

The purpose and use of data in Queensland schools

The intent of this joint statement is to provide school leaders and teachers with a recommended guide of how to collaboratively manage the use of data within schools to make positive evidenced based decisions around student learning and school improvement. This statement does not seek to be prescriptive. This statement also sets out school-wide approaches to help ensure that the data workload is a productive use of teachers' and school leaders' time.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) are committed to supporting and promoting school leaders and teachers to effectively use a range of evidence based sources relating to student learning to make informed decisions as a part of their educational responsibilities.

Evidence-informed decision-making is vital to inform classroom practice and is not new, however, it is important to take a considered approach to how we use data within our schools to enhance teacher practice: this includes managing teacher workload demands around collecting, analysis and responding to the data.

It is the view of DET and the QTU that the most important data pertaining to student achievement is that relating to the curriculum being taught within the classroom. Student achievement and progress is best reflected by the A-E or five point/year level scale in each learning area. The collection of this data should align with P-12 Curriculum Assessment and Reporting (CAR) Framework (link to P-12 CAR Framework) purposes.

The intent of data collection and analysis at the school should be discussed and developed so as to maximise impact on teaching and learning, recognise the professionalism of teachers and school leaders and minimise the impact on workload. Schools should develop in consultation with the Local Consultative Committee a school data plan which documents the approach to data that will be taken by the school.

School leaders should work with their staff to develop a school data plan that defines:

- what data is necessary

- how this data will inform teaching practice and school improvement
- what data is to be collected and when
- roles and responsibilities of teachers and other staff
- where this data is to be stored (including the adequacy and reliability of on-line data storage)
- how this data will be represented, tracked and monitored (including visibility of data)
- the audience for the data and how this will be reported to the school community and the frequency of this reporting
- what resources will be allocated to the priorities identified by the data

The plan should address the systematic collection of a range of student data. To ensure effective implementation, school leaders should consult with all staff to identify priorities and set clear expectations to align with the school's explicit improvement agenda. The school's data plan should clearly identify all programs of assessment and testing beyond those aligned to the P-12 CAR Framework and highlight how they are linked to school improvement.

School leaders and teachers should access existing data sets, understand and use what is already available. This will minimise requirements for multiple data entry points and assist all teachers to focus on their teaching practice. It is counter-productive for teachers to spend time on data tasks that are not intrinsically linked to student learning, relevant to their roles, the school priorities and departmental requirements.

It is the expectation of DET and the QTU that workload considerations will be assessed at each school and addressed through the school data plan. Additionally, systemic and regional initiatives will also take into consideration workload and resourcing implications for schools.

Essentially, school leaders and teachers need to focus on relevant data that informs everyday teaching practice and the next steps for learning for all

students. An effective and collaboratively developed data plan allows the school to establish targets for improvement in student achievement levels and communicate to parents, staff and the wider school community.

Findings of the school reviews conducted by the DET School Improvement Unit reinforce this. Schools are provided with report recommendations to ensure the analysis of data is clearly linked to school decision-making and practice, and consistent with the school's curriculum and pedagogical frameworks. Consequently, requests to schools to produce data should be linked to improvement in student learning and the school's priorities as outlined in the school's data plan.

School leaders should work with teachers to clearly articulate the appropriate sets of data to be used through the school data plan. Teachers and other school staff should be provided professional development to access, understand, reflect and respond to evidence of student learning, including data. School leaders will need to work with their staff to clearly articulate what data literacy is required to support teachers to do their work and provide professional development, training and support if needed.

As determined by the *Teaching in State Education Award 2016*, non-contact time is to be used for preparation and correction. In recognition of this, when a school's data plan is being developed it should identify the relevant time or resources that build in opportunities for teachers to collect and compile evidence to inform teaching practice.

Schools are required to maintain data that relates to student outcomes such as academic, attendance, behavioural and student well-being. Processes and resources to collect, record and follow up such data should be negotiated, outlined and included in the school's data plan.

DET and the QTU acknowledge that there are many forms of evidence used when determining the overall performance of a school and that student achievement is one contributing factor.