



Department of  
Education



**Focus  
2024**



# Message from the Director General

Every student deserves a quality education with opportunities to achieve and progress to the best of their abilities. We owe it to our students to provide access to high quality teaching with the right learning supports in environments where they feel safe and can learn.

That's why our commitment to Every student, every classroom, every day, prioritises quality teaching and learning, student and staff health and wellbeing, attraction and retention of quality staff, supporting students with a disability and supporting Aboriginal students achieving as Aboriginal people.

Our Focus 2024 priorities aim to embed the key elements and practices of our Quality Teaching Strategy. This strategy helps to build a shared understanding of what good teaching looks like, and consistency of delivery, to ensure every student benefits from what happens in our classrooms.

Quality Teaching Strategy supports are already available to schools – Teaching for Impact, the School Culture Survey, the Leading Cultures of Teaching Excellence professional learning program, and QTS lead schools. We have known for a long time that it is the quality of teaching that has the greatest impact on student learning and so I encourage all school leaders and teachers to use these in the context of their schools.

We all know the most important enabler for any student to succeed is their ability to read. We introduced the Phonics Initiative to help schools to identify those students who require targeted literacy support and we will continue to support schools to embed a consistent approach to phonics instruction.

We also know that for the Quality Teaching Strategy to be effective, we need to focus on creating safe and secure learning environments and providing a range of differentiated and specialist supports for those students who need it. Our Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce is dedicated to this work. This aims to help schools to develop the systems, supports and capabilities to support the wellbeing and learning of all students.

At a state and national level there is significant focus on the area of early childhood education, including the appointment of a Western Australian Minister for Early Childhood Education. This has always been a priority for us and we will continue to support initiatives in this area over the coming years.

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This material is available on request in appropriate alternative formats.

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.

We commit to building our capability to support our students with a disability. This includes understanding their specific pedagogical, curriculum and assessment needs and developing specific metrics for us to follow their progress in reaching their potential. We will draw on the lived experiences, expertise and student voice to ensure targeted supports meet students at their point of need.

We continue to prioritise Aboriginal student learning, wellbeing, and achievement through ensuring our system and our schools are culturally responsive, promote reconciliation and work towards strengthening Aboriginal student outcomes. Our Aboriginal Advisory Body will advise and guide us to work in ways that value the knowledge, expertise, and experiences of Aboriginal people, and create opportunities to work collaboratively with Aboriginal communities to determine aspirations and set directions for students.

We have a duty and moral obligation to keep our students and staff safe in our schools and workplaces. The recent release of Standing together against violence and the 'Connect and Respect' initiative provides a package of support and suite of measures that will assist our principals to remove violence from our schools. This is the strongest statement yet that our schools are places of learning. We will continue to support them to ensure safe and respectful relationships with their communities are forged and maintained.

We are one public education system with student needs at the centre of everything we do. It is our privilege to work in a space where we can change lives for the better. It's important we collaborate and support each other to make our schools great places to work and learn, and indeed drive innovation and high expectations for all students.

Our hope for all our students is that they leave us equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to take up one of the many meaningful pathways available to them.

As you can see Focus 2024 prioritises and embeds some significant initiatives in our schools to strengthen our teaching and learning and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students.

I encourage you to use Focus 2024 and our strategic directions with your school community to establish your priorities for the year ahead.



Lisa Rodgers  
Director General



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

### Together we will:

- maintain a focus on ensuring all students are achieving year on year progress
- create culturally safe and engaging learning environments for Aboriginal students
- explore the use of new secondary metrics to strengthen pathway planning for students
- draw on lived experience and expertise to better understand the needs of neurodiverse students
- embed the new Early Years Learning Framework V2.0, the updated WA Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines and continue to implement the National Quality Standard.

### Support for schools will:

- provide professional learning to strengthen the delivery of culturally responsive pedagogies that respond to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students
- be targeted to those schools that need to embed a consistent approach to phonics instruction
- provide clarity on whole school approaches to student care and wellbeing
- align services for students with disability with school support needs.

