



NSW Government  
response to the  
**NSW Curriculum Review**  
**final report**

**It is vital students  
have strong  
foundations  
in literacy and  
numeracy**





## Ministerial Statement

# Our Future, Our Schools

Nothing is more important for our society, and our nation, than the quality of teaching and learning in our schools.

Schools must be the place where students receive an education that provides them with a solid foundation for life - preparing young people for their future careers and equipping them to make a productive contribution to our society.

In a world that will continue to be transformed by globalisation and technology, with many jobs disappearing and new ones being created, the importance of a high quality school education has never been greater.

It is no longer a case of going to school to obtain the knowledge for the same job for life. With all the changes occurring across society and in the workplace, young people must have the knowledge and skills necessary to be lifelong learners.

After they graduate from school, today's students will need to be able to continue learning. To develop new skills for jobs that have yet to be created. To use new technology that has yet to be invented. Every job will be transformed in some way in the future, and everyone will need the ability to learn and re-learn throughout their careers.

A student who started Kindergarten in one of the state's 3000 schools this January will finish Year 12 in 2032.

When we think about how the world may have changed by the time they leave school, we only have to think of how different today is from a decade ago.

Now there are billions of smartphones. Thousands of programs streaming on your TV. Libraries on tablets. Drones in the sky. Driverless trains, trucks and cars. From science fiction to a daily reality.

In education, we have seen entire schools develop the capacity to deliver teaching and learning online, with classes, assemblies and even playgrounds streamed. STEM subjects have advanced considerably, and students are more aware of the world outside their classroom than ever before.

What will the world be like by the second half of the 21st century, where today's Kindergarten students will spend most of their working lives?

The future may be hard to predict. However, there are elements that are essential to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and success for our students.

Every student must be able to read, write and understand mathematical concepts. Mastering literacy and numeracy in the early years is vital. This mastery of knowledge is important, not just because these are the building blocks for all further learning, but also to ensure that students can develop advanced skills using that knowledge: critical and creative thinking, collaboration and communication skills.

We need to ensure that every student is improving every year, able to fulfil their own potential, develop skills and talents and explore their creativity. We need a system that meets the needs of every child, no matter where they live or which school they attend. Our commitment must be to ensure that every school is a safe and supportive place, where every student can improve and thrive.

The NSW Government is reforming the curriculum that will be taught in every NSW classroom to ensure that we focus on the key areas of learning to successfully prepare our students for a complex and fast-changing world.

We are reforming the NSW education system, one of the largest in the world, with a clear focus on making sure our schools and teachers are supported to deliver improved student outcomes. This includes the opportunity for students to engage in further education and employment when they leave school.

These reforms are vital for the young people in our schools today and for those who will arrive in the years to come. These changes are an investment in their lives and in the future of our society.

## Reforming the NSW School Curriculum

The Curriculum Review, developed by Professor Geoff Masters, charts a course to rework what is taught in NSW schools, and to equip every student for success both at school and beyond.

Our ultimate aim, to use the words of the Review, is to “ensure every student leaves school well-prepared for a lifetime of on-going learning and informed and active citizenship and with knowledge, skills and attributes that will help equip them for meaningful work and satisfying careers.”

The review has been informed by extensive consultation with thousands of teachers, parents and education experts from around the state, along with detailed examination of curriculum in the world’s top performing education systems.

This is the first comprehensive review of the NSW school curriculum in three decades and the recommendations will help shape the design of the new curriculum, identifying priorities for the early, middle and later years of schooling.

The review recognises that there is too much clutter in most syllabuses. The new curriculum will give teachers and students more time to focus on the key learning areas necessary for a deeper understanding of core concepts. The new curriculum will also ensure every student develops strong foundations for learning, life and work.

The NSW Government is setting an ambitious timeline for reform. A new English and Mathematics curriculum for Kindergarten - Year 2 students will be introduced by 2022. By 2024, the new curriculum will be available across all years.

