the connection. The ACT Government is also investing $4.2 million over four years on reforms arising from its *Future of Education* 10-year strategy, including strengthening the PBL program and initial resourcing to support complex case management.

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[7] www.childtrauma.org/

Schools also need to know what is available outside of the Directorate to assist them in resolving behaviour and other issues within the school. Improving the coordination of community resources to support students and families is vital in ensuring strategies developed at school can be reinforced at home or in the community.

PBL resourcing should include provision of supports when identified as needed by a school to ensure the success of interventions implemented through the PBL framework. Under the Student Resource Allocation Program (SRA), schools have flexibility in managing their resources, and SEAC affirms the need for school-based decision making in relation to the allocation of resources to support student need and positive school environments.

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**Observations**

- The PBL framework will require ongoing investment to remain sustainable, with the appropriate budget including provision for the increased and ongoing support of the implementation of PBL across all ACT public schools. This should take into account student growth and new schools.

- It is essential that the Directorate and each individual school have clarity on what resources are available to them specifically for the purpose of implementing PBL.

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## Data and reporting

Quality and timely data to support local level decision making is a key feature of PBL. SEAC is confident that more useful data is now being made available to schools. The data helps the school and Directorate understand trends in relation to a range of aspects relating to school performance such as incidents, safety matters and student and staff engagement. Known as 'multiple sources of data', the Directorate is working with principals on building their capability to look at multiple sources of data to make informed decisions and judgements. Examples of the sources include the Schools Administration System (SAS), Riskman and the School Climate Survey (the Survey).

The Survey recently underwent methodological changes to align it with other Education and ACT Government research principles specifically the inclusion of questions that will increase the understanding of factors that contribute to broad student wellbeing outcomes. Attachment E provides an overview of the Survey.

It is evident to SEAC that there are a large number of data sources available to schools and that for the most part the data being collected is being used to make good and informed decisions. One example provided showed that reporting of a number of incidents occurring on the oval amongst grade 3 students indicated a particular trend for a particular group which resulted in changes to playground supervision and structured play.

There is a need however to ensure that the data being collected is useful and used. Too much data collection can have unintended negative consequences. Simplified data sets with some analysis will be of value to school staff.

SEAC was advised that SAS is in the process of being upgraded to allow the Directorate to have access to incidents as they occur in schools. The Directorate is the first in Australia to have this level of line of sight into real time data at all schools. Consistent data entry will be required for the information to be of maximum use, with the Executive Group Manager, School Improvement explaining that the *"big shift isn't only in the IT system, but it's having the right people knowing how to use the information well."*

SEAC saw clear evidence that data is now available in a way that has not been available before. The use of the data is still in its infancy and SEAC discussed how the system and schools can better use the data as an information source and how to build the capability of principals, school leaders and ESO to understand the data and how to best use it.

> *"The next important step is how to analyse the data to make good decisions and put plans in place".*
> - SEAC Member

In relation to sharing information about students, especially at key transition points, it appears that practices are inconsistent between schools. However, with the implementation of SAS, schools have more access to the holistic history of a student rather than simply academic achievement.

The system of reporting and recording of incidents has improved. The challenge is to ensure the data collected provides the necessary information to enable a school to respond proactively and in a targeted manner. The call by students and parents for a reporting system which they can access was noted. This could be the next phase of development; for example, students involved in a bullying incident could submit an incident report directly into the school's incident report system and have it dealt with in the same way as other reports. However, an important aspect from a student and teacher perspective is that if a response or action is not evident after reporting, then motivation to report may wane.

SEAC also believes that the data that is being reported and collected needs to be shared in some way with the broader community, not just the parent community, to ensure that facts are available to all which may temper some of the debate outside of the school in relation to activity being undertaken within a school. This will be discussed further in *Communication*.

## Lead indicators

The majority of indicators of student progress, both in educational terms and in relation to the broader development of children are lag indicators that measure where children and young people are at a particular point in time. Valuable as these indicators are, even more valuable are lead indicators that can provide insights at the level of the whole of the education system, as well as at the level of the school and even for the individual students, as to what might be important to their progress in the future.

The two most important sources of lead indicators of the future progress of children are those that provide insights into the early life circumstances of children and those that provide insights into how the student relates to their school and their education. The Directorate has developed sources of data with respect to the first of these sources through a combination of school readiness data, collected from children as five year olds in kindergarten, and data collected at enrolment as four year olds around both how children have prepared for school as two and three year olds (such as attendance at an early childhood education and care service, including how many hours per week), and family biographical data collected at enrolment around the socio-educational advantage of the child's family (including highest education level and occupation).

Together, this data provides a rich source of information that can assist the system, as well as individual schools, to design the delivery of services to address issues of disadvantage that may have emerged through this data. Additional data gained through the Kindergarten Health Check and through the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) can enhance the value of this data as a lead indicator.

The strength of a student's engagement with their school, their wellbeing and sense of belonging, and the extent to which they see the education system working for them through their teachers, along with measures of wellbeing, such as resilience, are all lead indicators for progress through the education system.

The ACT is one of four jurisdictions nationally that collect student wellbeing and engagement data in a structured way. Other jurisdictions are exploring their own programs and the measurement of student wellbeing is a national priority of the COAG Education Council and a recognition of the value of this information as a lead indicator. The Directorate collects student wellbeing and engagement data through a survey instrument designed by the Australian National University that has been delivered annually from 2014 to students between year 5 and year 12 (from 2019 these data will also be collected from year 4 students).

These data, in conjunction with socio-educational data and student progress data already held by the Directorate, provide the basis for the design of approaches at the system and at the school level, and are reported to schools each year. This data also forms the basis of strategic indicators around student progress, equity and school identity that are published annually through the budget papers and the Directorate Annual Report.

**Observations**

- The Directorate should continue to develop and collect lead indicators, including student wellbeing and engagement data, to monitor student progress through the educational system.

- The Directorate should also consult with students to identify what information students consider would be valuable to collect in order to better identify positive learning communities. Consideration could be given to incorporating "feedback loops" into data collection processes so people understand how and why their information is being collected.

- Support for school leaders and teachers to better understand the data available is necessary.

- Trend data in relation to incidents, actions and outcomes could be made available more widely to parents and the broader community to present more accurate picture of what ACT schools are achieving and what they doing to ensure a safe and supportive culture within schools.

## Policy governance

SEAC reviewed the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (the Policy). It was noted by members that the Policy included reference to a large number of procedures and frameworks. Attachment F provides a policy map which demonstrates the complexity associated with the volume of relevant documents. SEAC believes simplification of procedures and a simple policy statement in language that is accessible to all, would improve adherence to the policy and provide a clear understanding of what is required for everyone, not just those accessing the policy regularly.

SEAC was advised that the Directorate is currently undergoing an extensive policy governance review and that the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy is currently also being reviewed. SEAC encourages authentic stakeholder involvement in this process.

**Observations**

- A review of Directorate policies and procedures needs to be undertaken to ensure currency, simplicity and accessibility for all stakeholders.

## Bullying and violence – student perspective

It was evident to SEAC that bullying and violence is a community wide issue that is not isolated to schools. Despite various quality programs and interventions that seek to implement sustained behaviour change, this issue continues to affect students in schools around the world.

According to research provided to SEAC, the volume of bullying occurring in schools now is not significantly different to the volume of bullying experienced in schools 20 years ago with about 1 in 4 children and young people being bullied in any one school term. Most children have witnessed bullying in school - either verbal, physical or psychological bullying.

What has changed in recent years is the nature of bullying due to the introduction of social media and smart devices. Of interest was that prior to the availability of smart devices and advanced technology, only a small number of children and young people experienced bullying both during and after school, with a majority of children protected from bullying when they closed the front door of their homes. Technology has the potential to provide a means for bullying to occur outside of school hours.

SEAC acknowledges that it can be challenging for a school to anticipate or witness bullying behaviours at all times. However, if a school has a respectful, inclusive and safe culture, the frequency and impact of the bullying is more likely to be reduced and children and young people will be more equipped to respond appropriately.
Similarly, explicitly teaching strategies and skills to build resilience and self-esteem will assist children and young people if they are faced with bullying and violence.

Three members from SEAC met with the Minister's Student Congress Executive on Tuesday 25 June. This group represents a cross section of ACT public school students. The Minister's Student Congress spoke to SEAC about their experiences with bullying.

One of the key responses from students was the need for follow-up and feedback after an incident of bullying or violence had occurred or had been reported. There is a perception by some students that teachers, while completing the reporting procedure, then failed to provide feedback on action and consequences or to follow-up on the impact on the victim and the perpetrator.

It was clear from the feedback provided by the Minister's Student Congress Executive that the inclusion of student voice in addressing bullying and inappropriate behaviour should be a priority for all schools, particularly because PBL requires a strong student presence. Students want to be a part of the solution, not passive participants. They want to identify how they can empower bystanders and use the power of the group to reduce bullying and negative behaviour. This includes the positive use of social media in responding to cyberbullying.

What was also evident from speaking with students was that many incidents of bullying and violence occurs away from school so managing and responding to it requires parental action too, particularly in modelling non bullying and violent ways of dealing with issues.

A program referred to as '1000 eyes' was reported as a positive approach to encouraging student reporting, however the perceived lack of follow-up action or feedback discourages students from reporting. Both students and parents highlighted the need for the feedback loop to be improved to demonstrate that once an incident has been reported it will be acted upon by teachers and school executive.

Students spoke openly about the perception that "bad kids" who do a relatively small "good" thing can be rewarded, whereas other students who always do the right thing go largely unnoticed. Similarly, action taken by schools seems focused too much on the short term with suspension seen as a small consequence, and in some cases a reward, with the behaviour continuing after the suspension. Students spoke about the perceived "bully's" perspective of an incident, often saying that "it's not that serious," not recognising that for a victim it can still be serious.

Students who spoke with SEAC want teachers to listen more and be provided with training about how to prevent and intervene in incidents of bullying and violence. They also spoke of the perception that positive behaviours are only taught when an issue occurs, so requested more explicit work on preventive education.

SEAC reviewed the *Ask Us…student voice in the ACT* final report[8] and product, prepared in March 2017 to inform the Future of Education Strategy[9]. This provides a great deal of useful advice and more focus could be given to using this as a key tool in all schools.

SEAC believes students need to have a greater voice in what PBL looks like in their school. SEAC suggests there should be more consideration given to how students are involved and how are they receiving feedback. The role of student ambassadors was considered, with SEAC forming the opinion that they could not take sole responsibility for helping to manage and reduce bullying and violence. It is every child's right to have their voice heard.

SEAC also noted the US research highlighted in the Literature Review which indicated that integrating evidence-based bullying prevention and intervention programs with PBL has the potential to increase positive outcomes in relation to bullying. The research outlined studies on targeted bullying intervention programs both in Australia and the USA which demonstrated that such programs do not shift culture and have limited ongoing success.

| Observations |
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| • SEAC encourages students and schools to continue to co-design specific school-based approaches to identifying bullying and violence and communicate broadly their implementation. Students should continue to be empowered to solve their own issues where this is possible and appropriate. <br><br> • Schools are encouraged to continue to work with students to develop age-appropriate acknowledgment systems for positive behaviours under the PBL framework. <br><br> • Schools should assist students to recognise their role as active bystanders, which is also consistent with the PBL framework. <br><br> • Schools should consider how students and parents and carers can report bullying and violence without fear of retribution and receive feedback about what has happened as a result of their report. Online mechanisms for reporting could be investigated. |

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8 www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1362624/Ask-Us-Student-Voice-Report.pdf

9 www.education.act.gov.au/our-priorities/future-of-education

## Cybersafety

Students in the ACT are not immune to global issues regarding cybersafety. There have been many studies and reports on the issue of cyberbullying with a wide variety of recommendations as to what would help stop the practice, including banning mobile devices in schools.

SEAC was keen to fully understand the issues and their impact on students and sought advice from researchers and experts on what could be done locally to respond to the issue.

Of particular interest to SEAC was the NSW Government's announcement regarding the ban on mobile phones in NSW primary schools, with high schools having more power to remove smart devices from students. This announcement followed Dr Carr-Gregg's Review[10] into the impact of devices in schools on students of different ages, as well as their potential benefits. The Review received almost 14,000 survey responses and 80 written submissions. During the course of SEAC's work, a mobile phone ban was also announced in Victorian schools.

In considering the information provided during its deliberations, SEAC has attempted to define the problem that needs solving in relation to the use of mobile phones in schools. The key issues appear to be the distraction mobile phones can cause in classrooms and the impact this can have on learning; and the impact on young people particularly in relation to their self-esteem when incidents of bullying and violence are recorded and shared on social media platforms.

Mark Scott AO, Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, and some researchers suggest time away from phones and devices for primary school students is important to reduce distraction so that learning is in focus. Researchers and SEAC members believe it is particularly important to provide primary school students with the opportunity to socialise and play, uninhibited by a device, during recess and lunchtime as the playground is acknowledged as a key social learning time. The time away from devices in breaks may also have an impact on reducing related social anxiety for high school students.

ACT teachers teach to the Australian Curriculum[11] (the Curriculum), which expects students to develop skills using a range of devices for learning over their years of schooling. Social Emotional Learning is embedded in the Australian Curriculum under the general capabilities. If a school is implementing the PBL framework, opportunities will be provided that cover the general capabilities outlined in the Curriculum.

The Curriculum ensures that students develop Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school. ICT capability involves students learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment. Devices such as smartphones and tablets can complement existing learning and teaching for those that wish to use them. It is the responsibility of both schools and parents and carers to help students learn positive behaviours.

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[10] www.education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/our-reports-and-reviews/mobile-devices-in-schools/review-into-the-non-educational-use-of-mobile-devices-in-nsw-schools

[11] www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/

SEAC considers there is an opportunity to work with the eSafety Commissioner to enhance the cyber-safety and digital technology curriculum and understands that the eSafety Commissioner is currently working with the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on this issue.

SEAC considers that prohibition is not likely to reduce violence and bullying and that children and young people will find a way around prohibition. However, SEAC did form a view that there should be times where phones and other devices are not easily accessible, providing more opportunities for socialising and conversing and to allow students to not be a "slave" to the constant demand for attention that often comes through a phone/social media outside of school.

Students, through the general capabilities embedded in the Curriculum, will be taught appropriate use of ICT including the ability to self-censor. Communication with parents on the expectations of ACT public schools in relation to the appropriate use of devices and social media will be critical to making a difference to the impact devices can have at school. Expectations and capability will vary between primary and high school. When students transition from primary to high school, the behaviours and expectations change so the approach to the management of devices also needs to change. A message to parents that explains school processes in relation to the use of mobile phones (and wearable devices) is important for ensuring that parents understand what the school is trying to achieve and the role they have to play in modelling appropriate use of digital technology and social media.

SEAC was interested in the power of bystanders in relation to student behaviour including reducing bullying and violence. One researcher stated that *"there are differences in schools in the impact of bullying despite the same characteristics of kids. The difference in the impact is the power of bystanders. Where other children challenge bullying behaviour the incidence reduces. High levels of bullying arises in particular groups because the bystanders step back and the victim is socially isolated." (Sonia Sharp).* Schools and parents can help students learn how to be empowered bystanders, recognising that they may not feel safe/comfortable to stand up unless they can see how they will be supported. Educating children and young people about how they can be active bystanders on social media is just as important as being active bystanders in a physical sense. Bystander behaviour needs to be an area of focus at school and with the parent community.

**Observations**

- Schools should continue to teach students about the appropriate use of technology.

- Provide more opportunity for all students to have time away from devices, particularly, eg recess/lunch time and make time for play and social interactions so that social interaction and social skills can be taught and practised.

- There is an opportunity for the Directorate and schools to work with the eSafety Commissioner to enhance the cybersafety and digital technology curriculum.

## Communication

The importance of clear and timely communication to the culture of a school was a consistent theme in SEAC's discussions with stakeholders - staff, principals, students, parents and carers, and other professionals and stakeholders.

### Policy and process

The multiplicity and complexity of procedures and policies undermines opportunities for clear and concise communication with stakeholders.

SEAC determined that there are too many policies about similar issues and that the complexity of the process and language used is often impenetrable for parents and students. This makes following a process or being sure about what is possible is often difficult for participants in problem resolution.

