

School reviews

The Department of Education (DoE) and the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) are committed to working together to support continuous improvement in Queensland state schools.

To support quality education and improvement in student learning in Queensland, every state school undertakes a review at least once every 4 years. School reviews are conducted by DoE's School and Region Reviews (SRR) branch.

The reviews use the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT), an internationally recognised framework. The tool consists of 9 interrelated domains which guide and inform school improvement.

Reviews are tailored to the context of each school and aim to provide quality feedback and inform school planning processes. In collaboration with staff and the school community, principals use the findings from the reviews to inform plans for the next stage of the school's improvement journey.

DoE and the QTU continue to work together to support the implementation of school reviews in Queensland state schools. DoE is committed to providing the support and resourcing needed to ensure schools can comfortably implement review recommendations.

Review types

School reviews are connected to each school's four-yearly planning cycle. Reviews are generally undertaken in the final year of the cycle to inform the next strategic plan.

There are 2 types of school reviews:

- school reviews
- school-led reviews.

The SRR is involved in both types of school reviews.

The Annual Performance Assessment (APA) process that is conducted in Term 4 each year by the SRR and each region, determines review designations for schools. For each school scheduled for a review in the following year, the SRR completes an analysis of key performance data aligned to system priorities. This data is considered with key contextual information provided by the region to designate the type of review required for each school.

School reviews

School reviews are conducted by experienced educators trained in the use of the NSIT. Reviewers look closely at each school's performance data and speak with a wide range of staff, students, parents and community members to get an accurate picture of the school.

School-led reviews

A school-led review consists of 2 phases:

- evaluation conducted by the school
- validation conducted by SRR.

Schools undertake a school-led evaluation tailored to their context using the 9 domains of the NSIT.

The school produces an evaluation report which captures the school's progress, including affirmations and improvement strategies to inform the school's next steps.

After the school-led evaluation, SRR leads a validation process to confirm the school's findings and improvement strategies. The validation team conducts a desktop analysis of key documents provided by the school, considers the report and conducts a validation school visit.

Review teams

Review teams are generally comprised of 4 types of reviewers:

- internal reviewers — experienced state school principals seconded to SRR for a period of time
- principal peer reviewers — principals trained in the use of the NSIT
- external reviewers — independent trained contractors engaged by SRR
- content expert reviewers — DoE staff with expertise and experience relevant to the school's context and priorities e.g. staff with expertise in Indigenous or early childhood education.

School review teams usually consist of 2 to 4 reviewers. Each team is tailored to a school's context and is led by an internal reviewer (chair), and includes a mixture of reviewers from the types outlined above. The number of reviewers and length of each review depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of the school.

School-led review validation teams are led by an SRR internal reviewer and comprised of a combination of reviewers, including content expert reviewers.

Review processes

An 'appreciative inquiry' approach is central to the review process. The intent of reviews is to acknowledge the progress schools have made against each of the 9 domains of the NSIT, and identify the next steps in their improvement journeys. School reviews provide schools with an external perspective, gathered through broad consultation in a highly supportive and collegial process. Wide consultation and engagement with students, staff, parents/carers, as well as community stakeholders and partners is central to the review process.

Interviews are another valuable part of the review process, and are voluntary. As such, it is not a requirement for those that volunteer for an interview to produce folios to present to school reviewers. DoE and the QTU seek to ensure review processes have minimum impact on school workload and there is no requirement to prepare new information or activities for the school review.

Principals are involved and kept informed throughout the review process.

At the completion of each review, the review (school review) and validation (school-led review) teams present findings and improvement strategies to the principal, school leadership team and school staff. The school's supervisor generally attends this session.

Review reports

Approximately 2 weeks after the school review or school-led review validation, SRR will send a report to the principal. The report highlights key affirmations, findings and improvement strategies. These improvement strategies are considerate of the context of each school, DoE priorities and policies and industrial frameworks that guide the management of work within Queensland state schools.

Principals, in collaboration with their school community, consider the outcomes of the review with other key data and information to inform the school's strategic direction for the next 4 years. Any significant changes to school performance plans and operations such as changes to data collection or classroom observation for example, will be the subject of consultation of the local consultative committee (LCC), for those schools obliged to have one, or via other consultation provisions in schools without an LCC.

Schools publish the executive summary of the review report on their website and discuss the findings with their school community.

Post-review support

The principal works with the school's leadership team and its supervisor to consider and respond to the outcomes of the review to inform the school's strategic and operational planning processes. Key improvement strategies from review reports are part of the evidence that regions use to provide differentiated support for schools following a review.

The DoE will work closely with the school to consider and provide the time, resources and guidance needed to implement the findings.

Region reviews

In addition to school reviews, SRR may also conduct region reviews and reviews of aspects of regional service delivery. These reviews take place at the request of the Director-General or regional director. Prior to commencing a review of this nature, the Department of Education will inform the QTU that the review is taking place and share the proposed review methodology.

General understandings

School reviews are an important part in each school's planning and improvement cycle. Along with other processes, they help inform and complement the work of the school in leading continuous improvement and ensuring quality learning outcomes for children and young people in Queensland.

The parties recognise the Principles of Good Workload Management captured in clause 9.4 (p32) of the Certified Agreement and the working conditions that are outlined in the Certified Agreement, Teachers' Award, Joint Statements and Memoranda of Agreement. Any significant change to the school's work practices which have an impact on workload, staffing or workplace health and safety, including psycho-social safety that may arise as an outcome of the school review will be subject to timely consultation with staff and endorsed by the school's LCC or other established consultative mechanism.

The parties agree that school reviews will be conducted by the SRR in accordance with this joint statement on school reviews.



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