

# Secretary reviews under the School Excellence Framework



## Background

Improving student results is our central focus. To achieve sustainable and continuous improvement we have to focus on both what we are achieving in each school, and what we are achieving as a system of schools.

We have made lots of changes in recent years to support schools. We have increased the amount of funding being directly provided to schools through the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) and we have made changes to departmental policies and procedures so that principals can make more decisions at the school level about how to meet the needs of their schools.

As we make these changes there is a growing need to monitor how we are operating as individual schools and as a system of schools.

## Increased funding and authority needs greater accountability

The new School Excellence Framework (the Framework) is the primary mechanism for monitoring school effectiveness.

The Framework identifies 14 elements, organised under the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading, which define the core business of excellent schools. The Framework supports schools in planning for, and assessing improvement, by providing a clear description of effective school practice across three stages of development for each of the 14 elements. The Framework forms the basis of annual school planning and reporting, as well as conversations between Directors Public Schools NSW and principals about school improvement.

Schools will be accountable for managing a single school budget guided by a single school plan. The school plan will show how each school is using their funding to improve the quality of teaching and improve student outcomes.

The annual school public report will show the school's progress and achievements, including the performance of students attracting equity funding.

School performance against the School Excellence Framework will also be externally reviewed and validated every five years.

School principals are also directly accountable to their Director Public Schools NSW through their performance development processes.

To help us understand how we are performing as a system of schools, an annual School Excellence Report to the Secretary will describe systemic performance based on the reports of the 400-440 schools to undergo validation that year.

In addition, each year the Secretary will visit up to 20 schools and hold review forums with the Directors Public Schools NSW of those schools visited, in order to engage firsthand in professional conversations about school improvement and accountability.

## Secretary's school review visits

### Description

Each year the Secretary will visit up to 20 schools to engage in a professional conversation with the school principal, executive and P&C about how the school aligns its resources to pursue excellence in the three dimensions of the School Excellence Framework (Learning, Teaching and Leading).

### Purpose

The review visits will allow the Secretary to see firsthand how the school's leadership team use data and evidence to inform their school planning, allocate resources to ensure the needs of their students are met, and monitor and evaluate how well they are tracking against their school plan.

### School selection

Up to 20 schools will be selected each year using stratified random sampling methodology to identify a representative cross section of public schools.

### Process at the school level

Schools will be contacted by the Secretary's Office to schedule the visit.

Schools will not be required to prepare any material for the visit or make any special preparations. Schools should not organise special assemblies or other activities.

The Secretary will already have, and bring with her, copies of the school's most recent SEF data report, school plan and annual school report – and in future years, when completed, the school's external validation report.

The Secretary wants the opportunity to engage in a professional discussion on the content of these school reports and plans with the school executive and, if possible, P&C representatives. A proposed schedule for each visit would typically involve:

- Secretary arrives at the school around 9-9.30am depending on travel.
- Secretary has an introductory meeting with the principal.
- Secretary meets with the executive team for at least an hour.
- If possible, Secretary meets with representative/s of the school's P&C.
- Secretary has a final opportunity to meet with the principal to share reflections.
- Secretary departs by 2pm.

The Secretary will provide feedback while in discussions with the principal, but there will be no written or formal reporting on the outcomes of the visit.

## Secretary's Directors Public Schools NSW review forums

### Description

Each year the Secretary will host up to four three-hour forums, with 4-5 Directors Public Schools NSW at one time, to have a professional conversation about the accountability processes they use to monitor school planning, self-assessment, reporting and financial accountability. These will be scheduled to align with the Secretary's review visits to schools.

### Purpose

The review forums will allow the Secretary to hear firsthand how Directors Public Schools NSW are monitoring school plans for compliance with accountability requirements, including the expenditure of equity or other targeted funding, and how they are ensuring improvement measures, strategies and resource allocation are aligned to meet the needs of students.

### Selection of Directors Public Schools NSW

Directors Public Schools NSW will be selected if their network responsibilities align with the same schools the Secretary has visited that year.

### Process for the forums

Directors Public Schools NSW will be contacted by the Secretary's Office to schedule the forum. The forum meetings will be three hours in duration and held at Bridge Street. Forums will be scheduled to occur with Directors after the Secretary has visited a school in their network. Depending on the timing of school review visits, up to five Directors Public Schools NSW could attend each forum.

Each Director will be expected to come prepared to talk for 15-20 minutes on the key accountability processes they use with their schools and present to the Secretary and the other Directors. The Secretary wants the opportunity to then engage in a professional and open discussion with the Directors allowing for the sharing of ideas and identification of any opportunities for system improvements.

The Secretary will provide feedback while in discussions with Directors, but there will be no written or formal reporting on the outcomes of the forum.