Targeted and consistent communication about school-based policies such as behaviour management, suspension and bullying will help the community to better understand their role in supporting the policy and how to access information and support if they have concerns.

It was clear from SEAC's conversations that not all parents understand what PBL is and why it is being implemented. From a school perspective, PBL may be a sound framework, however parents and carers may not understand the framework – including how it can help them at home. The Directorate and schools need to communicate in a more open and accessible way with parents, using language and resources that can be adopted in the home to reinforce the approach that schools are taking with students within schools.

### Feedback

Both students and parents commented on the lack of feedback when an incident occurs at school, with some parents feeling a need to request incident reports from schools and approach the Directorate and Minister for information and support.

Respecting the privacy of all parties involved in an incident needs to be considered in any feedback approach however privacy should not be used as a roadblock to providing useful/timely information. School executives and staff need clear guidance on information sharing as the default position appears to say little for fear of breaching privacy.

SEAC discussed approaches to providing feedback following incidents. Using a restorative practice framework may be one way of ensuring all parties are heard and that they understand what action is being, or can be, taken when addressing incidents. Trust and safety are important for restorative practices to be effective and participants must have confidence in the issue being taken seriously and in a proportionate response being taken.

The ACT is a restorative practice jurisdiction and schools could demonstrate their commitment to this through the approaches they take within their school community. Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and reconciliation with the victim.

Restorative responses to incidents are conciliatory in nature and aim to restore a positive learning environment for all parties.

Another approach discussed was "circle time" which was used in a number of ACT schools within their classrooms. Teaching staff and executives report that when used appropriately it leads to very positive outcomes.

Regardless of the approach, all schools should develop the capability to have clear, honest and targeted conversations on an issue in the classroom, in the school and with the broader school community including with parents.

### Community communication

The Directorate and schools need to take the lead on establishing the narrative on bullying and violence and how it is being managed within a school setting rather than simply responding publicly to individual incidents. Bullying and violence is an issue in broader society, and it would be useful for the Directorate or the ACT Government to highlight the importance of a whole community response in support of what schools are doing.

School P&Cs could be provided with aggregated/de-identified trend data for their school which demonstrates how the school is performing on some key indicators such as incidents, reports of bullying and climate measures so that they can also be a voice of reason within the broader community. Information could help allay parent and carer concerns about the action taken by schools to prevent or address incidents and could provide them with real information to reduce escalation of issues due to a lack of knowledge.

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**Observations**

- SEAC has identified a need for clear, concise and accessible communication to families using "plain English", while recognising that in the teaching profession words can have different meanings. Language should be differentiated depending on its audience.
- The Directorate should simplify the policies relating to Safe and Supportive Schools and provide clear, concise and accessible material for parents, students and teachers.
- The Directorate and individual schools need to use a variety of communication channels to ensure that all stakeholders can access and understand the information being provided.
- Recognising that P&Cs and School Boards already receive some information, additional aggregated/deidentified trend data could be provided to P&Cs and Boards which demonstrates how the school is performing on some key indicators such as incidents, reports of bullying and 'climate' measures.

## Initial Teacher Education, Professional Learning, Induction and Coaching

SEAC considered the progress on changes being made to pre-service education as a result of *Schools for All*. The Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) provided a paper on the work being undertaken to better prepare teachers for managing and responding to bullying and violence

Among a number of projects, the Professional Learning and 'support for staff' project explored opportunities for improving initial teacher education, professional learning and further study. The aim of the project was to ensure that all school staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and capabilities they need to support students to learn, in particular those with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

One example is the implementation of the Graduate Teacher Standards, a feature of the nationally agreed basis for assessing and accrediting initial teacher education programs (ITE). The reforms to the ITE Program accreditation process from TEMAG[12] have focussed attention on early career teachers being "ready to teach", with enhanced opportunities during their final professional experience placement to "put it all together" and critically analyse the effectiveness of their teaching on students, including those with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

TQI report that the next suite of University of Canberra undergraduate ITE will be submitted for accreditation in 2020 and will incorporate the requirements of the final raft of accreditation reforms, with a strong research-informed, evidence-based foundation, including core units that take a holistic approach to dealing with the complexity of school contexts.

Preliminary discussions have identified cybersafety as a key focus that will be addressed in programs to prepare pre-service teachers for preventing, curtailing and responding to this form of bullying and violence.

TQI have advised opportunities exist to also require specialisations in particular areas, such as the areas of complex needs and challenging behaviours.

In relation to teacher professional learning, the Professional Learning and Development Committee routinely reviews the accreditation of in-service programs and provides support for ACT initiatives and strategies to build the capability of the teaching profession. There is an extensive list of evidence-based programs accredited by TQI such as the Berry Street Education Model and other teacher identified programs.

It appears that the TQI is appropriately responding to the changing environment in schools and is working with local universities to ensure the appropriate programs are in place to support preservice teachers to acquire the necessary classroom management skills. SEAC recognises the ACT Government has recently provided investment to support the teaching workforce such as the provision of coordinated professional experience placements for pre-service teachers.

In collaboration with quality PL and ITE, SEAC sees a need for more robust school-based induction, not only for teachers, but also for Learning Support Assistants and relief teachers.

In addition, training for teachers in how to best use the resources in their classrooms (which includes Learning Support Assistants) is essential to the success of PBL in schools.

The culture of the school is fundamental to reducing bullying and violence. If everybody has the same information and understanding, then everyone in a school community will understand what is acceptable and unacceptable. Principals have a significant role in ensuring the right supports and resources are available in their school to build positive culture. School leaders and teachers need the capability, time, and support to create a positive culture. This includes the provision of timely, quality and meaningful PL for teachers.

SEAC sought to understand how staff are trained by external PBL coaches. SEAC was advised there are ongoing training opportunities for staff through staff meetings, meeting with Internal Coaches in schools (part of the school's PBL team), supporting capability development with data collection processes and analysis and the provision of resources and opportunities to share ideas, access to Internal Coach Google Drive and attendance at PBL Network meetings held each term.

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[12] Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group - Australian Government Action Now report

It was clear to SEAC that schools desire more time to collaborate, share their practice and receive meaningful feedback. Suggestions included additional release from face to face teaching time to observe good practice or to have experts observe and provide timely feedback on classroom management methods during class time.

Differentiated and time sensitive training will have a bigger positive impact than providing compulsory training modules at set times. Having a practice of regular reminders and refreshers, and quality mentoring approaches will help embed the culture across a school. This is most important for beginning teachers and teachers new to a school.

The roll out of PBL in a school requires the commitment of the school over a number of years. It occurs incrementally and requires a school leader to look at what exists in the school and build upon the good practice and positive culture which may already exist. We know that school culture is heavily influenced by a school principal. When a school goes through a leadership change, it would be beneficial for the principal, especially in the case of beginning principals, to be provided with additional and targeted support on establishing positive culture, quality communication and how to effectively embed PBL. SEAC believes this can be done as part of performance management and by accessing appropriate professional learning.

SEAC would also suggest that as PBL is a system wide framework which provides a universal foundation, learning modules on PBL should be made available to all staff, including casual teachers through the Personal Learning requirements.

**Observations**

- Teacher training should have as part of the curriculum for 4th year students modules on PBL, including the philosophy and expectations of ACT teachers in relation to PBL.

- The Directorate and Minister may wish to consider the opportunity to require an additional specialisation in the area of complex needs and challenging behaviours, and/or to require further professional learning for the current teaching workforce in this area as part of a re-registration process.

- PBL resourcing is not just about 'training modules'. The most effective way of embedding a PBL approach is to provide in-classroom support for teachers including mentoring and feedback. Mentors need to be freed up from their own classrooms, so resourcing must include the provision of relief from face to face teaching.

- Professional learning for principals is critically important for the success of the culture change that PBL brings- for beginning principals in particular. Their Professional Learning can be provided through coaching and mentoring and reflected in their performance management plan.

## Community engagement

PBL is a whole school approach for creating a positive, safe and supportive school climate in which students can learn and develop. This approach involves the school community working together. The schools that have had the greatest and most sustained impact on bullying are the schools that have engaged families from the start when developing and implementing the school's anti-bullying policy. This includes revisiting the outcomes of the policy regularly.

Public schools in the ACT need to draw on the community services organisations and resources which are available, however, SEAC acknowledges that this responsibility cannot sit solely with the principal. Community Coordinators are available in a small number of schools and SEAC would like to see the Directorate explore how to better utilise this approach. It appears that targeted resources are more accessible for Tier 1 children whereas preventative supports and programs which may be most helpful for Tier 2 children and their families are more difficult to connect with. Better alignment between the Education Directorate and the Community Services Directorate on how to access the resources available will also be of benefit.

ACT Policing is one of the services outside of the Education Directorate which may be of assistance to schools in embedding a safe and supportive culture. There have been a number of different programs over the years either developed by or partnered with ACT Policing including Constable Kenny, Menslink, and 'stay ok' programs. ACT Policing is working on providing schools with material on good decision making including a national program – 'you think you know'.

Currently, the Directorate, through NSET, engages with other directorates and non-government organisations through monthly interagency meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss students of concern whom the police are involved with/known to and include representatives from Child and Youth Protection Services and out of home care provider Act Together, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, ACT Together and the Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC).

SEAC was briefed about the work the Directorate is currently undertaking with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association. Of significance is the view that schools should be providing a safe place for families to be – a place for the most challenged families to feel they are welcomed, safe and connected. Families are an important part of the school community and should be part of the continuum of work on PBL that begins in the school but requires similar commitment to modelling and acknowledging the positive behaviour out of school and at home.

This positive and transparent partnership with community is an important aspect for all students, however it was also acknowledged that it is critical for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. SEAC heard that school staff, including principals, have not always necessarily been well-trained or supported to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and that when an issue is serious or sensitive it can be important to offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers an opportunity to bring someone with them such as an advocate, trusted friend, or community worker to school meetings.

In addition, a recurring discussion point for SEAC was that community attitudes regarding the teaching profession need to shift so that the community recognising the value of principals and teachers. This would be complemented by raising the expectations of behaviour towards and respect for the teaching profession.

## Supporting and educating parents

Positive relationships between families and schools can support greater parent and carer engagement which is beneficial to student learning and wellbeing. Some parents require flexible support to build and maintain a relationship with their child's school because of their own experiences or trauma. Schools already manage this in flexible ways, such as meeting with parents at alternative venues, or organising meetings with support people in attendance.

As discussed throughout this report, positive school culture is a whole school responsibility. SEAC believes that establishing clear expectations about learning and behaviour at 'our school' and the role parents and carers play in the process will assist schools in being safe and supportive learning environments.

PBL information sessions at a variety of times, routine newsletter items and social media campaigns can support parents to understand the framework.

A quality and accessible parent induction program could be part of each school's beginning of the year processes. One element of the parent induction should include the information provided by the e-Safety Commissioner and advice on how to report issues as they arise.

# Attachments

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|---|---|---|
| Attachment A | SEAC Terms of Reference | 29 |
| Attachment B | Safe and Supportive Schools policy | |
| Attachment C | Literature Review | |
| Attachment D | Jurisdictional PBL comparison | |
| Attachment E | School Climate Survey and how data is used to inform decision making | |
| Attachment F | Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Map | |
| Attachment G | Australian Education Union opinion piece-lifting the lid on OV | |

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U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. *National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.* www.PBIS.org

Yeung, A., Craven, R., Mooney, M., & et al. (2016). Positive Behavior Interventions: the Issue of Sustainability of Positive Effects. *Educational Psychology Review*.

## Reports, research and articles

In addition to the Literature Review, SEAC considered a number of articles and reports including but not limited to the following:

- NZ Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together (Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce, NZ, 2018)

- 60 Minutes: Teachers leaving profession 'in droves' thanks to abusive parents. (Taylor, 2019)

- Adolescents' relationships with their peers (Gray, Romaniuk, & Daraganova, 2018)

- Bullying. No Way! (SSSC, 2019)

- Anti-bullying interventions in schools – what works? (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2017)

- Helping your child stop bullying: A guide for parents (Lodge, 2014)

- Does your child bully others? Ten positive actions for parents (Lodge, 2014)

- Children who bully at school (Lodge, 2014)

- Working with families concerned with school-based bullying (Lodge, 2008)

- Independent Assessment – Occupational Violence Final Report (Caple, 2017)

- Schools for All Children and Young People – Expert Panel Report (Shaddock, Packer, & Roy, 2015)

- The Common Approach - (ARACY, 2019)

- Australian Education Union opinion piece (Attachment G)

- How the iPhone rewrote the teenage brain, ABC Podcast (Gillespie, 2019)

- We asked five experts: should mobile phones be banned in schools? (Heizer, 2018)

- Mobile phones in the classroom – what does the research say? (Russell, 2018).

# Attachment A - Education (Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee) Determination 2019

made under the

**Education Act 2004, Chapter 4A (School education advisory committee)**

___

**1  Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Education (Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee) Determination 2019.*

**2  Commencement**

This instrument commences on 18 March 2019.

**3  Establishment of advisory committee**
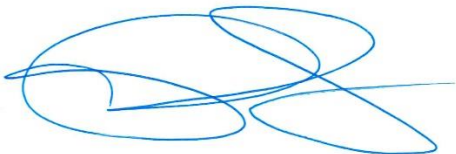
For the Act, section 126, I establish the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee as an advisory committee for the period from 18 March 2019 until 13 September 2019.

**4  Appointment of members**

For the Act, section 127, I appoint the people named in schedule 1, column 2 to the role mentioned in column 1 for the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee to represent the interest or expertise mentioned in column 3.

**5  Determination of terms of reference**

For the Act, section 127B, I determine the terms of reference at schedule 2 for the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee.

Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development
18 March 2019

# Schedule 1   Appointment of members

| role | name | interest or expertise |
|------|------|----------------------|
| **Chair** | Sue Chapman | **Independent chair** |
| **Deputy Chair and Member** | Chris Redmond | **Community sector** |
| **Member** | Dr Sue Packer | **Child health and wellbeing The needs of vulnerable families** |
| **Member** | Dennis Yarrington | **School principals** |
| **Member** | Nick Maniatis | **School teachers** |
| **Member** | Kirsty McGovern-Hooley | **School parents and citizens** |
| **Member** | Barbara Causon | **Families of children with special needs Aboriginal and Tones Strait Islander perspectives** |
| **Member** | **Philippa Godwin** | ***Schools for All* independent oversight committee** |

# Schedule 1    Terms of reference

# 1    Preamble

The government is committed to providing inclusive education that meets the needs of every child and young person that seeks a place in a government school. The government is equally committed to ensuring that government schools are safe and supportive for every student and school worker.

The Education Directorate is continuing an ambitious and evidence-based journey of systemic cultural change to deliver on the government's commitment to the community. Reviews and reports such as the *Schools for All Children and Young People - Report of the Expert Panel on Children with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour* from 2015 and the Work Safety Commissioner's findings on occupational violence have focused on ensuring all children and young people in ACT schools are engaged in learning in a way that acknowledges their diverse, changing needs and varying backgrounds and circumstances. While significant improvements in managing and responding to students with complex needs and challenging behaviours are evident, significant systemic change takes time.

One important component is the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy which has been implemented in a staged approach since April 2016. The Policy provides guidance for ACT government schools on promoting safe, respectful and supportive school environments. The Policy supports the work that has been undertaken through the Schools for All program to create safe school environments for all students, including those with complex needs and challenging behaviours. The Policy reflects the guiding principles outlined in the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework which assists school communities with developing student safety and wellbeing practices.

However, the Policy has not been examined in light of its alignment to the government's *Future of Education Strategy* which was launched in August 2018. The *Future of Education Strategy* is underpinned by the principles of equity, access, inclusion and student agency.

The Policy requires government schools to have processes and procedures in place to address and prevent bullying, harassment and violence. The Policy promotes embracing diversity as a core value which underpins all ACT government schools.

The Policy and associated procedures encourage critical evaluation of the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Learning approaches and the implementation of local school processes and procedures to address bullying, harassment and violence.

The Policy and associated procedures provide direction for schools in managing complex and challenging behaviour. The use of preventative and early intervention measures is promoted in the Policy to lessen the need for more intensive interventions such as protective actions to manage behaviour.

The Policy encourages schools to seek additional support and expertise through making appropriate referrals when they are working with students with complex and challenging behaviour.