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

### Together we will:

- ensure staff are familiar with the Quality Teaching Strategy and engage with its components
- use the school culture tool to support the growth of quality teaching
- deliver an early years literacy approach that includes planned and structured teaching of phonics, informed by the WA Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines and Pre-primary to Year 2 English curriculum
- understand our role as education professionals in student care and wellbeing
- explore approaches to rural and remote education to enable access and equity
- examine ways of reducing red tape and administrative burden on teachers and school leaders.

### Support for schools will:

- prioritise and align system support for schools with identified achievement challenges
- provide a refreshed panel of quality assured professional learning providers
- provide advice and support for evidence-based approaches to assessing the phonics knowledge and understandings of Year 1 students.



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

#### Together we will:

- understand what effective case management in schools is and enable all student services responsibilities to meet this expectation
- ensure all staff recognise the importance of Aboriginal peoples' cultural strengths and identities, community leadership and ways of working
- build an understanding of the complex and diverse teaching needs of students, including students with disabilities
- optimise the expertise of managers corporate services to support school management
- explore opportunities for more schools to teach Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages
- lead workplaces with strong safety cultures.

#### Support for schools will:

- deliver the next two cohorts of the Leading Cultures of Teaching Excellence program
- find additional ways to attract high performing teachers to public education
- encourage and facilitate networks for allied professionals, including education assistants and Aboriginal and Islander education officers
- provide access to professional learning that outlines effective case management in schools
- provide resources and advice to help schools support students with disability and other complex and diverse learning needs
- support all leaders and site managers to be trained in Work Health and Safety requirements.

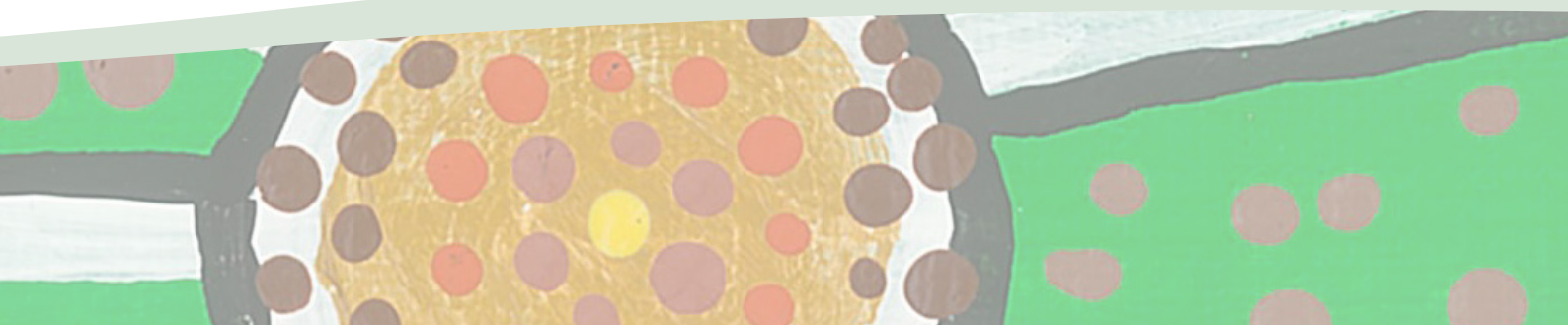
### 4 Support increased school autonomy within a unified public school system

#### Together we will:

- prioritise the focus of school networks on student attendance, quality teaching and staff development
- review and enhance the requirements of good standing policies in every school
- pilot an information system for new schools
- contribute to a healthier Western Australia by teaching students about the risks and consequences of vaping
- make safety of staff and students a priority and ensure every school and worksite is a child safe organisation
- consider the findings and recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission.

#### Support for schools will:

- pilot a tool that enables schools to review the effectiveness of the investment of their financial resources
- align and strengthen resources for Public School Review with the role and expectation of schools in student care and wellbeing
- streamline principal selection
- provide school leaders with workforce planning advice and support to maximise staffing flexibilities
- prioritise recruitment support for those schools with the greatest identified need
- provide advice and training ensuring every school has a safety representative.