The NSW Government wants to ensure that both VET and academic subjects are recognised as equally valuable. By 2022, new learning areas will be developed for Years 11 and 12 to clearly link school-based subjects to employment and study options. We will work with industry and post-school providers to ensure students have even better connections for their future.

The New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA), comprised of the leaders of all NSW government and non-government education systems, will oversee the rewriting of the curriculum to meet high community expectations.

I would like to sincerely thank Professor Masters for his important work, along with all those who have contributed to the review process. Over the next four years, we will be streamlining and strengthening what is taught in our schools, so that every student is prepared and ready for their future.

It's an exciting time.



**Sarah Mitchell MLC**

**Minister for Education and  
Early Childhood Learning**

**We aim to:**

**Improve  
school  
performance  
and student  
outcomes**

**Improve  
teaching  
quality**

**Strengthen  
school  
leadership**

**Build pathways  
to lifelong  
learning**



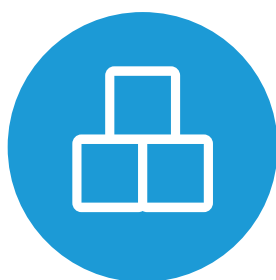


# The NSW Curriculum Review recommended:



## A new curriculum

- **De-cluttering the curriculum**  
Reducing content where it's needed
- **Learning with understanding**  
New curriculum focused on essential learning and structured to clearly show how deep learning develops from early to senior years
- **Skills in applying knowledge**  
Provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate skills in applying knowledge
- **Excellent ongoing progress**  
Students progress to new learning when they have mastered current learning



## Building strong foundations

- **The early years**  
Strong foundations in the basics, focusing on English and maths
- **The middle years**  
Clear standards that every student is expected to achieve in mandated subjects
- **The later years**  
Stronger pathways into vocational education for senior students; designing and linking subjects to deliver clear paths to both university study and vocational training; ensure rigorous subjects that integrate knowledge and the practical application of knowledge



## Making the change

- **Time for teaching and learning**  
“Declutter” a teacher’s day to give more time to focus on student learning
- **Extensive consultation**  
Involve all key education stakeholders in reform
- **An aligned learning ‘system’**  
Make sure assessment and reporting, support for teachers, and other system improvements best support what the new curriculum aims to achieve
- **Support for Teachers**  
Giving teachers what they need to make sure they can implement the new curriculum

## NSW Curriculum reform

The NSW Government has considered the recommendations of the review and is supportive of the overall principles of reform proposed.

Some recommended reforms will require additional work by government agencies, in partnership with the education sector, and other key stakeholders, to inform implementation.

The NESA board will take a leading role in providing advice to the NSW Government on all aspects of the implementation of curriculum reform.

In response to the recommendations, the NSW Government is committed to developing a new curriculum for NSW students from Kindergarten to Year 12 over the next four years.

The NSW Government response to individual recommendations is provided on page 16.

**Some students  
are missing out  
on developing  
the solid  
foundations  
they need**



## NSW Curriculum reform

### Professor Masters' review of the NSW Curriculum tells us:

- There is too much clutter in most syllabuses, meaning less time to focus on the basics.
- Some students are not getting the solid foundations in English and maths that they need and deserve.
- Not all HSC subjects provide clear links to further study and career pathways.

### The NSW Government is prioritising reform with an ambitious delivery timeframe:

- Building strong foundations for future learning by 2022 with new English and Mathematics curriculum for Kindergarten to Year 2
- More time for teaching by 2022 by reducing the hours teachers spend on extra-curricular topics and issues, as well as compliance requirements
- Strengthening post-school pathways by 2022 with new learning areas for Years 11 and 12 that clearly link learning to future employment and study options
- A new curriculum from 2024 with new syllabuses focused on what is essential to know and do in early and middle years of schooling, and key learning areas in senior years.