The Policy and associated procedures encourage critical evaluation of the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Learning approaches and the implementation of local school processes and procedures to address bullying, harassment and violence.

The Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) approach supports schools to implement the Policy. It is an international evidence-based approach for creating safe and supportive school environments. A summary of research evidence for PBL is available from the United States Office for Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at https://www.pbis.org/research.

PBL is a whole school culture changing approach to creating a positive behaviour environment through:

- leadership and school-wide support

- common language, vision and experience

- clearly defined set of expected behaviours (expectations and rules)

- procedures for teaching and practising expected behaviours

- continuum of procedures for acknowledging expected behaviours

- continuum of procedures for responding to problem behaviours

- procedures for record keeping and decision making and ongoing monitoring of data.

The government has determined that all government schools will adopt this approach. The Directorate is part way through implementation of PBL in ACT government schools.

There is no place for bullying or violence in schools but there will always be a need for deliberate effort to make school communities safe, supportive and inclusive. A literature review prepared by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group for the COAG Education Council and published on the *Bullying No Way!* website highlights that 'Australian research suggests that up to one in four students has experienced some level of bullying face-to- face and one in five has experienced bullying online'. Additionally, 'Australian researchers have suggested we are more aware of the potential impact of ignoring bullying, and willing to take the necessary positive action, rather than bullying actually increasing'.

The government is seeking assurance that its response to bullying and violence in schools is robust and that the occurrence of instances is minimised to the extent possible.

Under *Education Act 2004,* chapter 4A, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development may establish a School Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) as required to advise the Minister about school education or a related matter, for a specified period. The Minister, Yvette Berry MLA, has established the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee as an advisory committee for the Act.

# 2 Role and functions

Broadly, the advisory committee will provide advice to the Minister on opportunities for strengthening safe and supportive school culture in every ACT government school. The advisory committee will advise on opportunities to strengthen practises in schools and the Education Support Office that give effect to the Policy. The advisory committee will focus on PBL and other targeted interventions that support the implementation of the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy in ACT government schools.

Specifically, the advisory committee will:

- assess the Policy against evidence and approaches in other education jurisdictions

- provide advice on the currency of the Policy against national practice and relevant benchmarks

- provide advice on the barriers and impediments to effective implementation of the Policy (including the social and emotional needs of families that impact on student behaviours at school)

- provide advice on appropriate lead indicators and system level data that will improve early intervention

- provide advice on opportunities to strengthen escalation and complaint management about student violence and bullying in ACT government schools

- provide advice on the appropriateness of school vs system level accountability and how this interacts with features of school-based management in the government school system

- consider findings of the *Schools for All* Report and the work being done to address occupational violence issues related to students in government schools with complex needs and challenging behaviours

- identify best practice and advise on how to promulgate best practice across all school settings

- consider opportunities for strengthening the implementation of the Policy through PBL

- consider opportunities for strengthening the implementation of the Policy through investment in educators and other proven measures

- provide advice on opportunities to strengthen targeted services that respond to the management of student violence and bullying in ACT government schools.

# 3 Reporting

The advisory committee will provide a summary status update to the Minister by 22 May 2019.

The advisory committee will address the Terms of Reference and present a final report to the Minister by 23 August 2019.

# 4 Membership

The membership of the advisory committee is as appointed by the Minister.

Members will uphold the ACT Government code of conduct for members of boards or committees.

The advisory committee will engage the following external advice in fulfilling its role and functions:

| entity or person | interest or expertise |
|---|---|
| Chairs of Minister's Student Congress | School students |
| Various | Experts in educational psychology, child behaviour and trauma |
| ACT Policing | Community policing |
| Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth | Parental engagement, child and youth wellbeing |
| Various | Experts in child trauma |
| University of Canberra, Faculty of Education | Initial and ongoing teacher education |
| Australian Education Union, ACT Branch | School teachers in ACT government schools |
| ACT Principal's Association | School leaders in ACT government schools |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. |

The advisory committee may engage additional external advice as required. The Education Directorate will provide administrative and technical support.

# Attachment B - Safe and Supportive Schools Policy

## What is this policy about?

1. Canberra public schools are committed to providing positive and engaging environments where young people feel connected and respected, achieve success and are fully engaged in education. Student wellbeing impacts on student learning and is fundamental to a student's successful engagement with education.

2. This policy provides guidance for Canberra public schools on promoting a safe, respectful and supportive school community.

## Policy Statement

3. Canberra public schools are safe, respectful and supportive learning and teaching communities that promote student and staff wellbeing.

4. The Directorate is committed to ensuring schools are inclusive places where students, families and staff feel accepted, valued and connected to their school. Respectful relationships, fair and equitable processes and embracing diversity are core values which underpin Canberra public schools.

5. Canberra public schools through modelling and explicit teaching, develop the skills of students to enable generational change in reducing inequality and discrimination.

6. Canberra public schools establish safe, respectful and supportive environments for the whole school community, by fostering a positive school culture based on positive relationships and a focus on prevention and early intervention for behaviour that may impact safety and wellbeing. They do this by:

   - committing to develop safe schools through a whole-school and evidence-based approach;

   - building the self awareness, self management, social awareness and social management capabilities of students to engage in respectful relationships;

   - applying restorative and disciplinary measures;

   - supporting teachers to meet the social and emotional needs of students in the school environment;

   - supporting the wellbeing needs of teachers, consistent with the *ACT Government's Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace*, to ensure they are able to support students;

   - fostering an engaging, inclusive and responsive curriculum and school environment;

   - involving the school community in the development of school processes and procedures that promote student safety and wellbeing;

   - ensuring schools are organised in ways that provides duty of care as outlined in the *Supervision of Students on School Sites: Preschool to Secondary College Policy*;

   - valuing diversity and promoting positive social behaviour;

   - providing intensive, individualised behavioural support for students who require additional support in an appropriate and timely manner; and

   - minimising the use of restrictive practices and ensuring they are only used as a last resort, where there is a high risk of imminent harm.

# Who does this policy apply to?

7.  This policy applies to all school staff, parents/carers and students attending Canberra public schools and all other Education Directorate (the Directorate) staff.

# Context

8.  This policy reflects principles of high quality education outlined in the Education Act 2004 (ACT) and student safety and wellbeing practices outlined in the *National Safe Schools Framework (2013)*.

9.  A safe, respectful and supportive environment occurs in the context of schools that engage students in learning as set out in the Canberra public Engaging Schools Framework.

10.  This policy is consistent with ACT and Commonwealth human rights and anti-discrimination laws which protect individuals from unfavourable treatment on a number of grounds including disability, race, sex, sexuality, and gender identity.

11.  Information gathered under this policy and accompanying procedures will be kept in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2014* (ACT) and the *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997* (ACT). These Acts protect individuals' rights relating to the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information and personal health information held by government agencies.

12.  All school community members are expected to comply with all criminal laws in the ACT, which includes, but is not limited to offences relating to unlawful behaviour involving - weapons, alcohol, drugs, dangerous acts, vandalism, violence, harassment, digital technology and sexual misconduct.

# Responsibilities

13.  The Directorate is ultimately responsible for the safety and wellbeing of students and staff in Canberra public schools. The Directorate will provide resources, supports, facilities and environments that foster safety and wellbeing of students and staff. The Directorate's Education Support Office will set policy and procedures to support principals to create, evaluate and maintain a safe, respectful and supportive school environment.

14.  **School staff** including Principals are responsible for:

    - creating, evaluating and maintaining a safe, respectful and supportive school environment as described in the policy statement.

    - developing processes and procedures to address bullying, racial, sexual, homophobic, transphobic and other forms of harassment and violence as informed by the National Safe Schools Framework, in line with the *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure A*;

    - applying restorative and/or disciplinary measures where they are deemed appropriate as part of the school's processes and procedures;

    - intentionally developing students' social and emotional skills;

    - evaluating the effectiveness of:

        - the school's social and emotional learning approach;

        - processes and procedures to address bullying, harassment and violence;

        - restorative and disciplinary measures;

        - and making modifications and improvements in these areas, informed by the evaluation.

  - identifying Safe and Supportive Schools Contact Officers to support students experiencing bullying, harassment and violence, as outlined in *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure A*;

- recording incidences of bullying, harassment and violence in the designated system wide student administration system as per the *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting Policy*;

- developing processes relating to protective action to be used when a significant danger is present that may cause injury or harm to individuals, in line with the *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*;

- developing Positive Behaviour Support Plans for students with complex and challenging behaviour, including behaviour which may result in injury to themselves or others;

- developing Protective Action Plans which outline protective actions including restrictive practices to address potentially harmful behaviour in line with the *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*. Refer to *Managing Behaviours Safely: A Risk Management Approach*;

- ensuring Positive Behaviour Plans and Protective Action Plans are reviewed and updated each term as required, refer *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*;

- engaging professionals with appropriate expertise including school psychologists, Network Student Engagement Teams and if required, external providers to develop and where necessary assist with the implementation of support plans;

- minimising restrictive practices in line with *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*, ensuring they are used only as a last resort and only where it can be demonstrated that all other options have been considered and wherever possible implemented; and

- ensuring staff have access to appropriate training to support them to develop positive student behaviour and respond safely to potentially harmful behaviour.

15. **Principals** are also responsible for:

- Seeking advice from the relevant School Network Leader and the Network Student Engagement team to assist with decision making in relation to Positive Behaviour Support Plans with an accompanying Protective Action Plan that proposes a restrictive practice;

- consideration and approval of Positive Behaviour Support Plans with an accompanying Protective Action Plan after ensuring all processes have been followed with reference to *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*;

- reporting every use of restraint or seclusion in line with the process outlined in the *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*; and

- compiling and reviewing data on the use of restrictive practice in escalated situations, consistent the *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*, to inform processes such as Positive Behaviour Support Plan reviews.

16. **School Network Leaders** are responsible for:

- Providing advice to principals on Positive Behaviour Support Plans and Protective Actions Plans that propose a restrictive practice, to ensure they are consistent with the requirements outlined in this policy statement and the *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*;

- supporting principals to access additional support as necessary, such as allied health professional input through the Network Student Engagement Teams;

- seeking advice if necessary from the Director Student Engagement to assist with decision making, where there is complexity in the individual context of the Positive Behaviour Support Plan and related Protective Action Plan involving restrictive practice. Refer to *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*;

- responding to reports of the use of restraint or seclusion in line with the process outlined in the *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting Policy* or *Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents Policy*;

- keeping records of all Positive Behaviour Support Plans with Protective Action Plans proposing the use of restrictive practices;

- working with principals to ensure Positive Behaviour Support Plans with Protective Action Plans are reviewed and updated each term as required, refer *Safe and Supportive Schools Procedure B*;

- providing links to additional supports where plans need strengthening or review; and

- reporting trends and escalating issues to the Director Student Engagement.

17. **Students and Parents/ Carers** are partners and stakeholders in achieving safe and supportive schools and are responsible for:

- contributing as members of the school community to the development and ongoing maintenance of a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment;

- providing input into the development and review of any positive Behaviour Support Plans and Protective Action Plans that relate to them or to their child;

- supporting the policy by behaving appropriately in schools to ensure learning is not disrupted, and the safety and wellbeing of all school community members is maintained;

- supporting schools to remain free from bullying, harassment and violence, and

- communicating with teachers or the Principal about any concerns in relation to safety, bullying, discrimination or harassment at their school, to allow these concerns to be promptly addressed.

18. **Director, Student Engagement** is responsible for:

- providing advice and support to schools and School Network Leaders in the development of Positive Behaviour Support Plans and Protective Action Plans;

- working with School Network Leaders to:

  - develop responses to trends and escalating issues and

  - report trends and escalate issues to the Deputy Director Generals - Schools and Education Strategy.

19. **Policy Owner:** Director, Student Engagement is responsible for this policy.

# Monitoring and Review

20. The Policy Owner will monitor this policy. This includes an annual scan of operation and review. A full review of the policy will be conducted within a three year period.

# Contact

21. For support contact Student Engagement Branch on (02) 6207 0457 or email: ETDStudentWellbeing@act.gov.au

# Complaints

22. Any concerns about the application of this policy or the policy itself, should be raised with:

- the school principal in the first instance;

- contact the Directorate's Liaison Unit on (02) 6205 5429.

- online at https://www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/contact_us.

- see also the *Complaints Policy* on the Directorate's website.

# References

23. **Definitions**

- **Bullying**: an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).
  Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

- **Cyberbullying**: Bullying that occurs through social media and/or telecommunications platforms.

- **Directorate**: For the purposes of this policy and the related procedure, the Directorate refers to the Education Directorate, ACT Government. The term is used to refer to the organisation and its staff as a whole, including schools, Central Office and Executive staff.

- **Disciplinary**: practices is a set of actions by a teacher towards a student (or groups of students) after the student's behaviour disrupts the ongoing educational activity or breaks a pre-established rule created by the school system. Discipline guides the children's behaviour or sets limits to help them learn to take care of themselves, other people and the world around them.

- **Diversity**: is about recognising the value of individual differences to school culture. Diversity can include sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, cultural background, age, religious belief, family makeup and family responsibilities. Diversity also refers to other ways in which people are different, such as educational level, life experience, work experience, socio-economic background, personality, marital status and abilities/disabilities. Diversity is more than merely accepting people from diverse backgrounds – it is about active support and celebration of difference.

- **Duty of care**: the responsibility to exercise reasonable care to protect the safety of any students against injury that should reasonably have been foreseen. This duty exists whenever a student/teacher relationship exists, while students are on school premises during hours when the school is open and while on school based activities taking place elsewhere.

- **Positive Behaviour Support Plans**: are evidence-based plans, based on a functional behavioural analysis of the purpose of the behaviour in the context of the student's environment. They outline proactive strategies that build on the person's strengths, and support the learning of positive replacement behaviours and skills. A Positive Behaviour Support Plan is the primary planning tool for bringing about positive behaviour change for a student.

- **Protective Action**: describes the interventions taken by staff to minimise the risk when a significant danger is present. This might include restrictive practices, non-physical interventions and changes to the immediate environment. The danger may be from the actions of a person or from hazards in the immediate environment.

- A **Protective Action Plan**: refers to a plan that guides immediate response strategies for the management of aggressive, violent and unsafe behaviours of a particular student that are presenting imminent risk of harm to the individual or others. These strategies are only used when all other planned responses have failed. It is informed by a deep knowledge of the individual student's circumstances. The Protective Action Plan will always have an accompanying Positive Behaviour Support Plan.

- **Respectful relationships**: are interpersonal interactions where all parties feel safe, are treated with fairness, are valued and feel accepted. This concept applies to all relationships, including friendships, student-student, student-teacher, teacher-family, family and partner relationships.

- **Restorative Practices**: are strategies that seek to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying. It aims to do this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the wrongdoer and forgiveness by the victim. The restorative approach, reintegrates wrongdoers back into their community and reduces the likelihood that they will continue to misbehave.

- **Restrictive Practice**: is defined as any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the liberty or freedom of movement of a person, with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm. Restrictive practices must only ever be used as a last resort option to prevent harm to the individual or

others. They should only be used within the context of a positive behaviour support approach, and only after all other less restrictive options have been applied, or are not practicable in the circumstances. They must not be used to gain compliance in students. Refer to *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Procedure B*. Restrictive Practices include:

- **Restraint** is the use of force to subdue or restrict a person's movement. It can be mechanical (using an object) or physical, using a part of a person's body.

- **Seclusion** is the sole confinement of a person in a room or place where the doors and window cannot be opened by the person.

- **Schools**: The term is used generically in this policy to include all Canberra public schools and educational programs delivered by the ACT Education Directorate for school-age students on other sites, such as Birrigai. School-related educational institutions (or *schools in special circumstances*) established under section 20 of the *Education Act 2004* are also included as part of this definition.

- **School Communities**: The term is used generally to include all stakeholders associated with a school. This may include, but is not limited to: students, staff, parents/carers, families, volunteers and visitors.

- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**: is the process through which students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, understand and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive respectful relationships, and make responsible decisions.

- **Student**: means a person who is enrolled in a Canberra public school or related institution established under section 20 of the *Education Act 2004 (ACT)*.

- **Student Wellbeing**: is defined as a state of positive psychological functioning that allows students to thrive, flourish and engage positively with their school and other people.

