



Department of
Education

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



**Focus
2021**



Message from the Director General

Following extensive consultation through the 2019 Education Conversations, I outlined the strategic directions for public schools 2020-2024 in *Every student, every classroom, every day*, *Building on Strength*, and *Focus 2020* which set the improvement agenda for the year ahead.

We started implementing those plans, but it wasn't long before our efforts were diverted to deal with the impact of COVID-19 on our schools. The overriding priority became the safety and health of students and staff and, as far as possible, ensuring continuity of education for all our students.

Our people responded to the challenge. We prepared to deliver education in a way we never had before. I want to acknowledge that, despite the unprecedented challenges of 2020, schools remained open and committed to the learning outcomes of their students and I thank all staff for their efforts in achieving this.

For 2021 we resume activities paused in 2020 and refocus our work on the priorities we set ourselves in *Every student, every classroom, every day*.

We outlined and prioritised the need for individual students to be on a meaningful pathway throughout their schooling, starting in the early years through secondary, and beyond into further education, training or work. Our challenge is for all our students to leave school with the capabilities demanded by modern workplaces so they are well placed to pursue their future aspirations.

Our focus on strengthening support for schools continues. We will implement the improvements we have designed for the Public School Review process to provide greater consistency in reviews, more flexibility in the cycle of reviews, and greater support for school staff following review.

The new role of Collegiate Principal will give principals access to a supportive colleague who can help them to increase their impact on teaching and learning and the newly appointed Directors of Education will be increasingly focused on the improvement of student outcomes in their region.

We will apply the lessons learned during 2020 to enhance our incident management response and mobilise support for schools in a range of situations as and when they arise.

While the global threat of COVID-19 remains, a focus is on strengthening our digital capabilities so that schools are ready to deliver high quality distance and online teaching and learning.

I encourage you to use *Focus 2021* and the strategic directions with your school community in establishing your priorities for the year ahead.



Lisa Rodgers
Director General



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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our students live and are educated. We acknowledge parents, families and communities as the first educators of their children. Aboriginal people have a long tradition of teaching and learning through sharing their connections with the land and sea, and through their stories and lived experiences that are passed from generation to generation. We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.

1 Provide every student with a pathway to a successful future.

Together we will:

- Support learners to make the best start with access to high quality, evidence-based learning opportunities in the early years.
- Engage Aboriginal students in learning that builds on their strengths and enables them to thrive academically and socially.
- Engage in early pathway planning to support young people to transition successfully through education and beyond.
- Build STEM skills through the implementation of the new K-10 Curriculum resources.
- Create learning environments that promote resilience, optimism, confidence and self efficacy.
- Implement targeted approaches to engage students identified as being at high risk of non-achievement.
- Ensure all students are achieving year on year progress in literacy and numeracy.

Support for schools will:

- Establish a panel for schools of quality providers of programs for Aboriginal girls.
- Provide pathway planning resources and professional learning to school staff.
- Provide guidance to schools regarding the new work capabilities.
- Pilot additional professional learning for school staff to enable them to better respond to student mental health.
- Provide schools with a sustainability framework.

2 Strengthen support for teaching and learning excellence in every classroom.

Together we will:

- Embed whole school approaches and professional collaboration that strengthens teaching, learning and leadership.
- Be ready to continue provision of education programs during potential disruption to face-to-face learning.
- Increase capacity and confidence in the use of ICT.

Support for schools will:

- Deliver professional learning to support the implementation of the new K-10 Curriculum resources.
- Redefine principles of quality teaching.
- Provide teachers with access to a greater range of quality resources through the Connected Learning Hub.
- Ensure provision of professional learning for staff to be able to pivot to remote and digital learning.
- Prioritise the provision of professional learning and support for schools with the greatest identified needs.
- Reorganise Statewide Services to better meet the needs of students and schools.
- Accelerate high performing final year university students into the classroom through the Public School Teaching Pathway program.
- Resource effective, evidence-based approaches to improve Aboriginal student outcomes.
- Enhance and expand service provision to schools from SIDE.

3 Build the capability of our principals, our teachers and our allied professionals.

Together we will:

- Ensure effective teaching in every classroom.
- Build the capability of our leaders to deliver effective and evidence-based teaching practices in their schools.
- Develop workforce plans and strategies to attract, retain and invest in the development of all employees.
- Increase diversity in our workforce including Aboriginal people, youth and people with disabilities.
- Develop a new Code of Conduct that articulates our values and workplace behaviours.

Support for schools will:

- Ensure the focus of the new Directors of Education is on influencing student outcomes and leading support in the regions.
- Explore leadership identification and development programs at a regional level.
- Trial the introduction and impact of Collegiate Principals.
- Deliver an Aboriginal Aspirant Leadership program.
- Evaluate the impact of the Manager Corporate Services career pathway program.
- Enhance workforce reports available to schools to assist workforce planning.
- Commence the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Co-design and prototype a culturally responsive program for school leaders.

4 Support increased school autonomy within a unified public school system.

Together we will:

- Enable greater decision-making at the local level while strengthening our collective purpose through schools working together.
- Use student performance data to plan for improvement across groups of schools.

Support for schools will:

- Review the effectiveness of school networks.
- Implement an enhanced Principal Professional Review process.
- Improve support for schools to respond to Public School Review recommendations.
- Design improved principal selection and placement processes.

5 Partner with families, communities and agencies to support the engagement of every student.

Together we will:

- Take a stand against violence by enabling safe and supportive school environments.
- Increase the number of students who attend school 90% or more of the time.
- Create opportunities to work collaboratively with local communities, including Aboriginal communities, to determine aspirations and set directions for students.
- Improve collaboration with other agencies to enhance our services and support for students with disabilities.

Support for schools will:

- Provide ongoing training and additional resources, including the 10-point action plan, to address violence in schools.
- Promote engagement in alcohol and other drugs education programs to support students, families, and communities most at risk.
- Focus the work of Directors of Education on facilitating localised, cross agency initiatives for schools most in need.
- Streamline student exclusion processes.
- Assist schools and regions in the resolution of complaints.
- Enhance incident management and response across the Department.

6 Use evidence to drive decision-making at all levels of the system.

Together we will:

- Use data and evidence to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of students' educational opportunities.
- Set aspirational targets for retention and attendance of students.
- Use data, including student voice, to examine the impact of teaching.

Support for schools will:

- Identify appropriate metrics to measure the contemporary capabilities students need to succeed.
- Explore appropriate metrics for measuring wellbeing.
- Commence the development of appropriate metrics to capture our success in enabling Aboriginal students to succeed as Aboriginal people.

Artwork:

Meaningful pathways - developing student skills through education for a successful life.

The footprints and the lines represent the many meaningful pathways for students through education for a successful life. They are all radiating or leading out from the lines and dots which represent the multilayered and multifaceted nature of these pathways.



About the Artist:

My name is Rosie Paine and I am a Yilka woman from Cosmo Newberry, an Aboriginal community in the north eastern Goldfields of Western Australia. Through my mother I am a proud Noongar/Yamatji woman and through my father I am a proud Wongutha/Ngaanyatjarra woman.

Explore the story behind the artwork at education.wa.edu.au/artwork.