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

### Together we will:

- implement the Connect and Respect initiative and stand together against violence
- continue a community conversation about violence in schools and online
- work to restore attendance to pre-COVID levels
- work in partnership with the Aboriginal Advisory Body to strengthen shared decision making with Aboriginal people
- expand and embed education conversations with Aboriginal families across regions and schools
- use co-design approaches to establish partnerships between schools and their Aboriginal communities.

### Support for schools will:

- assist schools to strengthen approaches to restore attendance
- provide specialist commercial advice to schools that wish to engage with organisations providing extended services
- streamline access to expertise for students with complex health needs
- provide clear advice on authority and responsibilities in the management of aggressive or violent adults
- establish a dedicated helpline to support principals in managing aggressive or violent incidents
- assist schools to implement evidence-based respectful relationships and consent education, including effective ways to engage families and communities.

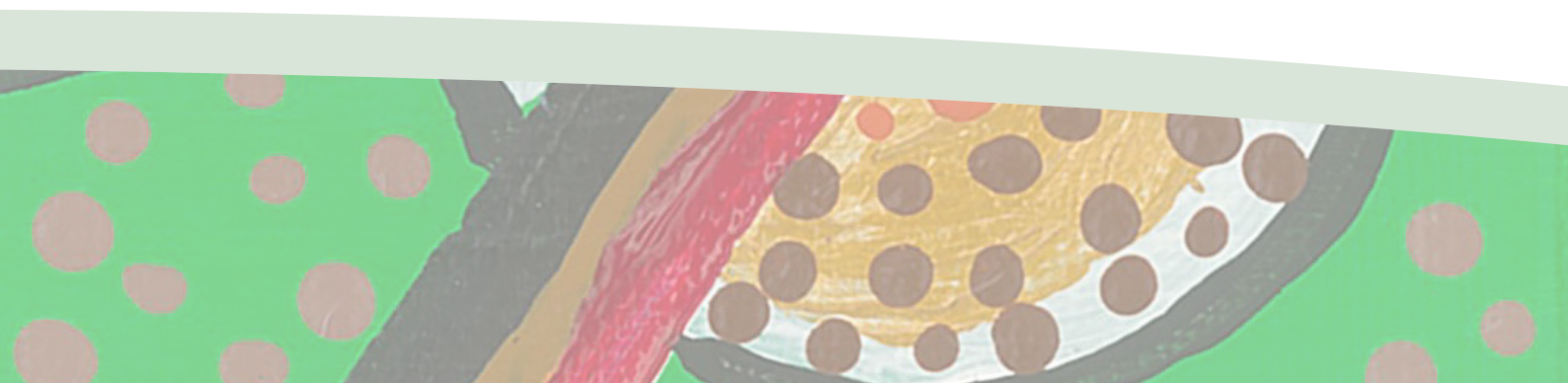
## 6 Use evidence to drive decision-making at all levels of the system