- **Violence**: is the use of force, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in actual or apprehended physical harm or property damage. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts, multiple incidents, or a pattern of behaviour which creates a context for separate incidents. It may involve a random or a deliberate act. Threatened or actual conduct involving weapons or implements used as weapons is considered to be a serious act of violence.

24. **Legislation**

- *Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)*

- *Crimes Act 1900 (ACT)*

- *Criminal Code 2002 (ACT)*

- *Criminal Code Act 1995 (ACT)*

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*

- *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*

- *Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)*

- *Education Act 2004 (ACT)*

- *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011*

- *Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)*

- *Information Privacy Act 2014 (ACT)*

- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*

- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

- *[Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)* (Cth)

25. **Implementation** Documents

- Safe and Supportive Schools Procedures

    - Procedure A – Preventing Bullying, Harassment and Violence in Canberra Public Schools

    - Procedure B – Safely Responding to Complex and Challenging Behaviour in Canberra Public Schools

- Safe and Supportive Schools Factsheets:

    - Factsheet for Parents and Carers

        - Building Positive Partnerships: Working together with school staff to understand and support behavioural issues at school – Parent and Carer Fact Sheet

        - Frequently Asked Questions: Parents and Carers

    - Factsheet for Schools

        - Restrictive Practices - Frequently Asked Questions

        - Use of Withdrawal Spaces in Canberra Public Schools

    - National Safe Schools Framework - Factsheet for School Communities

- Managing Behaviours Safely - A Risk Management Approach Guidance Document

    - Individual Student Safety Analysis and Intervention Plan Template

        - Pre-Individual Student Safety Analysis and Intervention Checklist for Schools

    - Risk Appraisal and Treatment Plan Matrix and Template

        - Pre- Risk Appraisal Checklist

- Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP) and Protective Action Plan Templates

    - Checklist for developing a PBSP and Protective Action Plan

    - Positive Behaviour Support Planning Flowchart

- Use of Restrictive Practice: Reporting, Documentation and Responsibilities Flowchart

26. **Related Policies and Information**

- [ACT Government Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace](#)

- [Australian Curriculum](#)

- Child Protection Policy

- Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting Policy

- Education Participation (Enrolment and Attendance) Policy

- [Engaging Schools Framework](#)

- [National Safe Schools Framework](#)

- [National School Improvement Tool](#)

- Quick Reference Guide: Support for schools to implement the Education Participation (Enrolment and Attendance) Policy

- Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents Policy

- Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents Procedures

- Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents Guidelines

- Supervision of Students on School Sites - Preschool to Secondary College Policy

- Suspension, Exclusion or Transfer in ACT Public Schools Policy

- Working with Children and Young People – Volunteers and Visitors (Interim) Policy

*Safe and Supportive Schools Policy:* *SSS201611 is the unique identifier of this document. It is the responsibility of the user to verify that this is the current and complete version of the document, available on the Directorate's website at http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/school_and_corporate_policies/A-Z/.*

# Attachment C

# Safe and Supportive Schools

Literature Review

ACT Education Directorate, Schools Education Advisory Committee

May 2019

Safe and Supportive Schools: A Literature Review Australian
Research Alliance for Children and Youth

## Contact us

If you have any queries about this report, please contact ARACY: Mail: GPO Box
2807, Canberra, ACT 2601

Email: enquiries@aracy.org.au Website: aracy.org.au Phone: +61 2
6248 2400

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# Contents

# List of Abbreviations

ARACY – Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth ASWF – Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

CNCB – Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour ED – ACT Education Directorate

EPB – Evidence-Based Practices

ETD – ACT Education and Training Directorate

PBIS – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports PBL – Positive Behaviour for Learning

SEAC – School Education Advisory Committee SWPBS – School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support

# Executive summary

This literature review has been prepared by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the ACT Education Directorate's School Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). It provides details of key policy and practice being implemented internationally and in Australian jurisdictions, which aim to respond to student violence and bullying in the context of inclusive schools.

Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet to the issue of bullying and violence in schools. Overall the most recent evidence supports that SWPBS is the best tool available for addressing the issue, but there are key issues to be mindful of. For example, while it is noted that there appears to be a growing use of School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) for behaviour support in Australia, with a range of jurisdictions adopting Positive Behaviour interventions, the most recent research highlights that the international evidence on these approaches has limitations for the Australian context. Put simply, the bulk of research continues to emanate from the USA, and other international and cross-cultural research is thin on the ground.

Further research is needed in Australia to conclusively say whether the implementation of SWPBS has resulted in more productive and positive classrooms and increased teacher use of evidence-based practices (EPBs) for classroom management in our schools.

ARACY's review indicates that the SEAC can have a level of confidence that the PBL approach remains a valid means of managing complex needs and challenging behaviour in ACT schools. The evidence suggests that consistent implementation of all tiers can be expected to take up to 3-5 years and ongoing commitment to the program will reap the benefits of the approach in time.

To give the program the best chance of success, and leverage the investment already made, the Education Directorate may wish to consider extending the rollout to schools which have not yet adopted the approach and invest in ongoing training and support for those schools where it is in use. A peer network to share best practice, clear guidance on implementation fidelity at school and classroom levels, and effective evaluation, specifically including use of the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), will also support the program's sustainment and ongoing benefit.

# 1. Introduction

This literature review has been prepared by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the ACT Education Directorate's School Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). It provides details of key policy and practice being implemented internationally and in Australian jurisdictions, which aim to respond to student violence and bullying in the context of inclusive schools.

## 1.1 The Shaddock Report and Schools for All Program

The Schools for All Children and Young People Report of the Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour (the 'Shaddock Report') was released in November 2015 and made 50 recommendations on policy and practice in all ACT schools (Shaddock, 2015).

The Panel found that policy in other Australian educational jurisdictions tended to focus on whole school approaches to positive behaviour, teamwork at school level and the engagement of external expertise to assist schools with students and families who need intensive assistance.

The Shaddock report explained how traditional approaches to discipline and behaviour management are inadequate for many students, particularly those who experience the effects of trauma, illness, disability, and/or violent or chaotic home environments:

"It is inefficient and futile for schools to attempt to 'fix' these issues one at a time. A framework in which proactive support is provided for the behaviour of all students, and subsequently differentiated according to assessed need, is a more effective way to support the behaviour of those with complex needs and challenging behaviour." (Shaddock 2015, p.16)

The Panel noted that many education jurisdictions in many countries, including other Australian States and Territories, have experienced success with a 'universally designed' framework, the foundation for which is support for positive behaviour. A tiered model provides additional support for behaviour commensurate with students' assessed needs, delivering increasingly targeted, personalised support that may involve multidisciplinary and/or multiagency support for a small proportion of students with highly complex needs and behaviour.

As a result, the following recommendation was made by the Panel:

**Recommendation 9.1**: That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, (a) endorse School-Wide Positive Behavioural Support; (b) resource and support schools to implement the program for a minimum of three years; and (c) evaluate the success of the program.

*ACT Government Response to the Shaddock report*

The ACT Education Directorate accepted all of the Shaddock report's 50 recommendations, and in respect of Recommendation 9.1, stated the following:

"**Agreed**. ETD has negotiated with NSW to implement the Positive Behaviour Support in Schools program in 2016. The program will be evaluated and reported on following the first year of implementation. ETD will share the proposed program and outcomes with CE [Catholic Education Office] and AIS [Association of Independent Schools ACT]." (ACT Education and Training Directorate, 2015)

*Schools for All Program*

Following the Directorate's acceptance of the 50 recommendations, the Schools for All Program (the Program) was established – a three-year program of system reform (2016-2018), to progress the work related to the Shaddock report. The Program's webpage states the following in relation to creating its 'student-centred vision':

"The first year of work will focus on implementing the 50 recommendations with the next two years focused on ensuring that change is sustainable and effective. We will know we have succeeded when every teacher, school leader, support staff member, central office employee, parent/carer and student sees the issues posed by students with complex needs and challenging behaviour not as a problem but as an opportunity, invitation and challenge to further exemplify the inclusive vision of all ACT schools." [1]

It is understood from reports published on the Directorate's website that by June 2018 the last of the 50 recommendations were marked as 'closed' at the Schools for All Program Board meeting. In the final quarterly report for the Program, the following statement was made, on page 1, under the theme of 'improving student outcomes':

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[1] Retrieved from: https://www.education.act.gov.au/support-for-our-students/students-with- complex-needs-and-challenging-behaviours/Schools-for-All-Project#new

"Schools' understanding and management of student behaviour is shifting in a way that supports positive academic, behavioural and wellbeing outcomes for all students, as a growing number of schools (currently forty schools) have embraced the Positive Behaviour for Learning framework." (ACT Education and Training Directorate, 2018a)

In the Schools for All *Executive Summary – June 2018* the following was stated in relation to future steps, on page 3:

"…The evaluation will also continue to progress the Positive Behaviour for Learning, Continuum of Educational Support and Parental Engagement Evaluation Plans, each of which are case studies for the Schools for All Program Evaluation. The Final Report, expected to be completed in 2019, will detail the outcomes for students with complex needs and challenging behaviour in ACT schools, and will look at both academic and wellbeing measures. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the Schools for All Program in realising the objectives and outcomes sought by the program and make findings and recommendations based on quantitative and qualitative data. The Final Report will include additional measures of the broader cultural change outcomes that will be delivered by student-centred schools." (ACT Education and Training Directorate, 2018b)

## 1.2  Safe and Supportive Schools Policy

The Directorate's *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy* has been implemented in a staged approach since April 2016, following **Recommendation 4.1** of the Shaddock Report, that:

"ETD, CE, and each Independent School, review their policies and procedures with respect to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour to ensure that all schools have a comprehensive suite of relevant policies and procedures."

Around the same time, in 2016 the Australian Government commissioned a review and update of the *National Safe Schools Framework* (NSSF) to ensure its alignment with contemporary issues facing Australian school communities. First developed in 2003, the NSSF has remained the central national reference point on student safety and wellbeing for all state and territory governments, non-government education authorities and the Australian Government. In the time since its launch it has a number of reviews and revisions in order to respond to the changing nature of Australian society, particularly in relation to the education environment and the need to support school communities to address major issues that affect them.

The most recent review has led to a revision and renaming of the NSSF to the *Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*, introduced towards the end of 2018 (Education Services Australia, 2018a). Findings from the review of the NSSF state:

"The Framework [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework] is based on evidence that demonstrates the strong association between safety, wellbeing and learning… Schools play a significant role through the development and implementation of whole-school positive academic, social and emotional curricula. The new name reflects the need to address both the safety and wellbeing of school communities and to acknowledge the intrinsic relationship between these two core concepts." (Education Services Australia, 2018b)

ARACY has noted that the *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy* refers to the NSSF in section 4.1 under 'Context' but does not explicitly refer to the more recent Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (ASWF). However, it is understood by ARACY that the Policy "reflects the guiding principles outlined in the ASWF which assists school communities with developing student safety and wellbeing practices".[2]

## 1.3  Current Climate and Positive Behaviours for Learning

It is understood by ARACY that the Schools for All Program is now in a phase of consolidation, with the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy and Procedures in place and a growing number of ACT government schools 'embracing' Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) approaches, which aim to support schools to implement the Policy. As noted above, the ACT Government has determined that **all** government schools will adopt the PBL approach. ARACY understands that 51 of Canberra's public schools – around half – have commenced their PBL journey. It is not clear however, the extent to which the rollout has continued or the method by which implementation in individual schools has occurred. ARACY has not been supplied with information of this nature by the Directorate.

The issue of personal safety in ACT schools has been the focus of recent media attention following several incidences of student bullying and violence during Term 1, 2019 alone.[3] The volume of violent incidents against teaching staff (perpetrated by students and parents) has also been reported in local media.[4] ARACY understands that the volume of recorded incidents against teaching staff has been increasing as there has been an emphasis on reporting culture across the ACT Education system.

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[2] Taken from the RFQ, Statement of requirement, p.3

[3] E.g. https://www.smh.com.au/education/survey-asks-students-to-name-names-as-violence- concerns-continue-20190221-p50zbt.html and https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03- 19/instagram-snapchat-fight-videos-canberra-schools/10913576

[4] E.g. https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/5992804/200-cases-of-violence-against- teachers-in-first-month-back-at-school/

In response, the ACT Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA, has established a School Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to look into the issue and provide her with findings, in addition to recently passing a motion in the ACT Legislative Assembly for the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs to report on the management and minimisation of bullying and violence in ACT schools.
The Committee is required to complete its inquiry and table its final report by 24 October 2019.[5]

## 1.4 Literature Review

Given the current landscape, the ACT Government is seeking assurances that its response to bullying and violence in schools is robust and that the occurrence of instances is minimised to the extent possible.

ARACY has been commissioned to produce a review of the literature that provides details of key policy and practice being implemented internationally and in Australian jurisdictions, which aim to respond to student violence and bullying in the context of inclusive schools.

As stated in the RFQ, this literature review has focused on providing information on the following areas of enquiry:

1. Changes since the Shaddock Report's formation, utilising meta-analysis and systemic reviews to consider where best practice internationally and in Australian jurisdictions may exist;

2. Recent updates to the existing evidential base of best practice relating to creating safe and supportive schools;

3. Positive examples in relation to managing violence and bullying in schools including programs such as Positive Behaviours for Learning;

4. Key challenges and benefits in the approach to violence and bullying in schools;

5. Evaluation measures for programs being implemented in schools to support policies relating to violence and bullying;

6. Build on the Shaddock Report's evidence with contemporary research findings in relation to the implementation of Positive Behaviours for Learning in schools;

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[5] https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-education,-employment-and-youth-affairs/inquiry-into-the- management-and-minimisation-of-bullying-and-violence-in-act-schools

7. A progress summary of other jurisdictions or countries implementing the Positive Behaviours for Learning program;

8. An outline of the key thematics in improving social and emotional wellbeing in schools (programs, funding infrastructure);

9. A description of the limitations of the research into managing violence and bullying in schools; and

10. A summary of the levers that impact positively on managing violence and bullying in schools, for example timeliness and adequacy of teacher/staff training.

Given the significant work that took place to support the Shaddock report, this review has focused specifically on work that has occurred in the time since then (2015 onwards). ARACY has used the following keywords to search academic and other research databases for relevant literature:

- Creating / Promoting Safe and Supportive schools/ school environments

- Evaluating Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) approach

- Managing/Addressing bullying, harassment and violence in schools

- Managing/Addressing Complex and Challenging Behaviour in schools

- Management and minimisation of bullying and violence in schools

- Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) approach (and its parent program Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports)

- Positive Behaviour environments

- School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)

- Social and Emotional Learning Processes

- Supporting student behaviour

ARACY has also scanned key journals in the field, for example *Educational Psychology Review*, the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders,* and the *Journal of Behavioral Education*, to search for any particularly relevant information.

A final line of enquiry has been to follow up some of the key researchers who undertook evaluations of the NSW implementation of PBL to see if they have revisited this, or other behavioural interventions, in their more recent work.

The following review is structured in three key sections. Firstly, in Chapter 2 ("Current state of play") we discuss the recent evidence from both Australia and internationally, reviewing what has emerged in the period since 2015 in

the areas of school-wide positive behaviour approaches and best practice relating to creating safe and supportive schools. In Chapter 3 ("Challenges and limitations") we look at the challenges for implementation and what has emerged in terms of key thematics in improving social and emotional wellbeing in schools. Finally, in Chapter 4 ("Lessons from the review") we have reviewed the evidence to determine 'what works' in terms of implementation and sustainability of approaches, as well as methods for supporting continual improvement. We conclude the review with a summative discussion of the findings and implications of these.

## 1.5 A note on limitations

ARACY has been tasked with conducting a review of literature across a range of aspects related to school violence and bullying, largely in response to recent media reports regarding the prevalence of this issue in ACT schools.

Without access to data on the implementation of PBL in ACT schools (e.g. how schools have been selected, which schools are involved, implementation processes and timelines, etc), nor the specific incidents of violence and bullying, it is not possible for ARACY to comment on the link between rates of bullying and violence and the impact of PBL on those rates. Instead we have focused on what the available evidence tells us about responding to violence and bullying in the context of inclusive schools.

## 1.6 A note on terminology

It should be noted that throughout this review, a range of terms are used to refer to positive behaviour support and positive behaviour approaches.

Generally, we use the term School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) to refer generically to approaches, programs, and policies which take a whole- school approach to engendering positive behaviour in a school setting.