**“If students are to find meaningful employment, avoid long-term economic disadvantage and become active and engaged adult members of society, then every student will require levels of knowledge and skill currently achieved by only some.”**

(NSW Curriculum Review, p. 103)







# The new curriculum

### Review recommendations

Some students are missing out on developing foundations in the basics that they need for future learning and life beyond school.

The review makes recommendations about the content and structure of the new curriculum including:

- Most syllabuses are ‘overcrowded’ with content and need to be stripped down to focus on what is essential in each subject.
- Content should build across the school years to support deep understanding in each subject.
- Application skills should be developed for every subject, including subject-specific skills, and other application skills, such as, using technology, sourcing and analysing information, critical and creative thinking, collaborating, and communicating.
- Students should have opportunities to develop and demonstrate practical skills through problem-solving activities and projects.
- Students should have appropriate learning challenges and be supported to make excellent ongoing progress.
- Students should have the time they need to master a syllabus before moving on to the next one.

### NSW Government response

New syllabuses will be developed describing core learning in each subject area. Syllabuses will clearly identify essential concepts, knowledge, skills and understandings.

Knowing what is core will ensure teachers can prioritise learning and have the flexibility they need to teach to a variety of different student abilities within the one classroom.

**The NSW Government is committed to:**

**By 2024, a new curriculum for NSW students from Kindergarten to Year 12.**

### Why change is needed

Teachers want more time to teach core content in depth and to give students opportunities to apply skills, which builds depth of learning. When requirements are broad or unclear, students don’t have time for mastery or further learning.

To stay engaged students need learning challenges that give the appropriate ‘stretch’ – too much and they disengage and fall behind; too little and they become bored, failing to reach their full learning potential. Teachers need a curriculum that provides flexibility to meet students where they are at with their learning.

**“The underlying principle is that learning is maximised when learners are presented with appropriately challenging material, rather than being under-challenged by what they already know or over-challenged by what they are not yet ready to learn.”**

(NSW Curriculum Review, p. xv).



## NSW Curriculum Review

# Building strong foundations: the early years

### Review recommendations

The review recommends:

- The early years of school should focus on providing every child with solid foundations in the basics.
- Priority learning needs to focus on oral language skills, early reading and writing skills, and early mathematics knowledge and skills.
- New syllabuses should include evidence-based teaching advice to support teachers to identify and respond to children's development and learning needs.

**“A key to ensuring every child establishes strong foundations in the early years is to identify the points they have reached in their learning – for example, the extent to which they have mastered early reading skills – and to tailor teaching accordingly.”**

(NSW Curriculum Review p. xvi)

### NSW Government response

The NSW Government recognises the critical importance of ensuring that students develop the foundational basics in English (reading, writing, oral language) and mathematics in the very first years at school.

**The NSW Government is committed to:**

**By 2022, new curriculum available for schools for English and Mathematics in the early years.**

### Why change is needed

Literacy and numeracy skills are essential to unlock children's academic potential at school, improving their overall academic outcomes and increasing the likelihood they will attain tertiary qualifications. Too many students move on from their early years of schooling without the foundations they need for subsequent success at school.

The reforms support the NSW Premier's Priority to increase the proportion of public school students in the top two NAPLAN bands (or equivalent) for literacy and numeracy.



## NSW Curriculum Review

# Building strong foundations: the middle years

### Review recommendations

The review recommends:

- The existing set of mandated subjects should be maintained.
- A minimum level of attainment should be identified for every subject, which students should achieve by the completion of school.
- New syllabuses should prioritise deep learning of core concepts and principles in each subject, as well as build students' skills in applying subject knowledge.
- Each syllabus should be designed to build on the content of prior syllabuses and provide the foundations for subsequent syllabuses.
- Students progress to new learning when they have mastered current learning.
- Teachers and parents and carers should be provided with a way of monitoring whether students are on track.