### Together we will:

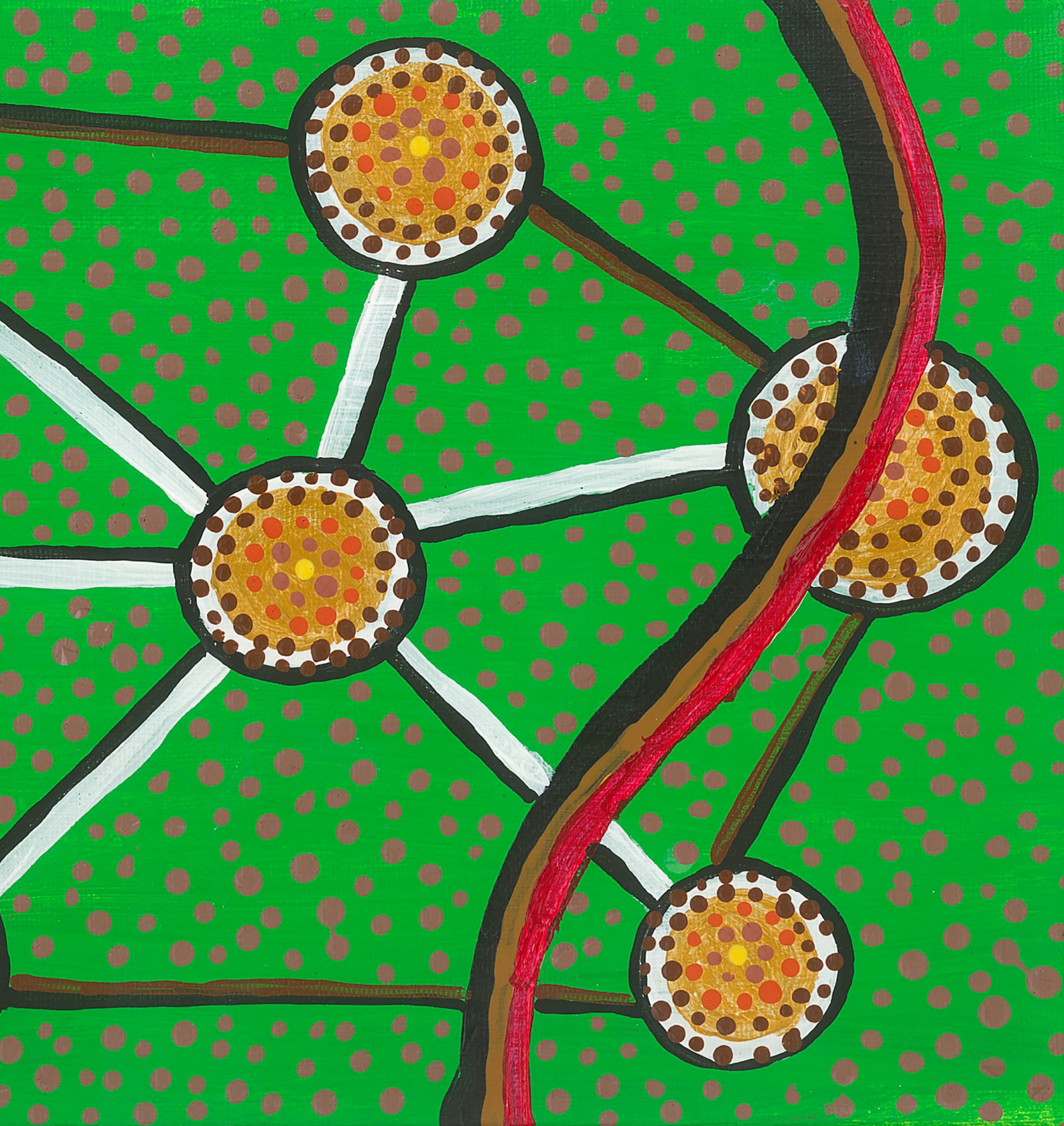
- use available data and evidence to identify targeted support for students
- reset system and school achievement targets to reflect the new NAPLAN proficiency standards and levels
- promote and use student voice in decision making
- give young people a voice and role in approaches to address violence in the community
- evaluate the free period products initiative.

### Support for schools will:

- provide training and advice on using attendance data to plan for improvement
- trial the use of vape detectors in some schools
- provide data and assist school and regional planning that contributes to Closing the Gap outcomes
- explore methods and tools for parents and communities to raise and report concerns
- capitalise on the expertise and perspectives of the WA Student Council to inform system priorities and future initiatives
- develop advice and planning tools for using the new secondary metrics
- commence trialling metrics to capture our progress in enabling Aboriginal students to succeed as Aboriginal people.







**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. I am a proud Noongar/ Yamatji/Wongutha woman. I currently work as a Deputy Principal at Sheoak Grove Primary School.

**About the artwork:**

Facilitate connectedness

Developing a network of connected, autonomous institutions and professionals, sharing excellence in the educational experience of students. This painting represents the networks of connected, autonomous institutions and professionals. The lines connected them all represent the sharing of excellence in the educational experiences of students. The green of the background represents the growth from these networks.

Explore the story behind the artwork:  
[education.wa.edu.au/artwork](http://education.wa.edu.au/artwork)