The term Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is used to refer specifically to the approach local and state education agencies across the United States and territories. The US Department of Education describes PBIS as an "implementation framework for maximizing the selection and use of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along a multi-tiered continuum that supports the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of all students."

The term Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) is used to refer to the approach endorsed by the ACT Education Directorate and used in ACT schools, which is based on PBIS.

Other terms are also used as they are referred to in the literature.

# 2. Current state of play

In this section, we discuss the evidence from both Australia and internationally, reviewing what has emerged in the period since 2015 in the areas of school-wide positive behaviour approaches and best practice relating to creating safe and supportive schools.

## 2.1 Addressing violence and bullying in schools

It is understood that School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) approaches that implement a range of complementary approaches to prevent as well as respond to bullying behaviours, tailored to the context of the school, and integrated into existing systems, are likely to be more effective than approaches delivered in isolation (White, 2019).

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation assert that often programs are developed in reaction to particular incidents and that these reactionary programs lack the capacity to effect long-term change. They instead advocate a preventative whole-school framework that incorporates the following principals (The Alannah & Madeline Foundation, 2018):

- Universal programs are better than programs delivered only to 'at risk' students

- Embed relevant principles and processes into the curriculum

- Start early in a student's life, including parents and childcare workers

- Plan for sustainability as long-term implementations work best

- Involve parents and the community

- Use multiple strategies and sequences that promote social skills and prosocial behaviour

- Ensure teachers' behaviour is consistent with the values they advocate.

SWPBS that incorporates all aspects of the school community in the prevention of bullying and violence, is in line with the recently updated *Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*. Effective practices outlined in this Framework include collaborating with students to develop strategies to address bullying in online and physical spaces, building partnerships with families and communities, and actively seek the involvement of staff, students and families in the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour (Education Services Australia, 2018a).

At a recent conference in Queensland, Tim Lewis, Professor of Special Education at the University of Missouri and expert in PB, used a keynote presentation to address the issue of maintaining momentum with SWPBS (Lewis, 2017). He emphasised the challenge of maintaining and sustaining a school-wide approach in the face of issues such as spikes in rates of bullying:

"I characterise PBL (note, PBL used here in the generic sense) as a problem-solving framework. …What I tell schools is this, "If you've adopted that problem-solving framework, if you're building a continuum of academic and behaviour supports, you are prepared for whatever comes down the pike." … A couple of years ago in the US, everything was about bullying and some of our PBS [Positive Behaviour Support] schools have stopped what they're doing and they're like, "Well, we've got to adopt a bullying curriculum now. Our district is saying it's mandated, we got to do it," and I would say, "no, stop. You, in essence, are setup much better than any other school to address bullying. If you think about it, bullying, we address the perpetrator, we support the victim but if we're really going to get ahead of bullying, it's about all the other kids. If we're developing this notion of a continuum and we're working with all the students around those universals and we're providing some small group support for the victims and we're developing those individual interventions for the perpetrators, you are doing what the research and literature tells us to do." (Lewis, 2017)

*Case study: Implementation of an anti-bullying intervention in Australia*

A study out of Western Australia published in 2018 conducted a trial of the Friendly Schools Project intervention which aimed to reduce bullying and aggression among all students who had recently transitioned to secondary school. The project model was a multi-tier intervention encompassing classroom curriculum, school policies and procedures, the social and physical environment, pastoral care approaches and school-home-community links. The study comprised of 3,462 students from 21 Catholic education secondary schools in Perth. The trial was found to have reduced bullying among students during the year following their transition to secondary school, however these positive outcomes were no longer reflected by the end of the second year of secondary school. These results may have been impacted by diminished implementation fidelity and further research could explore this (Cross et al., 2018).

An aspect of the trial included providing implementation support. We discuss implementation further in the following chapter, however in terms of this trial, the following implementation support was provided to school staff each year (Cross et al., 2018):

- A two-hour in school training session for all school staff to raise awareness of the approach, establish common understandings and consistency.

- A six-hour group training for school implementation teams which included a manual to guide on whole school implementation.

- A one-hour coaching session four times a year for the school implementation teams to assist the progression of the staged implementation, identify staff and student needs, and select appropriate strategies.

- A two-hour in school training for teaching staff who were delivering the classroom curriculum.

## 2.2.  Australian research on School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support

A 2015 study out of Macquarie University assessed the level of implementation of SWPBS and the association between the level of implementation and perceptions of behaviour problems. The study involved 52 staff members from 31 government and non-government schools in New South Wales, the ACT, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. The results provide evidence of a positive association between implementation of SWPBS and reduced behavioural issues. Higher levels of implementation were associated with lower levels of perceived behaviour problems in the participating schools (De Nobile et al.,2015).

Conversely, a recent journal article (Armstrong, 2018) raises concerns over the success of SWPBS. The author asserts that despite widespread trials of SWPBS in the US education system, SWPBS has not become mainstream in the USA. The article highlights that over the last ten years the use of suspension and exclusion has increased in the US, therefore suggesting that SWPBS has not been successful in this regard. In examining this perspective, it is important to observe that the increase in the use of suspension and exclusion is in relation to the whole US school system, not specifically those schools implementing a SWPBS approach.

Other recent evidence stemming from Australia shows that well-designed school-based interventions can significantly reduce bullying, with SWPBS approaches being more successful than single focused approaches, such as classroom curriculum learning or traditional disciplinary actions only, particularly when they include socio-ecological strategies delivered in the classroom, school and home and at the individual level (Cross et al., 2018).

## 2.3   Figure 1: Progress of other jurisdictions or countries implementing the Positive Behaviours for Learning program

| Jurisdiction / country | Holistic approach or individual schools/ clusters | Date of implementation | Date of evaluation/ update | Summary of progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | Approximately 940 public schools trained in Positive Behaviour for Learning (42%) (NSW Department of Education) | Progressive rollout since 2005 | UWS evaluation 2008 (Mary Mooney et al., 2008) | An August 2017 NSW Ombudsman inquiry into behaviour management in schools made mention of PBL in NSW, including the following (Ombudsman NSW, 2017): "To date, the framework has been implemented in individual schools across NSW. As at 20 March 2017, there were 1,083 NSW public schools (50%) implementing PBL, comprising: <ul><li>770 mainstream primary schools (48%)</li><li>223 mainstream secondary schools (60%)</li><li>53 SSPs (48%)</li><li>37 central schools (57%)"</li></ul> "Since July 2016, the department has allocated $15 million of additional funding over three years to fund 36 dedicated positions to support the implementation of PBL in public schools in NSW. **The department has advised that it will carefully monitor PBL over the next two years, to examine (among other things) the extent to which it makes a difference**; and how greater flexibility in the delivery of the framework may be achieved, noting that it is premised on being implemented with fidelity." |
| VIC | Victoria employs a coaching model supported by a central, state-wide unit (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018b). No information about current level of implementation or numbers of schools involved. | State wide unit commenced roll out in 2017. (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018b). | No overall evaluation yet undertaken. Schools with PBS in place prior to this to be evaluated according to current framework (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018b). | The first objective of the 2018 Victorian SWPBS initiative is to support school based teams to implement tier I of SWPBS with fidelity through high quality training, ongoing coaching and the use of valid and reliable evaluation tools (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018a). A conference was held from 14-15 March 2019 for "teachers, school leaders, school support services (SSS) and early childhood educators to build their skills and to improve the delivery and sustainability of positive climates for learning" (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018b) |

| Jurisdiction / country | Holistic approach or individual schools/ clusters | Date of im-plementation | Date of evaluation/ update | Summary of progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| QLD | "Many QLD state schools" (no further detail available).<br><br>The information available suggests an opt in approach:<br><br>"Schools submit an expression of interest to their PBL regional coordinator to receive training" (Queensland Government, 2019a) | | Referenced in findings from the Queensland 2017 school reviews included (Queensland Government, 2017). | Expected outcomes of PBL implementation:<br><br>• improved academic outcomes<br><br>• reduced rates of problem behaviour across the school<br><br>• raised positive public profile of the school<br><br>• increased consistency of practices<br><br>• improvements of staff and student wellbeing<br><br>• increased teaching time<br><br>• improved school climate.<br><br>(Queensland Government, 2019c)The Queensland Department of Education hosts a biennial Queensland Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Conference, (this year) taking place 24-26 June 2019. (Queensland Government, 2019b)<br><br>Findings from the Queensland 2017 school reviews included (Queensland Government, 2017):<br><br>"As a result of all school improvement efforts, positive changes were apparent in student learning in 78 per cent of cohort schools. First of all, in almost a quarter of cohort schools, there was some evidence of improved student attendance or behaviour. Teachers and students spoke positively regarding the changes in student behaviour over the past 12 months and **credited much of this change to the school's continued focus on PBL**." |

| WA | Opt-In approach: Individual schools interested in involvement submit a request to the Department's School for Special Education Needs: Behaviour and Engagement (School for Special Education Needs: Behaviour and Engagement). | 2009 | The WA model is called Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) rather than PBL but follows the same three tiered structure as PBL, with a focus on a continuum of supports (Government | In March 2014 the Western Australian Auditor General submitted a report to Parliament on behaviour management in schools, in regards to PBL they found the following (Office of the Auditor General Western Australia, 2014): "Training and Positive Behaviour Support are not effectively targeted so schools and staff that need it most may miss out" |

| Jurisdiction / country | Holistic approach or individual schools/ clusters | Date of im-plementation | Date of evaluation/ update | Summary of progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | In the 5 years period (from 2009-2014), it has been implemented in 132 schools since 2009 as of March 2014 (Office of the Auditor General Western Australia, 2014). | | of Western Australia: Department of Education). | "**DoE does not have a plan for rolling out Positive Behaviour Support in schools in spite of its apparent success**. The PBS framework has been implemented in 132 identified schools since 2009. PBS is an approach to whole- of-school change that uses data and information about teaching and behaviour management to improve student outcomes. To implement it schools must have whole-of- school commitment, invest their own resources and work with DoE's specialist support staff. Our sample schools and survey results indicate that **whole-of-school behaviour has improved in schools that are using it**. DoE endorsed PBS in 2013 but has no policy or plan for encouraging more schools to take it up. There is limited information for schools about PBS on DoE's website." |
| NT | No apparent structure in place for PBL or SWPBS. | Individual schools have implemented PBL or SWPBS. | | |
| SA | No apparent structure in place for PBL or SWPBS. | Individual schools have implemented PBL or SWPBS. | | |
| Tasmania | No apparent structure in place for PBL or SWPBS. | | | From the Tas Dept for Education website: "Schools are also supported with resources such as the Respectful Schools Support Team, the Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour Resource and the dedicated Respectful Relationships website." (Tas Department of Education, 2018) |
| New Zealand | "PB4L is delivered by the Ministry of Education in partnership with a range of organisations and groups, including Resource Teachers: | Commenced in 2010 with an initial 86 schools, as of | A three-phase evaluation occurred in June 2014, June 2015 and August 2015. | June 2014 "The main themes … from school and Ministry of Education staff reports were that SW was supporting improvements in school culture and consistency of practice in approaches to |

| Jurisdiction / country | Holistic approach or individual schools/ clusters | Date of im-plementation | Date of evaluation/ update | Summary of progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), non-government organisations, and universities. The Ministry of Education continues to work collaboratively with other Government agencies, such as the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, and the New Zealand Police, to ensure that PB4L is effectively contributing to better public services (including the Government's priority result areas and targets). Some PB4L initiatives are part of the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project" (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2015). | April 2018 PBL was in 879 schools (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2018). | | behaviour. Staff at most of the schools that had been part of SW since 2010/11 considered that SW was supporting a wide range of changes to their school. Key changes … include: a more respectful, inclusive, and positive culture; fewer major behaviour incidents; an improved classroom environment and student engagement, with teachers spending less time managing behaviour; the development of an effective SW team which uses data to improve school practice; the building of collaborative ways of working with staff and students to improve school practice" (Ministry of Education, NZ, 2014)

June 2015

"At the seven case study schools, nearly all the staff and students we spoke to were strongly supportive of PB4L-SW, mainly because the initiative had assisted them to build a more collaborative and positive school community" (Ministry of Education NZ, 2015a).

August 2015

"Across a range of schools, School-Wide is **resulting in many of the expected short-term shifts in practice and outcomes**. A focus on School-Wide is being maintained in the short term at many schools. A few schools, particularly large secondary, may require adjustments to the support and resourcing model to fully implement the core features of School-Wide. Some schools are developing strategies to "keep School-Wide fresh" in the longer term. Other schools require more active support to address challenges to maintaining School-Wide over time" (Ministry of Education NZ, 2015b) |

References can be found at Appendix 2.

## 2.4 What can be established by the review

Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet to the issue of bullying and violence in schools. Overall the most recent evidence supports that SWPBS is the best tool available for addressing the issue, but there are key issues of which to be mindful.

Across the evidence, we found that several themes emerged:

- That there appears to be a growing use of SWPBS for behaviour support in Australia

- That the international evidence on these approaches has limitations for the Australian context

- That teacher preparation in terms of behaviour management is lacking

- That teacher stress may have negative flow-on effects to student behaviour.

We discuss each of these in turn.

### Growing use of universal school-based interventions in Australia

The Shaddock report noted that a number of jurisdictions had implemented a SWPBS approach to assist them to plan and implement practices across the whole school to promote positive behaviour and wellbeing, with targeted approaches for students with higher levels of need.

While the report did not specify the jurisdictions where SWPBS was implemented, a recent article indicates that many schools in Australia have adopted the SWPBS approach to address behaviour support, with education departments in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria formally endorsing the approach (Hepburn & Beamish, 2019). According to the authors, in the last two years complaints from parents and student advocates about the disciplinary practices used in Australian government schools, and concerns about rising rates of suspensions and exclusions, have led to Ombudsman reports in Victoria and NSW and the commissioning of an independent review in Queensland.

These statewide reports found an overreliance on exclusionary discipline such as suspensions and expulsions, and the limited use of positive behavior support practices. The Queensland review (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017) focused specifically on students with disability and recommended more effective implementation of SWPBS as a whole school approach for positive behaviour support, together with increased training and capacity building in behaviour management for teachers and school leaders.

### International evidence has limitations for the Australian context

According to Yeung et al (2016), there is limited research available on the sustainability of positive behaviour intervention programs in countries outside the USA. Additionally, there has been a heavy reliance on US personnel to deliver training overseas, and there remains uncertainties between fidelity and adaption in an international context.

Further, there is international review-level evidence that SWPBS can have beneficial effects on violence and bullying in school settings. However, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about which programs or components are the most effective, as all the reviews found that while some programmes were effective in some aspects of bullying prevention, others were not (White, 2019).

A recent study in the domestic context emphasises that research is needed in Australia to see if the implementation of SWPBS has resulted in more productive and positive classrooms and increased teacher use of evidence- based practices (EPBs) for classroom management in our schools. It remains to be seen if teachers in schools adopting the SWPBS approach in Australia are more likely to know and use the EPBs for classroom management, which are promoted within the preventative schoolwide approach of SWPBS (Hepburn & Beamish, 2019).

### Teacher preparation

It has been argued that behaviour management has not been sufficiently addressed in preservice teacher training (Yeung et al., 2016). Beginning teachers often complain about the inadequacy of teacher education programs in preparing them for classroom and behaviour management, and new teachers often feel overwhelmed by the disruptive behaviours of students.
Oliver et. al. (2019) state that teachers lack adequate training on classroom management, leading to an increased need for research in how to effectively train pre-service and in-service teachers. A Grattan Institute report (Goss, Sonnemann, & Griffiths, 2017) called for better teacher preparation in classroom management and evidence-based practices to be included in teacher education courses.

In the absence of appropriate training in SWPBS new teachers are likely to respond to students' disruptive behaviours with a reactive approach (Yeung et al., 2016).

Behaviour management training in teacher education programs is often dominated by theoretical and philosophical model without a solid evidence- based approach, such as Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS). In Australia, despite the inclusion of behaviour management in

teacher education programs, time spent on the practical aspects of SWPBS is limited compared with theoretical and philosophical models (O'Neill, 2014).

At a systemic level, the most recent Australian review of approaches to classroom management (Hepburn et al., 2019) has affirmed the critical need for pre-service teacher education programs to be adjusted to include more classroom management content, a focus on evidence-based practices, and more opportunities for pre-service teachers to practise classroom management in real-life settings.