**“In the middle years of school, the new curriculum maintains existing subject requirements and a strong discipline focus. These are recognised as essential to a rounded education and crucial foundations for advanced and specialised learning in the later years.”**

(NSW Curriculum Review, p. 81)

### NSW Government response

The NSW Government supports the introduction of a minimum level of attainment in mandatory subjects by the completion of schooling.

The NSW Government is committed to providing better information to parents and carers about where their child is at in their learning. The current curriculum makes it difficult for teachers, parents and carers, and students to see their growth across the years of schooling.

A priority in the development of new syllabuses is to work with teachers and parents to determine the most appropriate ways to monitor and report on student progress.

### The NSW Government is committed to:

**By 2023, Kindergarten to Year 2 new curriculum available to schools.**

**By 2024, Years 3 to 10 new curriculum available to schools.**

### Why change is needed

There is a lack of clarity about the purpose and expectations of schooling in the middle years. Students can lose focus and start to disengage from schooling. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has identified minimally acceptable levels of attainment in reading, mathematics and science by 15 years of age. Between one in five and one in four students in NSW do not reach these levels.

Setting clear standards for every student will provide a basis for monitoring student progress and identifying students who are not on track to achieve these standards.



## NSW Curriculum Review

# Building strong foundations: the later years

### Review recommendations

The review recommends a smaller number of rigorous high-quality senior secondary courses.

All courses should:

- build strong theoretical foundations
- provide opportunities to transfer and apply knowledge
- develop skills in practical application, including through undertaking a major project.

Changes to existing senior secondary learning areas are recommended to strengthen pathways from school to further learning and employment and minimise the current academic-vocational divide.

Although out of scope of the Terms of Reference, public feedback on ATAR has been reflected in the review.

### NSW Government response

VET and academic subjects must be supported to attract high-quality students into both. Both theoretical knowledge and applied skills are needed to meet the future challenges faced by the NSW economy.

Introducing new learning areas will be a first step to strengthening senior secondary pathways, by providing clear information for students about the subjects they study and their options beyond schools. Stronger links are needed between schools, universities and VET providers, employers and industry.

The NSW Government supports the development of a smaller number of rigorous, high-quality HSC courses. All senior secondary subjects must provide a strong foundation for future learning and life beyond school.

### Why change is needed

Since the school certificate was abolished in 2011, students who may have traditionally left school in Year 10 to pursue vocational careers, have struggled to find the right pathway in their senior years at school.

Public consultation on the review made clear that there is a strong divide in the later years of school between academic and vocational learning.

**“It is not obvious that these existing arrangements provide the strong foundations that every student now requires for further learning, adult life and the world of work. Both provide relatively narrow preparations in their own way, either driven by the needs of universities or by industry bodies.”**

(NSW Curriculum Review, p. 85)

### The NSW Government is committed to:

**By 2021, review and reduce by approximately 20 per cent the number of school-developed elective courses in secondary school.**

**By 2022, strengthen post-school pathways in the senior secondary school by redefining learning areas.**

**By 2024, new syllabuses for senior secondary courses in key learning areas available to schools.**





## NSW Curriculum Review

# Requirements needed to drive change

### Review recommendations

The review indicates conditions for success in curriculum reform, including:

- continuing to engage stakeholders in curriculum reform
- more time for teachers to focus on teaching and learning by reviewing extra-curricular issues and topics, and streamlining compliance-related requirements
- making sure that all parts of the education system – such as assessment and reporting, and professional capacity building – are consistent with the new curriculum arrangements
- teacher professional learning to support the implementation of the new curriculum.

### NSW Government response

The NSW Government has set an ambitious timeframe for reform. We acknowledge the need to work closely with the education sector and other key stakeholder groups to achieve effective change and reform.

The NSW Government will work closely with the sectors to ensure that appropriate professional learning, supported by educational research and evidence, is accessed by teachers.

As a priority, the NSW Government will work with the sector to identify the impact of current extra-curricular issues and topics and compliance demands. Making more time for teaching is key to achieving the curriculum reforms.

