

A joint statement from Department of Education and the Queensland Teachers' Union

September 2021

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 four years. School reviews are conducted by DoE's Education Improvement Branch (EIB).

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.

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 three types of school reviews:

- **full school reviews** as the standard review type
- **priority support reviews** for schools identified for additional support
- **self-determined reviews** for schools with a strong trajectory of improvement and capacity to organise their own review.

The EIB designates the review type for schools based on an analysis of a wide range of school data and trends, consideration of each school's context and consultation with regions. In Term 4 each year, the EIB develops the review schedule and review type designations, with confirmation provided to schools for the following year.

The EIB conducts all school reviews, except self-determined reviews which can be organised by the school with support from the EIB.

An appreciative inquiry approach

The reviews use the *National School Improvement Tool* which incorporates the same domains and common

language around school improvement across Queensland state schools.

An appreciative inquiry approach is central to the review process. Reviews seek to acknowledge the progress schools have made and identify the next steps in their improvement journeys against each of the nine domains.

School reviews provide schools with an external perspective gathered through broad consultation in a highly supportive and collegial process. Wide consultation and engagement takes place across the school with students, staff, parents/carers, as well as community stakeholders and partners.

Review process

Reviews are conducted in a professional manner by reviewers recruited and trained by the EIB to ensure every review is undertaken in a collaborative, positive and constructive manner. Internal reviewers lead each review team and are experienced state school principals who are seconded to the EIB for a period of time.

Principals are involved and kept informed throughout the review process. Review teams consider each school's performance data and other relevant school information. DoE and the QTU seek to ensure that review processes have minimum impact on school workload and there is no requirement to prepare new information or activities for the review.

Review teams also interview staff, students, parents/carers and other members of the school community. Interviews are a valuable part of the review process and are voluntary for people to be involved. As such, it is not a requirement for those that volunteer to produce folios to present to school reviewers.

Differentiated support for schools

Reviews are tailored to the needs of schools. Reviewers generally spend two to four days in a school, with scheduling and review teams tailored to the size, location and unique context of each school.

DoE and the QTU acknowledge that some schools need more support than others and that the department has a responsibility to ensure support is prioritised where it's needed.

The reviews also help regions and central office to better target and deliver resources matched to the level of support a school requires.

Review reports and follow-up support

After a review is completed, the review team presents its findings to the school's leadership team. The school's assistant regional director or principal supervisor is required to attend the exit interview for priority support reviews.

Following the review, a written report provides schools with more information to support their continuous improvement. Schools publish the executive summary on their website and discuss the findings with their school community.

The school's assistant regional director or principal supervisor will work closely with the school to respond to the review's findings, including incorporating any recommendations into the school's four-year strategic plan.

In the case of priority support reviews, the assistant regional director or principal supervisor works with the school to develop and implement a detailed action plan in response.

Regions and the EIB continue to support schools after a review is completed. For priority support reviews, the EIB checks back with the school and region on a termly basis for 12 months to monitor progress.

The parties recognise the Principles of Good Workload Management contained in Schedule 6 of the Certified Agreement. Any significant change to the school's work practices which have an impact on workload or staffing that may arise as an outcome of the school review will be subject to timely consultation with staff and endorsed by the school's local consultative committee (LCC), or other established consultative mechanism.

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 agree that school reviews will be conducted by the EIB in accordance with the Joint statement of school reviews.

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6.9.2021

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