## Teacher stress

It is well documented that educators are at significant risk of experiencing high levels of workplace stress.[6] Research studies predict that reduction in work-based stress for teachers and its adverse psychological outcomes for individual professionals are likely to have tangible positive consequences for their capacity to respond to behaviours by students (Armstrong, 2018).

According to the author, an important and methodologically robust, recent study by Oberle and Schonert-Rechl (2016) highlights the phenomena of a 'burnout cascade':

"…as teachers feel overworked while lacking support and resources, they increasingly experience occupational stress and tend to use fewer responsive and more reactive and punitive classroom management techniques. This leads to deterioration in classroom climate in which the emotional needs of students are not met. As a result, students exhibit increased troublesome behaviours which ultimately leads to increases in stress for students and teachers, steadily contributing to teacher burnout and a negative classroom environment." (31)

It is suggested that knowledge about teacher burnout is important for educational practice and policy because it implies that targeted intervention and support for teachers experiencing (or at risk of) burnout will also have beneficial, flow-on consequences for the behaviour and welfare of their students (Armstrong, 2018).

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[6] For example: https://www.news.com.au/finance/work/at-work/australian-teachers-are-at-the- end-of-their-tethers-and-abandoning-the-profession-sparking-a-crisis/news-story/43c1948d6def66e0351433463d76fcda

# 3. Challenges and limitations

In this chapter we look at the challenges for implementation and what has emerged in terms of key thematics in improving social and emotional wellbeing in schools.

## 3.1 Implementation fidelity

A range of studies conducted over the last 20 years indicate that carefully implemented School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) is effective in reducing suspension rates and disciplinary referrals (Armstrong, 2018). A key theme across the literature is the importance of implementation fidelity. The literature indicates that Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs with high 'implementation fidelity' – whether a program is implemented accurately by the educator, as designed and tested by the developers – will have a more positive impact on student outcomes. If implementation fidelity is not maintained, then suboptimal outcomes may occur (Yeung et al., 2016).

A challenge to the uptake of SWPBS in the US appears to be the school wide systemic changes that effective implementation requires (Armstrong, 2018). This comes with the warning that "Without adequate implementation, the [positive] effects may not be observed, and the risk of abandonment increases" (Armstrong, 2018). The PBIS approach limits this challenge:

"Education is replete with examples of excellent ideas and practices that have proven too challenging to implement with a level of precision that results in student benefits. By contrast, the core features of PBIS have been found to build on existing school strengths and be adoptable with high fidelity." (Horner & Macaya, 2018)

Implementation fidelity can be facilitated by having clearly articulated definitions and steps for delivery of practices including effective information dissemination for all involved, regular and ongoing monitoring of the use of the practices, and periodic performance feedback (Mitchell, Hirn, & Lewis, 2017).

*Measuring Implementation Fidelity*

In determining how accurately a SWPBS program has been implemented, as it was designed and tested, there are a range of ways to check fidelity. For example, observing where the intervention happens and providing feedback, or asking teachers to self-rate well they think they're doing and where they could use additional support. Schools implementing SWPBS or similar have a range of measurement options to determine how well they've done at implementing systems to improve student behaviour.

The PBIS.org site lists the following measures to address fidelity:

- Team Implementation Checklist (TIC)

- PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)

- School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET)

- School-wide Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)

- Benchmark of Advanced Tiers (BAT)

- Monitoring Advanced Tiers Tool (MATT)

- Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)

It is understood by ARACY that the Directorate is currently using the SAS, SET and BoQ measures to evaluate the implementation of PBL in schools that have adopted the intervention.

This review has established that the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) is considered an optimal survey to take as a team. It is described as an efficient, reliable survey assessing how closely a school implements the 'critical elements of PBIS'. Regardless of whether a school is in its first year of implementing PBL or has been sustaining PBL for over a decade, it is suggested that taking the TFI annually is something every PBIS school should do.[7]

NSW Education has a range of Research Validated PBL Evaluation Tools listed on its website, to assist schools determine which measure is best suited to the aspect of PBL being measured (reference).[8] However, ARACY has also established that the TFI is based on the features and items of existing PBIS fidelity surveys (e.g., SET, BoQ, TIC, SAS, BAT, MATT) and can be used to 'replace any or all of them'.[9]

## 3.2 Sustainability

Along with implementation, a key challenge of SWPBS is sustainability. A 2016 study from the US showed when SWPBS approaches are abandoned, they are usually abandoned within the first three years of implementation (Rhonda Nese et al., 2016).

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[7] The TFI is available here: https://www.pbisapps.org/Applications/Pages/Tiered-Fidelity- Inventory-(TFI).aspx

[8] Available here: https://pbl.schools.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/doe/sws/schools/p/pbl/localcontent/pbl_evaluation tools.pdf

[9] Retrieved from: https://www.pbisapps.org/Applications/Pages/Tiered-Fidelity-Inventory-(TFI).aspx

Yeung et al. (2016) clarify that sustainability should not just look at the length of time that the approach is implemented for, but should also incorporate quality, integrity, and contextual factors. They summarise that factors that enable sustainability include ongoing professional development and technical assistance, administrator support for school team, emphasis on classroom- level implementation and fidelity and effective evaluation of implementation fidelity and sustainability.

In contrast to factors that enable sustainability, factors that impede sustainability are a lack of administrator direction and leadership, scepticism regarding the need for tier one interventions, feelings of hopelessness about change, philosophical differences, and staff feeling disenfranchised from each other and the administrator or the mission of the school (Yeung et al., 2016). A number of these impeding factors relate to individual and team confidence.

A recent study from 2018 examined the correlation between staff confidence and sustainability of SWPBS. This study found that confidence was a significant predictor in the sustainability or abandonment of SWPBS. Their results showed no significant differences in confidence levels between different job positions within schools. This same study indicated that most participants learned about the approach through training provided at their schools and that only 17% had received relevant training to this at University (Chitiyo, May, Mathende, & Dzenga, 2018). The limitation of this study is that it is US-based and therefore findings would need to be localised to the Australian context. However, it remains a significant theme that building staff confidence is important to sustainability and a SWPBS approach should include building the capability and confidence of teachers to embed the approach into their classrooms and curriculum (Yeung et al., 2016).

### Systems

An article examining the future of positive behaviour supports highlights the need to better define the systems associated with effective practices. They outline that practices are the procedures that make a difference in the behaviour of students, while systems are the elements more likely to affect the behaviour of those providing support (Horner & Sugai, 2017). For example, a recurring theme in SWPBS is the need for systems to train and support teachers (Oliver, Lambert, & Mason, 2017). As such, establishing effective systems could contribute to sustainability in current schools as well as better facilitate a broader uptake of PBL.

### Whole-school ownership of SWPBS

The literature continues to support the view that effective and sustainable positive behaviour supports needs to be a whole-school approach:

"Whole-school strategies that implement a range of complementary approaches to prevent as well as respond to bullying behaviours, tailored to the context of the school, and integrated into existing systems, are likely to be more effective than approaches delivered in isolation." (White, 2019)

SWPBS requires a broad range of resources and practices targeting classroom settings, non-classroom settings and individual students (Oliver et al., 2017). As such, pockets of individual staff members would lack the time and resources needed to implement and sustain the approach alone. For this reason, SWPBS needs to incorporate the whole school community. A whole- school approach allows for a collective vision to be developed and for the school community to work together (Mitchell et al., 2017).

As discussed by Yeung et al., administrator support is an important aspect for sustainability. The need for administrator support includes administration agreeing with the SWPBS approach, championing a whole-school approach, and allowing resources for staff training and implementation activities. The most significant impact of administrator support is the contribution it makes to other factors that have an even greater impact on sustainability. These are team functioning and team use of data for decision making (Yeung et al., 2016).

A range of literature outlines the implementation component of establishing a SWPBS team (Yeung et al., 2016) (Horner & Macaya, 2018; Mary Mooney & Katrina Barker, 2008). These teams generally represent aspects of the whole- school community and are responsible for driving implementation, coordinating professional development and monitoring data. Although this is a strategy that can be a necessary part of implementation, there are challenges associated with this also. The school administration and team needs to implement and engage the school community in such a way that SWPBS is widely held to be the responsibility of everyone in the school community, not simply something delegated to the team alone.

## 3.3   Other key thematics

### Clarity of pathways

Under SWPBS behaviour support is viewed as a continuum, with behaviour supports being available at each of the three tiers (Yeung et al., 2016).
Horner and Macaya (2018) assert that it is at the 'middle' tier (also referred to as Tier II) that supports are most often missed. By establishing clear systems of reporting, including definitions of behaviour to be reported, pathways between tiers can become clearer. One goal of these systems is to increase the consistency of staff judgement, thereby increasing the consistency of how the SWPBS is applied within the school (Yeung et al., 2016).

### Time

In 2018 the UK-based Education Empowerment Foundation published a guide to implementation in schools. This guide asserts that implementation needs to be treated as a process, not an event. It advises schools to allow enough time for effective implementation, particularly in the preparation stage (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018). For a school to effectively adopt Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) usually requires one to three years, along with active directorate level support (Horner & Macaya, 2018).

A study published in 2018, that covered 708 public elementary, middle, and high schools in the US assessed the time between initial training and adequate implementation of Tier I SWPBS over five (5) years. Significantly, it was found that the time needed for adequate implementation varied across the different levels of the school system:

"On average, elementary schools reached adequate implementation after 2 years, middle schools reached adequate implementation after 2.4 years, and high schools reached adequate implementation after 3 years." (R. Nese, Nese, McIntosh, Mercer, & Kittelman, 2018)

Therefore, although most schools overall may achieve implementation within one to three years, multilevel implementation support for three to five years is recommended in order for implementation to be sustained long term (R. Nese et al., 2018).

### Cost

The cost of SWPBS is a factor that has a bearing on effective implementation as well as sustainability. Implementation of Tier I and II often involves the need for external supports. Wherever external supports are required, it is common to have concerns over the financial sustainability of the approach over the long term (Yeung et al., 2016). The Washington Institute of Public Policy (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2018) recently performed a cost benefit analysis of SWPBS which found a 70% chance that the practice will produce benefits greater than the costs.

### Professional development

The need for ongoing professional development is a reoccurring theme when it comes to sustainability. Teachers need to be trained and continually supported when it comes to using data to inform decision making at a classroom level as well as at an individual student level. Professional development alone may not be sufficient for this, ongoing technical assistance

should also be provided (Yeung et al., 2016). Literature in this area indicates that professional development that includes theory and discussion alone does not effectively translate into classroom practices. Instead what is required in

addition to professional development is coaching through technical assistance and performance feedback. In one study, this multicomponent approach resulted in the transfer of skills to classroom settings for 95% of the participants (Mitchell et al., 2017 citing Joyce and Showers, 2002).

### Tailoring to need

It is important to continue to focus on the tailored nature of SWPBS across primary schools versus secondary schools, as well as school to school. For example, due to the more complex nature of relationships in a secondary school setting, successful programs that have worked in primary schools may not work in secondary schools (Cross et al., 2018).

# 4. Lessons from the review

In this chapter, we present our review of the evidence to determine 'what works' in terms of implementation and sustainability of approaches, as well as methods for supporting continual improvement.

In revisiting the Shaddock report we have determined that not only are the findings relating to Recommendation 9.1 sound, but that they still hold currency – particularly in relation to statements about procedural integrity and treatment fidelity: "…it is one thing to identify a practice that all schools should be using but it is an entirely different matter to extend the model to a large system, for example, ACT Public Schools or Catholic Schools, and to do so in a way that is sustained." (Shaddock, 2015)

Indeed, in determining the 'what works' our findings focus on those practices required for ensuring a) implementation fidelity and b) sustainability of PBL.

## 4.1    Implementation fidelity

### Stages of implementation and common errors

In a recent paper on building safe and effective school environments, the authors argue that part of any effective educational effort will be proactive and sustained attention to the social competence of students. "This means more than teaching social skills, but establishing schools as learning communities with predictable, consistent, positive and safe social cultures." (Horner & Macaya, 2018)

The authors emphasise that adoption for effective educational practices can occur quickly for some smaller practices but is more likely to consume two to four years for larger efforts. They go on to state that an important contribution from the implementation science literature is identification of four stages that typically guide adoption of new practices – and that ignoring these stages often leads to school personnel launching training efforts too early or shifting support for implementation away from a school before adequate fidelity has been achieved.

These stages include:

- **Stage 1 – Exploration** of a new practice: considering a new approach or practice and examining data to determine, for example, if a problem or deficit exists, and consideration of whether the core features that research has shown to be effective are (or are not) already in place.

- **Stage 2 – Installation**: this involves establishing the context to support effective implementation for successful adoption prior to launching major

training efforts.

- **Stage 3 – Initial implementation**: this is the stage at which direct training, coaching and support of personnel is delivered. This includes the time from initial training until the educational practices are implemented with criterion level fidelity.

- **Stage 4 – Scaling and Sustaining**: this stage involves activities designed to ensure that any educational practice be implemented with continued improvement processes, regular review and ongoing adaption to changes in the cultural and organisational needs of the context. Importantly, the variables needed to achieve Stage 3 (initial implementation) are often different to those needed for scaling and sustaining effective practices (Horner & Macaya, 2018).

The authors note that these stages of implementation are helpful in avoiding three common errors in the implementation process, namely:

1. **Scheduling and delivering staff training too soon** – it is important to take the time to establish agreement about the need and value of a practice or system to help ensure successful adoption. For example, if training is delivered before the Exploration stage, or while staff believe the training is unnecessary, contextually appropriate or effective, the training is unlikely to result in a positive effect.

2. **Launching practices without organisational systems needed for initial or sustained implementation** – installing the core systems needed for successful implementation is a vital but an oft-missed stage of implementation. Training teams to meet, use data and make decision is important to ensure local culture and values guide implementation, but if the training occurs and the teams do not have scheduled time to meet, the teams do not have access to the data they have been taught to use, or the teams lack the authority to act on their decisions, then the training will have little impact. Put simply, investment in resources matters.

3. **Withdrawing attention and support after reaching minimally acceptable Tier 1 implementation** – too often the assumption is that if a school is able to implement initial fidelity with Tier 1 practices then they should have all they need for sustained and elaborated implementation of Tier II and III practices. The four stages of implementation (outlined on the previous page) illustrate that what is needed for initial adoption is seldom sufficient for sustained, elaborated and/or scaled adoption. The authors quote another recent study to emphasise this point:

"Implementing PBIS at Tier II and III requires investment in personnel with behaviour support expertise, and sustained implementation requires investment in organizational systems with ongoing review of fidelity and impact data by local teams." (Horner, Sugai & Fixsen, 2017)

### *Putting evidence to work – a guide to implementation*

Our review uncovered a relatively new resource for schools, *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation*, published in the UK (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018). The resource aims to help senior leaders develop a better understanding of how to make changes to teaching practice by offering practical and evidence-informed recommendations for effective implementation. The guide starts with two important underlying factors that they believe influence a school's ability to implement effectively:

a) Treating implementation as a process, not an event; and

b) School leadership and climate, environments conducive to good implementation.

The remainder of the guide is organised around the four well-established stages of implementation, similar to those discussed in the previous section: Explore, Prepare, Deliver,

Sustain – with actionable recommendations at each stage.

Importantly, although presented discretely, the authors emphasise that the stages inevitably overlap, and so should be treated as an overall guide rather than a blueprint.