**The NSW Government is committed to:**

**By 2022 reduce extra-curricular issues and topics and compliance requirements.**

# Implementation timeframe 2020 to 2024



## 2021

- Reduce 20 per cent of elective courses in high school e.g. puppetry, leather and wearable art to free up study for core subjects.

## 2022

- New English and Mathematics curriculum for K – 2.
- Provide more opportunities for credit towards qualifications in apprenticeships, robotics, Artificial Intelligence, engineering etc.

## 2023

- Full Implementation of new K – 2 curriculum.
- New English and Mathematics curriculum for Years 3 – 10.

## 2024

- New syllabuses for Years 11 and 12.
- Full implementation of new curriculum K – 12.

**For students to have a deeper understanding of subjects, we need to declutter the curriculum**



## NSW Government response to the recommendations of the NSW Curriculum Review

### Learning with understanding

- 1. Design new syllabuses for each subject, including subjects of the senior years, to reduce the volume of mandated content where appropriate and to prioritise the learning of core facts, concepts and principles.**

Recommendation	Position
1.1 In each subject of the new curriculum, identify essential facts, concepts and principles, the understanding of which is developed in increasing depth over time, and where required, use this to identify content that is more peripheral and could be removed.	Support
1.2 Decide how this core content is to be sequenced through new syllabuses, informed by evidence of how increasingly deep knowledge and understandings in a subject commonly unfold and are best developed over time.	Support

### Skills in applying knowledge

- 2. Design new syllabuses not only to develop increasingly sophisticated knowledge and deeper understandings of a subject, but also skills in applying that knowledge.**

Recommendation	Position
2.1 Make explicit in new syllabuses for every subject that skills in applying knowledge are part of the intended learning, and show how these skills are to be developed over time. These skills include subject-specific skills, but also skills in using technologies, sourcing and analysing information, critical and creative thinking, collaborating, and communicating.	Support



## Excellent ongoing progress

### 3. Design new syllabuses that do not specify when every student must commence, and how long they have to learn, the content of each syllabus.

Recommendation	Position
<p>3.1 Make new syllabuses untimed, with students progressing to the next syllabus once they have mastered the prior syllabus. Students who require more time should have it; students ready to advance should be able to do so.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Further advice will be sought from NESA</p>
<p>3.2 Specify what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of being taught each syllabus in a subject and illustrate this standard with samples of student responses and work.</p>	<p>Support</p>

## Building strong foundations

### The early years

### 4. In the early years of school, give priority to providing every child with solid foundations in the basics, especially oral language development, early reading and writing skills and early mathematics knowledge and skills.

Recommendation	Position
<p>4.1 Make explicit in the curriculum that oral language development, early reading and writing skills and early mathematics skills are top priorities in the early years of school, particularly for children who are less advanced in these areas, and that these take precedence over other aspects of learning.</p>	<p>Support</p>
<p>4.2 Develop a detailed and explicit curriculum for the teaching of reading as part of new syllabuses for subject English, structured to assist teachers to establish and diagnose where individual children are in their reading development, and accompanied by evidence-based teaching advice.</p>	<p>Support</p>
<p>4.3 Structure the early mathematics curriculum to support teachers to establish the points children have reached in their mathematics learning, including by diagnosing conceptual gaps and skills deficits, and provide accompanying evidence-based teaching advice as part of new syllabuses in mathematics.</p>	<p>Support</p>

## The middle years

- 5. In the middle years of school, give priority to providing every student with challenging learning material appropriate to their current level of attainment in the expectation that they meet (and ideally exceed) a minimally acceptable standard in each mandated subject by the completion of school.**

Recommendation	Position
5.1 Maintain the existing set of mandated subjects; for each subject define the minimum level of attainment every student should achieve by the completion of school; and provide teachers and parents/carers with a way of monitoring whether individuals are on track to achieve that standard.	Support
5.2 Require every student to commence learning a second language during their primary years, making use of technology where possible.	Noted
5.3 Develop a curriculum that specifies what every student should know and understand about Aboriginal cultures and histories, and incorporate this into Human Society and its Environment.	Support