**Figure 2** shows a summary of the recommendations as a cycle which works through the four implementation stages.
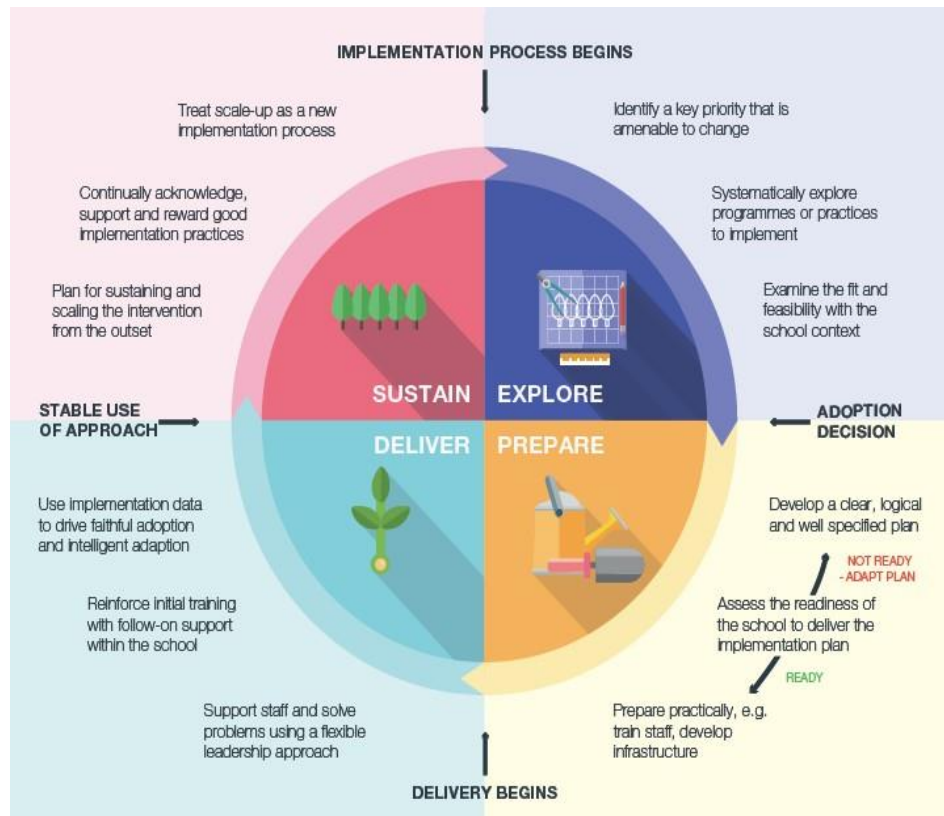


*Fig 2: Implementation can be described as a series of stages relating to thinking about, preparing for, delivering, and sustaining change.*

**A final word on implementation**

In his keynote presentation at a 2017 PLB Conference in Brisbane, Tim Lewis, emphasised the challenge of maintaining and sustaining a school-wide intervention program like PBL:

"So maintaining implementation and fidelity is hard work. Why would we bother? … We're affecting the most vulnerable, high risk kids. This is why we continue. This is why we invest. …You've got to remember that building a complete continuum is a marathon, not a sprint. Let's hope it's not a real critical emergency. You have to give yourself time.
*Implementation science teaches us that it takes three to five years to change organisations. To make this feel like it's a part of how you 'do business', so hang in there. Use some of the lessons we've learned over the years". (Lewis, 2017)*

## 4.2    Sustainability

*Key factors for sustainability*

In a recent Australian study, it was found that the factors for sustainability outlined in the literature can be summarised in four essential components (Yeung et al., 2016):

1. Ongoing professional development and technical assistance

2. Administrator support for the school team

3. Emphasis on classroom-level implementation and fidelity

4. Effective evaluation of implementation fidelity and sustainability.

In discussing each of the components in detail, the authors emphasise that given the interrelationship between the different dimensions, a holistic approach to addressing sustainability by actively addressing all dimensions should be considered.

They use a tetrahedron diagram to conceptualise the relationships between these four dimensions, as shown in **Figure 3**:
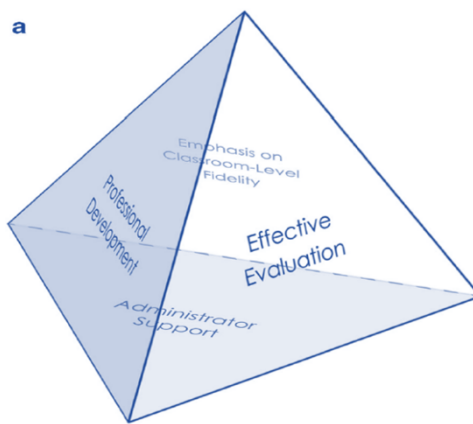


*Fig 3: 3D sustainability tetrahedron for positive behaviour interventions (Yeung et al., 2016)*

### In-service teacher training and support

Importantly, in the research above (Yeung et al., 2016) highlight the importance of classroom fidelity to the successful implementation of positive behaviour interventions, based on evidence that implementation of positive behaviour support practices at the classroom level is a key predictor of effective schoolwide implementation. It has been established that high regard for positive behaviour interventions at a school-level does not necessarily indicate high implementation fidelity at the classroom level, therefore in- service teacher training becomes a major point to consider (Yeung et al., 2016).

According to Hepburn et. al (2019), taken as a whole, accumulating evidence on the supports for teacher implementation of evidence-based practices for classroom management (all of which emanates from the USA), is pointing to

the need for quality preservice and in-service training in classroom management, preferably with follow-up coaching support to ensure effective implementation of practices.

In a variety of situations, individual teachers may rely on ineffective or nonevidence-based strategies or receive incomplete training or misinterpret professional assistance towards implementing practices consistent with the principles of SWPBS. Therefore, extra attention should be focused on ongoing coaching after initial training for classroom-level fidelity (Yeung et al., 2016).

Positive results demonstrated in several studies from the USA strengthen the argument for coaching and performance feedback to be incorporated into ongoing professional learning activities. Indeed, it is suggested that teachers should receive coaching, which not only focuses on underlying beliefs and practices, but also supports teachers in collecting and analysing classroom behaviour data to inform student interventions (Yeung et al., 2016).

### Peer mentoring/sharing practice

Peer support and sharing of good practice supports implementation and celebrates success. Conversely, schools and educators acting in isolation can prove detrimental to the spread of good practice approaches. It is recommended that school teams meet regularly with coaches and teams from other schools to share and build up their knowledge of PBIS implementation (Mathews, McIntosh, Frank, & May, 2013).

### Integrating PBL with other initiatives

Many of the initiatives and activities schools and teachers are expected to conduct can have similar or complementary goals. Explicitly identifying and prioritising these common goals ensures the best use of resources – thereby increasing efficiency and ensuring effectiveness as well as reducing the burden of implementation on school staff. The integration of mutually supportive prevention programs into school-wide interventions such as PBL, referred to by some as 'braiding', is well regarded for sustainability.

Kent McIntosh, Director of Educational and Community Supports, a research unit in the College of Education, University of Oregon, asserts that connecting PBL to other initiatives and explicitly 'braiding' them together will help to ensure that the intervention is not simply an add-on but integrated as a successful component of the SWPBS (McIntosh, 2019).

McIntosh identifies three necessary stages in braiding initiatives:

1. Identify shared, valued outcomes (what are our goals?)

2. Defend against activities that don't help to meet those goals (no free lunches)

3. Find common structures and language that can be integrated (teams, data, professional development).

A visual representation of initiatives with common or complementary values and outcomes within the SWPBS "envelope" is shown at **Figure 4**:
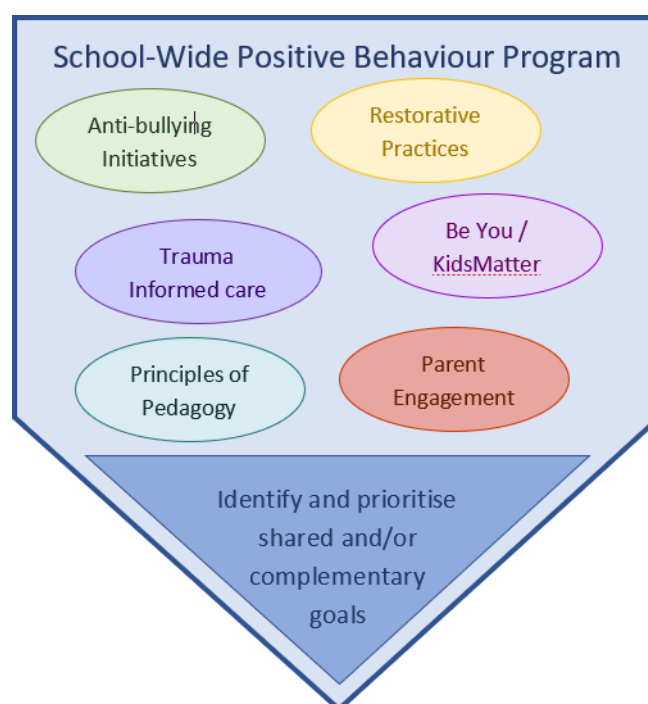


*Fig 4: examples of programs and initiatives with complementary or*

*common values and outcomes which, through " braiding", can be mutually supported by each other and SWPBS (adapted from McIntosh, 2017)*

### Bullying

A common concern in schools is how to address bullying behaviour, including online and social media bullying. Initiatives and programs to prevent bullying are a prime example of values and goals which complement those of SWPBS, being typically based on respectful relationships, empathy and improving executive functioning skills.

A PBIS framework by Horner and Macaya (2018) reports that there is a high success to prevention activities when students are taught two elements: how to respond to bullying behaviour in a manner that eliminates social attention, and an alternative social routine if someone indicates to the student that they are engaging in bullying (Horner & Macaya, 2018).

Other research further supports the view of incorporating bullying prevention into SWPBS. In their 2018 study conducted in the US, Gage et al. (2018) found that SWPBS alone does not address key aspects of bullying. Their results suggest that integrating evidence-based bully prevention and intervention programs *with* SWPBS has the potential to increase positive outcomes for bullying (Gage, Rose, & Kramer, 2018).

### Organising multiple initiatives

In cases where multiple initiatives with similar goals and outcomes are being implemented, it may be useful to use an overarching framework as a vehicle for organising and prioritising these initiatives. An overarching framework can support the analysis of multiple initiatives for the purpose of identifying the common values, outcomes and measurements.

The Nest (ARACY, 2013) is one example of an overarching framework for all aspects of wellbeing, which can assist in identifying opportunities for braiding interventions in an integrated and holistic way. The Nest provides a conceptual framework to think about children's wellbeing as a set of overlapping and interdependent domains.

The Common Approach is based on The Nest and provides a tool to support children and young people at a universal, preventative level, accessible to everyone who interacts with young people. It provides a common language and approach which can support integration of multiple initiatives.

A previous ARACY report produced for the Directorate, *Promoting better connections: evidence and recommendations to support engagement between schools and parents of children with complex needs and challenging behaviour* (April 2017), contains more detail about The Nest and The Common Approach. Relevant extracts can be found at Appendix A.

# Discussion and implications

In summary, then, recent research continues to add to the considerable body of evidence supporting school-wide approaches to positive behaviour support.

The bulk of research continues to emanate from the USA, and other international and cross-cultural research is thin on the ground. Further research is needed in Australia to conclusively say whether the implementation of SWPBS has resulted in more productive and positive classrooms and increased teacher use of evidence-based practices (EPBs) for classroom management in our schools.

"It remains to be seen if teachers in schools adopting the SWPBS framework in this country are more likely to know and use the EBPs for classroom management, which are promoted within the preventative schoolwide approach of SWPBS" (Hepburn & Beamish, 2019)

Assuming adequate transferability from the US context to the Australian, however, there is evidence to show that SWPBS approaches in general remain best practice, and Positive Behaviours for Learning specifically a valid approach to managing complex needs and challenging behaviour.

A growing number of jurisdictions are adopting SWPBS approaches in response to the need to address complex needs and challenging behaviour in Australian schools, suggesting not only that issues relating to complex needs and challenging behaviour are experienced in all jurisdictions, but that SWPBS is viewed as a key part of the solution.

Our review finds evidence that implementation of universal school-wide interventions takes time and ongoing commitment – it is a marathon, not a sprint.

Keys to successful implementation and sustainability can be summarised as:

- Ongoing professional development and staff support (noting that most school-wide approaches which fail are abandoned in the first three years)

- Specific technical assistance on approach/program implementation, particularly when implementing the higher levels of tiered approaches

- Sustained administrator support for the school team

- Emphasis on classroom-level implementation and fidelity, with support for schools to achieve this

- Effective evaluation of implementation fidelity and sustainability.

Our review indicates that the SEAC can have a level of confidence that the PBL approach remains a valid means of managing complex needs and challenging behaviour in ACT

schools. The evidence suggests that consistent implementation of all tiers can be expected to take up to 3-5 years and ongoing commitment to the program will reap the benefits of the approach in time.

To give the program the best chance of success, and leverage the investment already made, the ACT Education Directorate may wish to consider extending the rollout to schools which have not yet adopted the approach, and invest in ongoing training and support for those schools where it is in use. A peer network to share best practice, clear guidance on implementation fidelity at school and classroom levels, and effective evaluation, specifically including use of the Tiered Fidelity Inventory, will also support the program's sustainment and ongoing benefit.

# Appendix A: Extract from *Promoting better* connections: evidence and recommendations to *support engagement between schools and parents of children with complex needs and challenging behaviour* (April 2017)

## Background to The Common Approach

The Common Approach was originally developed by ARACY and government and non-government partners through Australian Government funding under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-20.

It is a flexible way of working to help professionals have quality conversations with a young person and their family about all aspects of their wellbeing. The Common Approach is based on four evidence-based practices:

- A holistic understanding of the strengths and needs of children and their families

- A strengths-based approach that focuses on building the strength of families

- Working in partnership with families and other professionals

- A child-centred philosophy with the wellbeing of the young person as the primary focus.

In 2010, an independent, formative evaluation found that The Common Approach helped:

- Increase the number of practitioners making earlier identification of needs among children and families

- Increase practitioners' ability to identify family strengths and needs, including those outside the professional's core area of expertise or work

- Increase the levels of support and follow up for vulnerable families

- Improve referral patterns for vulnerable families

- Improve relationships

- Increase the use of services to improve child wellbeing.

The Common Approach is currently being implemented across education, health, allied health and social service organisations throughout Australia.

# Appendix B: Figure 1 Table References

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# Attachment D - State/Territory comparisons of programs to manage and respond to bullying and violence in schools

| Jurisdiction/ country | Holistic approach or individual schools/ clusters | Date of implementation | Date of evaluation/ update | Summary of progress |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW<br>https://pbl.schools.nsw.gov.au/<br><br>https://pbl.schools.nsw.gov.au/about-pbl/pbl-in-nsw.html | Approximately 940 public schools trained in Positive Behaviour for Learning (42%) (NSW Department of Education) | Progressive rollout since 2005 | UWS evaluation 2008 (Mary Mooney et al., 2008) | An August 2017 NSW Ombudsman inquiry into behaviour management in schools made mention of PBL in NSW, including the following (Ombudsman NSW, 2017):<br>"To date, the framework has been implemented in individual schools across NSW. As at 20 March 2017, there were 1,083 NSW public schools (50%) implementing PBL, comprising:<br>• 770 mainstream primary schools (48%)<br>• 223 mainstream secondary schools (60%)<br>• 53 SSPs (48%)<br>• 37 central schools (57%)"<br>"Since July 2016, the department has allocated $15 million of additional funding over three years to fund 36 dedicated positions to support the implementation of PBL in public schools in NSW. **The department has advised that it will carefully monitor PBL over the next two years, to examine (among other things) the extent to which it makes a difference**; and how greater flexibility in the delivery of the framework may be achieved, noting that it is premised on being implemented with fidelity." |
| VIC<br>https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/improvement/Pages/swpbs.aspx | Victoria employs a coaching model supported by a central, state-wide unit (Victoria State Government: | State wide unit commenced roll out in 2017. (Victoria State Government: Education and | No overall evaluation yet undertaken. Schools with PBS in place prior to this to be | The first objective of the 2018 Victorian SWPBS initiative is to support school based teams to implement tier I of SWPBS with fidelity through high quality training, ongoing coaching and the use of valid and reliable evaluation tools (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018a). |

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| | Education and Training, 2018b). No information about current level of implementation or numbers of schools involved. | Training, 2018b). | evaluated according to current framework (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018b). | A conference was held from 14-15 March 2019 for "teachers, school leaders, school support services (SSS) and early childhood educators to build their skills and to improve the delivery and sustainability of positive climates for learning" (Victoria State Government: Education and Training, 2018b) |
| QLD http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au /education/learning/Proc edure  http://behaviour.educati on.qld.gov.au/positive-behaviour/whole-school/Pages/support.asp x  http://behaviour.educati on.qld.gov.au/positive-behaviour/Pages/Positive -Behaviour-for-Learning-Conference.aspx  http://behaviour.educati on.qld.gov.au/positive-behaviour/whole-school/Pages/why.aspx | "Many QLD state schools" (no further detail available). The information available suggests an opt in approach: "Schools submit an expression of interest to their PBL regional coordinator to receive training" (Queensland Government, 2019a) | | Referenced in findings from the Queensland 2017 school reviews included (Queensland Government, 2017). | Expected outcomes of PBL implementation:<br>• improved academic outcomes<br>• reduced rates of problem behaviour across the school<br>• raised positive public profile of the school<br>• increased consistency of practices<br>• improvements of staff and student wellbeing<br>• increased teaching time<br>• improved school climate.<br><br>(Queensland Government, 2019c)The Queensland Department of Education hosts a biennial Queensland Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Conference, (this year) taking place 24-26 June 2019. (Queensland Government, 2019b)<br>Findings from the Queensland 2017 school reviews included (Queensland Government, 2017):<br>"As a result of all school improvement efforts, positive changes were apparent in student learning in 78 per cent of cohort schools. First of all, in almost a quarter of cohort schools, there was some evidence of improved student attendance or behaviour. Teachers and students spoke positively regarding the changes in student behaviour over the past 12 months and **credited much of this change to the school's continued focus on PBL**." |

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| WA<br>http://det.wa.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourandwellbeing/detcms/navigation/positive-classrooms/positive-behaviour-support/ | Opt-In approach: Individual schools interested in involvement submit a request to the Department's School for Special Education Needs: Behaviour and Engagement (School for Special Education Needs: Behaviour and Engagement).<br>In the 5 years period (from 2009-2014), it has been implemented in 132 schools since 2009 as of March 2014 (Office of the Auditor General Western Australia, 2014). | 2009 | The WA model is called Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) rather than PBL but follows the same three tiered structure as PBL, with a focus on a continuum of supports (Government | In March 2014 the Western Australian Auditor General submitted a report to Parliament on behaviour management in schools, in regards to PBL they found the following (Office of the Auditor General Western Australia, 2014):<br>"Training and Positive Behaviour Support are not effectively targeted so schools and staff that need it most may miss out"<br>"**DoE does not have a plan for rolling out Positive Behaviour Support in schools in spite of its apparent success**. The PBS framework has been implemented in 132 identified schools since 2009. PBS is an approach to whole-of-school change that uses data and information about teaching and behaviour management to improve student outcomes. To implement it schools must have whole-of-school commitment, invest their own resources and work with DoE's specialist support staff. Our sample schools and survey results indicate that **whole-of-school behaviour has improved in schools that are using it**. DoE endorsed PBS in 2013 but has no policy or plan for encouraging more schools to take it up. There is limited information for schools about PBS on DoE's website." |
| NT<br>https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/health-and-wellbeing-of-students/introduction | No apparent structure in place for PBL or SWPBS. | Individual schools have implemented PBL or SWPBS. | | |

| SA [https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/health-wellbeing-and-special-needs/bullying-and-harassment/identifying-bullying-harassment-and-violence](https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/health-wellbeing-and-special-needs/bullying-and-harassment/identifying-bullying-harassment-and-violence) | No apparent structure in place for PBL or SWPBS. | Individual schools have implemented PBL or SWPBS. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tasmania [https://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents-carers/parent-fact-sheets/respectful-relationships-education/](https://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents-carers/parent-fact-sheets/respectful-relationships-education/) [https://www.education.tas.gov.au/2018/10/respectful-schools-resources-support/](https://www.education.tas.gov.au/2018/10/respectful-schools-resources-support/) | No apparent structure in place for PBL or SWPBS. | | | From the Tas Dept for Education website: "Schools are also supported with resources such as the Respectful Schools Support Team, the Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour Resource and the dedicated Respectful Relationships website." (Tas Department of Education, 2018) |
| New Zealand | "PB4L is delivered by the Ministry of Education in partnership with a range of organisations and groups, including Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), non-government organisations, and universities. The | Commenced in 2010 with an initial 86 schools, as of April 2018 PBL was in 879 schools (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2018). | A three-phase evaluation occurred in June 2014, June 2015 and August 2015. | June 2014 "The main themes … from school and Ministry of Education staff reports were that SW was supporting improvements in school culture and consistency of practice in approaches to behaviour. Staff at most of the schools that had been part of SW since 2010/11 considered that SW was supporting a wide range of changes to their school. Key changes … include: a more respectful, inclusive, and positive culture; fewer major behaviour incidents; an improved classroom environment and student engagement, with teachers spending less time managing behaviour; the development of an effective SW team which uses data to improve school practice; the building of collaborative ways of working with |

| | Ministry of Education continues to work collaboratively with other Government agencies, such as the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, and the New Zealand Police, to ensure that PB4L is effectively contributing to better public services (including the Government's priority result areas and targets). Some PB4L initiatives are part of the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project" (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2015). | | | staff and students to improve school practice" (Ministry of Education, NZ, 2014)<br>June 2015<br>"At the seven case study schools, nearly all the staff and students we spoke to were strongly supportive of PB4L-SW, mainly because the initiative had assisted them to build a more collaborative and positive school community" (Ministry of Education NZ, 2015a).<br>August 2015<br>"Across a range of schools, School-Wide is **resulting in many of the expected short-term shifts in practice and outcomes**. A focus on School-Wide is being maintained in the short term at many schools. A few schools, particularly large secondary, may require adjustments to the support and resourcing model to fully implement the core features of School-Wide. Some schools are developing strategies to "keep School-Wide fresh" in the longer term. Other schools require more active support to address challenges to maintaining School-Wide over time" (Ministry of Education NZ, 2015b) |
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# Attachment E -
## Schools Education Advisory Committee: School Climate Survey and how data is used to inform decision making
## May 2019

Australian and international research indicates that school climate has an impact on student learning and wellbeing outcomes. This research also points towards a positive school climate protecting students who face socio-economic barriers to success. Measuring elements that contribute to school climate, particularly those elements that most directly relate to student learning and wellbeing outcomes, allows school leaders to prioritise and monitor their school improvement efforts across learning and wellbeing domains.

The Australian National University (ANU) in partnership with the Directorate has developed the Australian School Climate and Identification Measurement Tool (ASCIMT). The tool was developed initially through the School Climate Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (ARC Project), followed by a field trial involving six high schools. The tool was then trialled and adjusted for use in primary schools and beginning in 2014 it was progressively applied in all ACT public schools. In 2015 and 2016 it was combined with the School Satisfaction Survey so student, staff and parents could complete the both surveys in one session.

In 2018 the Survey underwent methodological changes to align the survey with other Education and ACT Government research principles, the changes improve the capacity to automate analytical reports across not only the surveys collected through it but also to other integrated data sets. Our ongoing relationship with ANU, and any additional academic relationships, will improve support for advanced research using the data we collect.

The survey also underwent some question revisions including the "don't know" options to be added to all appropriate questions, a resilience measure for students between years 7-12 and the alignment of life satisfaction questions to the school satisfaction survey. The survey continues to be developed to meet our increased understanding of the factors that contribute to broad student wellbeing and to student educational and other outcomes.

From 2019, the survey will contain questions on the level of support for their education that students perceive both at home and in their broader community.

## School Climate Factors measured by the ASCIMT

The ASCIMT has been developed to measure the following elements of school climate which contribute to positive student learning and wellbeing outcomes:

- **Social relations – students**
  Assesses students' perceptions of the social relations between students and the extent to which they support and help each other.

- **Social relations – staff**
  Assesses staff and students' perceptions of the social relations between staff and students and the extent to which they support and help each other.

- **Academic emphasis**
  Assesses staff and students' perceptions that at school there is a focus on student achievement.

- **Shared values and whole-school approach**
  Assesses staff and students' perceptions that at school there is a sense of shared mission, rules and processes.

- **School identification**
  Assesses staff and students' psychological connection to the school and sense of belonging.

## Outcome Factors measured by the ASCIMT

The tool also includes outcome measures that are influenced by school climate and will support schools in monitoring their actions in addressing school climate. These outcome measures are:

- **Wellbeing (not in primary school version)**
  Assesses a number of wellbeing domains.

- **Aggression**
  Assesses levels of aggression and bullying (including cyber bullying) between students and students, and staff and students.

- **Victimisation**
  Assesses levels of students' victimisation experience.

- **Group Support and Safety**
  Assesses how safe and supported a student feels at school

- **Student Engagement (behavioural and emotional)**
  Assesses the level of engagement in learning students demonstrate and feel at school.

The teacher version of the survey measures: Shared Values and Approaches, Academic Emphasis, Staff and Student Relations, Staff Relations, School Identification, Work-Group Identification, Leadership, Team Morale, Professional Development, Self-Rated Performance, Organisational Commitment, Stress and Work Health.

The parent version of the survey measures: Shared Values and Approaches, Academic Emphasis, Relations, School Identification, School and Family Connections, Parent/Carer Involvement at Home, Parent/Carer Involvement at School.

The survey is conducted in August every year with the aim to provide data to schools late in the year for use in schools planning for the following academic year. Data is provided to schools using different platforms with dashboards circulated in Qualtrics showing trends over time as well as summary data being provided through the School Data Tool to Schools and ESO staff.

2019 will be the first year with free text proposed as we now have the capability to analyse it in the Qualtrics system which should lead to further insight to lived experience of students, staff and parents. Some individual schools have included "other comments" questions in the past but it has not been done consistently or across the majority of schools.

While the survey results presented through the dashboard are relatively self-explanatory, there is support available to interpret the results at a deeper level, through both the Analytics and Evaluation Branch and through the ANU.

# Attachment F – Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Map

**Key**

- Yellow indicates a policy related to the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy
- Green indicates the procedure related to that policy
- Blue indicates the guidelines related to that policy and procedure

Attachment A – Education Act (2004) Section 36 – suspension, exclusion or transfer of student by chief executive

Attachment B - – Procedural fairness and natural justice

Attachment C – Appeal against a decision to suspend a student from an ACT public school

Suspension, Exclusion or Transfer in ACT Public Schools Guidelines Published Jan 2010 Owner: SE

Suspension, Exclusion or Transfer in ACT Public Schools Procedure Published N/A Owner: SE

Engaging Schools Framework Owner: EDU Published Nov 2016

Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting Procedures Owner: EDU Published: 2016

ACT Government Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the workplace Owner: ACT GOV

National Safe School Framework

National School Improvement Tool

Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting Policy Owner: EDU Published: 2016

Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents Procedures: support, reporting and insurance arrangements policy Published Dec 2016 Owner: GCL

Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents Procedures: support, reporting and insurance arrangements procedure Published: NA Owner: GCL

Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents Procedures: support, reporting and insurance arrangements Guidelines for staff Published Feb 2017 Owner: GCL

Suspension, Exclusion or Transfer in ACT Public Schools Policy Published Jan 2016 Owner: SE

Exemption Certificate procedure Published June 2016 Owner: L&T

Registration of Home Education in the ACT Manual Published: July 2013 Owner: TBC

Education Options other than School procedure Published: March 2015 Owner - SE

Education Options other than School procedure Published: March 2015 Owner - SE

Attendance at Non-ACT public schools procedure Published: Nov 2011 Owner - GCL

Attendance at ACT public schools procedure Published: Nov 2011 Owner – DSI North Gungahlin

Enrolment in ACT Public Schools P-12 procedure Published: Nov 2011 Owner: GCL

Non-compliance procedure Published: Nov 2011 Owner: GCL

Post year 10 alternatives, work related training and employment procedure Published: Jan 2015 Owner: (SE) L&T

Quick Reference Guide: Support for schools to implement the Education Participation (Enrolment and Attendance) Policy

Education Participation (Enrolment and Attendance) Policy Published: Jan 2016 Owner: SE

**Safe and Supportive Schools Policy**
**Published: Nov 2016.**
**Owner: SE.**

Safe and Supportive Schools procedures Published: Nov 2016

Managing Behaviours safely – a risk management approach guidance document

B: Safely responding to complex and challenging behaviour in Canberra Public Schools. Published: Nov 2016 Owner: SE

A: Preventing Bullying, harassment and violence in Canberra Public Schools. Published: Nov 2016 Owner: SE

Australian Curriculum Owner: Aus Gov

Curriculum Requirements Policy Owner: EDU Published Jan 2016

Curriculum Requirements Procedures Owner: EDU Published Jan 2016

Working with Children and Young People – Volunteers and Visitors (Interim) Policy Published Jan 2016 Owner: GCL

Working with children and young people checklist – managing an externally funded service provider in an ACT public school Published: N/A Owner: N/A

Working with children and young people interim guidelines for principals and staff managing volunteers and visitors Published: 2013 Owner: N/A

Working with children and young people interim guidelines for principals and staff managing volunteers and visitors Published: 2013 Owner: N/A

Supervision of Students on School Sites - Preschool to Secondary College Policy Published Jan 2016 Owner: GCL

Supervision of Students on School Sites - Preschool to Secondary College Guidelines Published Jan 2016 Owner: GCL

Child Protection and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Policy. Published: January 2016

Keeping Children and Young People Safe: A shared community responsibility – A guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT Owner: CYPS Training – Online for all mandatory reporters

Child Protection and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Procedures

Child Protection and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Guidelines for ACT Public Schools

# The good news in stories of violence against teachers

**Glenn Fowler**

Those who follow local news may be confused as to whether all this talk about occupational violence in education workplaces is a tale of horror or a good news story. On balance, it is most certainly the latter.

This story began a little more than two years ago. It's the story of a sleeper issue in schools being boldly addressed – an issue none of the so-called experts and commentators talk about in their unhealthy obsession with school "performance" through the narrow lens of NAPLAN results.

It's the story of an Education Minister and a department head genuinely listening to the representatives of a profession and being prepared to accept the occasional challenging news day because it's the right thing to do. It's the story of brave teachers saying "no more".

Finally, it's the story of the rapid turnaround in approach that can be achieved by an effective and tenacious union.

Two years ago, we surveyed members of the teachers union. They told us by the hundreds they were being verbally and physically abused at work. This is unsurprising in workplaces that welcome all comers. Public schools do the bulk of the heavy lifting for students with complex needs, though private schools no doubt face similar issues. While it wasn't surprising that occupational violence was happening, usually resulting in soft tissue and superficial injuries, it was surprising to uncover the extent to which teachers had accepted being hit, kicked, spat on and sworn at as part of the job.

It was deeply concerning that most people were unwilling or unable to talk them out of that view. The cultural-change journey then began, convincing a caring profession that turning a blind eye helped no one – not them, their families or their students.

What message was being sent to children when (mainly) boys got off pretty much scot-free after they assaulted women (mainly women, who make up 75 per cent of

teachers)? How did this sit with our national commitment to addressing domestic violence? We heard stories of young girls cowering under a desk while a boy attacked a teacher. We heard of the young female teacher who wished a metal bracket that had smashed into the wall next to her head had actually struck her "so something would be done".

After robust but ultimately productive negotiations between the employer and the union, a nation-leading occupational violence policy and an occupational violence management plan were born in July 2017. Next year in Canberra, this work will be shared with educational officials, teachers and unionists from other states and territories, which are mostly well behind the ACT. In our schools, training of staff has begun, resources have been increased within the work safety team, school leaders are prioritising the issue, a reporting culture is growing, and Worksafe ACT is taking an active interest.

Not all incidents have been perfectly addressed, but good practice is evolving. WorkSafe's latest intervention will result in quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that all incidents receive the appropriate response and follow-up. Four more work-safety practitioners will be employed to share their expertise. The government will develop a parental-engagement strategy and numerous other promising measures.

Our union is seeking to build upon this in enterprise bargaining, negotiating an occupational violence clause in the teachers' enterprise agreement, face-to-face training and refresher training for all public school teachers, and the time and training that health and safety representatives need to properly perform a role with increased expectations.

Schools are statistically very safe places, but our union wants to make them as safe as they can possibly be. We do not judge those children who act violently in schools – there are myriad explanations for that sort of behaviour. But we must be mature enough to care for, help and educate these often troubled young people at the same time that we professionally manage their violent behaviour as a hazard to workers. We can do both, we *must* do both, and we are now trying to do both. In a few years' time, when the ACT is a beacon for occupational violence management in this country, our union will be proud that we lifted the lid on this problem, and our public servants and politicians will be proud that they braved some short-term reputational risk and rolled up their sleeves with us.

**Glenn Fowler, a public school teacher, is secretary of the Australian Education Union's ACT branch.**