# The later years

**6. In the later years of school, give priority to providing every student with opportunities to pursue personal interests and strengths through rigorous, specialised subjects, each of which builds solid theoretical foundations, provides opportunities to transfer and apply knowledge, and develops skills in the practical application of subject learning.**

Recommendation	Position
<p>6.1 Eliminate the current bifurcation of learning in the later years by developing over time a new set of HSC subjects, each of which involves rigorous, high-quality learning that integrates knowledge and the practical application of knowledge.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Further advice will be sought from NESA</p>
<p>6.2 Replace the existing learning areas in the later years with a newly defined set, allocate all future HSC subjects to these areas and promote them as focal points for schools' connections with relevant industries and post-school providers and pathway and career advice.</p>	<p>Support</p>
<p>6.3 Require every student to undertake a major investigative project in a subject of their choosing, with common assessment criteria, moderation of teacher assessments, and performances forming part of a student's HSC results.</p>	<p>Support in principle</p> <p>Further advice will be sought from NESA</p>
<p>6.4 Establish a taskforce comprising representatives of the higher education sector, the school sector and the Universities Admissions Centre, to investigate the feasibility of not calculating and reporting the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Further advice will be sought from NESA</p>

# Stakeholder engagement

## 7. Involve stakeholder groups, especially teachers, in all implementation phases of the new curriculum.

Recommendation	Position
7.1 Consult and actively involve all relevant stakeholder groups in the planning, development and pilot testing of new curriculum arrangements.	Support
7.2 Implement a communications plan to explain the urgency of curriculum reform and the key intentions, guiding principles and underpinning evidence base for the new curriculum, including by clarifying what is not intended.	Support

# Creating enabling conditions

## Time for teaching and learning

## 8. Review current external demands on teachers' and school leaders' time in an effort to maximise the time available for teaching, learning and instructional leadership.

Recommendation	Position
8.1 Review recent requests that schools add extra-curricular issues and topics to the school curriculum to determine whether all are still necessary, and review protocols for adding such issues and topics in the future.	Support
8.2 Review current paperwork and compliance requirements of teachers and school leaders with a view to reducing the time currently spent on such activities. This review should be undertaken by NESA and each school sector.	Support



## An aligned learning ‘system’

- 9. Work to ensure all components of the learning system — including professional capacity building, assessment and reporting processes, and broader improvement efforts — are aligned with the principles and intentions of the new curriculum.**

Recommendation	Position
9.1 Build a coherent system of support for the new curriculum’s goals to promote learning with understanding, to build skills in applying knowledge, and to assist teachers to establish where students are in their learning so that individual needs can be addressed with appropriately targeted, evidence-based teaching.	Support
9.2 In assessing student learning, give greater priority to students’ understanding of core facts, concepts and principles, ability to apply these understandings in relevant settings, and skills in knowledge application..	Support
9.3 Develop, implement and promote assessment and reporting practices to establish the points individuals have reached in their learning, to provide diagnostic feedback to support further learning, and to monitor students’ long-term learning progress.	Support in principle

## Professional capacity building

- 10. Invest in professional capacity building to support the implementation of the new curriculum.**

Recommendation	Position
10.1 Promote an understanding of teaching as the process of first establishing where students are in their learning and then providing stretch learning challenges appropriate to individuals’ current levels of attainment.	Support in principle
10.2 Develop and deliver professional learning to build teachers’ skills in assessing and diagnosing student learning and their knowledge of effective, evidence-based teaching strategies.	Support

**There will be a  
new curriculum  
from Kindergarten  
to Year 12**



Reforming NSW public schools

# Implementing a new NSW Curriculum will support us to achieve our ambition for the students of NSW



## Reforming NSW public schools

# Our work to prepare our teachers and schools for this change has already begun

**We have been systematically implementing the measures that the evidence shows will lift student outcomes across the NSW public school system, getting our schools ready to get the most value out of these curriculum reforms.**

### **Increased focus on student performance in NSW public schools**

The government has made its commitment to improving educational standards for our students in public schools clear.

NSW public schools have committed to targets to increase the number of students who achieve NAPLAN results in the top two bands for literacy and numeracy. We have implemented targets at a regional level to focus our system on increasing the proportion of Aboriginal students attaining the HSC while maintaining their sense of cultural identity.

From Term 1 2021, all schools will be embedding these targets in new four-year Strategic Improvement Plans, which will set out how they will strengthen teaching to drive student growth and attainment.

### **Strengthening the quality of our school leaders**

We know that a good principal can make a great difference to students. We want strong leaders in all our schools. Building on the work started in 2016 with the School Leadership Strategy, we are improving how we develop, support and equip principals to ensure that every leader, every school, every teacher and every student improves every year. New principal performance management approaches will be piloted this year, drawing from international best practice to link evidence that supports improved assessment and management of performance.





### **Established the Best in Class Teaching Unit**

The Best in Class Teaching Unit is employing outstanding teachers from NSW schools, identified based on their impact on student performance, and involving them in the development of new resources and professional learning for their peers.

The unit will focus initially on driving high – and equitable – performance in popular HSC subjects, including English and maths, as well as embedding effective teaching of writing across subjects in the early years of secondary school.

### **Better use of evidence-based practice for teacher training**

All teachers now have access to the What Works Best resources. This is a practical guide teachers can use which give examples of the best strategies teachers can which have the highest impact on student outcomes in our classrooms.

Through the the Disability Strategy, we have invested in the development of our workforce to ensure that we are building and applying the evidence of what works best for all our learners.

These teaching strategies will become the cornerstone of teaching across the curriculum.

### **Mapping students' progress**

A curriculum that enables teachers to meet every student at their point of need requires effective use of formative assessment data by teachers. The NSW Department of Education is rolling out the use of Best Start Assessments for Kindergarten and Year 7 students, to every school by 2021 so that teachers know each student's level of literacy and numeracy on entry to primary and secondary schools. Additional diagnostic assessment tools are being rolled out to support the teaching of phonics, including piloting the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check in more than 500 schools in 2021. Similar assessments in other school systems have demonstrated opportunities to better support teachers in teaching phonics, and we expect to see these benefits in NSW.

We are leading the development of assessment tools to measure the learning progression of our students with additional needs to support effective differentiation for all learners.

In addition to these system-wide tools, we are developing assessments and resources for individual teachers to use in their classrooms. These assessment tools will align to the syllabus and will help teachers map their students' progress in literacy and numeracy.



### **Building the resilience of our students so they are ready to learn**

International evidence demonstrates that higher levels of wellbeing are linked to higher academic achievement. The NSW Government is expanding access to additional support for mental health and wellbeing, by ensuring every high school has a full-time counsellor or educational psychologist by 2023. The first cohort of 24 has already started supporting students. These psychological services will be complemented by 350 full-time student support officers in high schools.

Building on the rollout of trauma-informed practice training at scale across the state, the NSW Government will release a new Behaviour Strategy and Student Behaviour Policy this year. The focus of this will be on striking the balance in our schools between supporting teachers and leaders with managing challenging behaviour, while providing the right help and support to the student to address the underlying needs and keep them engaged with education.

### **Implementing the Schools Digital Strategy**

This strategy is the department's response to the requirements of the Digital NSW Plan and the recommendation in the NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038. We have already introduced a vision and roadmap for new services and ways of working. This will improve equity, professional development, and access to digital tools and technologies to empower both teaching and learning, as well as to support the digital literacy of students, teachers and organisational staff. It will also improve the functionality of legacy systems.





