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Aboriginal Education Policy

Defines the department's commitments in its schools. Developed in response to the Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education 2004, in collaboration with Aboriginal communities and key partners.

1. Policy statement

1.1 Commitments

- 1.1.1** The NSW Department of Education is committed to improving the educational outcomes and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students so that they excel and achieve in every aspect of their education.
- 1.1.2** It is the goal of the department that, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- 1.1.3** The department is committed to increasing knowledge and understanding of the histories, cultures and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia.
- 1.1.4** The department will provide Aboriginal cultural education for all staff and education about Aboriginal Australia for all students, as it is everybody's business.
- 1.1.5** The strength, diversity, ownership and richness of Aboriginal cultures and Custodianship of Country are respected, valued and promoted.
- 1.1.6** The department is committed to collaborative decision making with Aboriginal Peoples, parents, caregivers, families and their communities.
- 1.1.7** The department recognises the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (NSW AECG Inc.) as the peak Community advisory body to the department on Aboriginal

education at all levels and in all stages of planning and decision making.

- 1.1.8 These commitments affirm the inherent right of Aboriginal students to fair, equitable, culturally inclusive and significant educational opportunities so that all students obtain a high quality education as a platform for enriching their life chances and achieving their full potential.
 - 1.1.9 Aboriginal education and training is core business for all staff.
 - 1.2 Aboriginal education involves continuous, lifelong learning. It includes:
 - 1.2.1 Delivery of quality education to Aboriginal students in schools (including, where relevant, preschools)
 - 1.2.2 Education about Aboriginal Australia for all students.
 - 1.2.3 Mandatory Aboriginal cultural education through professional learning and career development experiences for all staff.
 - 1.2.4 Identifying and engaging the NSW AECG Inc. and Aboriginal communities as partners in Aboriginal education
 - 1.3 The department values the skills, experiences and knowledge of Aboriginal people and will:
 - 1.3.1 Increase the participation and retention of Aboriginal students in schools.
 - 1.3.2 Increase employment, promotional opportunities and retention of Aboriginal people in a broad range of positions across all areas of the department.
 - 1.3.3 Engage the NSW AECG Inc. and Aboriginal communities as partners in Aboriginal education.
 - 1.4 The department will improve lifelong learning pathways for Aboriginal learners. This will include transitions:
 - 1.4.1 From home to school.
 - 1.4.2 Through primary and secondary education.
 - 1.4.3 From school into further study and employment.
 - 1.5 The department in partnership with the NSW AECG Inc. and Aboriginal communities and organisations will:
 - 1.5.1 Value and acknowledge the identities of Aboriginal students.
 - 1.5.2 Provide supportive and culturally inclusive learning environments for Aboriginal students.
 - 1.5.3 Assist Aboriginal students to access educational opportunities in a range of settings.
 - 1.5.4 Implement:
 - Aboriginal studies programs.
 - Aboriginal languages programs.
 - Aboriginal cross-curriculum content within schools.
 - Aboriginal perspectives in education.
 - 1.5.5 Incorporate the cultural contexts, values and practices of local Aboriginal communities into the mainstream delivery of education.

- 1.6** The department will consult with local Aboriginal communities and support teachers to:
- 1.6.1** Develop and demonstrate their high expectations of all Aboriginal students.
 - 1.6.2** Engage and motivate Aboriginal students for successful participation in education.
 - 1.6.3** Encourage Aboriginal students to pursue personal excellence, including a commitment to learning.
 - 1.6.4** Use quality teaching and assessment practices and resources that are culturally inclusive.
 - 1.6.5** Enable Aboriginal students to achieve age appropriate syllabus outcomes in schools.
 - 1.6.6** Provide all students with opportunities to develop deeper understandings of Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages through:
 - Aboriginal studies.
 - Aboriginal languages.
 - Aboriginal cross-curriculum content in schools.
- 1.7** Working together to build capacity within Aboriginal communities
- 1.7.1** The department will work with other government agencies and non-government organisations to build capacity within Aboriginal communities to ensure that Aboriginal people participate as equal partners in education.
- 1.8** Training and assistance
- 1.8.1** The department will provide appropriate and relevant training and resources to assist with the implementation of this policy in line with the key focus of achieving improved educational outcomes in Aboriginal education.

2. Audience and applicability

- 2.1** The policy applies to all employees of the department.
- 2.2** Strategies funded by the department are expected to operate in line with the policy.

3. Context

- 3.1** The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 (PDF 1.7MB). (http://www.scseec.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/ATSI%20documents/DECD__NATSI_EducationStrategy.pdf), provides a consistent approach across states and territories to deliver and report on Aboriginal Education.
The purpose of the strategy is to assist schools to accelerate improvements in the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students. NSW and other jurisdictions have contributed to the strategy.

- 3.2 The National Indigenous Reform Agreement and NSW 2021 include commitments to close the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
- 3.3 The Report of the Aboriginal Education Review Yanigurra Muya: Ganggurrinyma Yaarri GuurulawYirringin.gurray Freeing the Spirit: Dreaming an Equal Future 2004
(https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/about-us/careers-at-education/media/documents/aer2003_04.pdf), details the findings and recommendations from the Aboriginal Education Review.
- 3.4 The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977)
(http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/aa1977204), along with the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act (1975)
(http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/rda1975202), make racial discrimination and vilification illegal in New South Wales.

4. Responsibilities and delegations

- 4.1 All staff are responsible for implementing the policy and ensuring their actions comply with it.
- 4.2 School principals are responsible for:
 - 4.2.1 Consulting with the NSW AECG Inc. at local and regional levels and Aboriginal communities in the development and reporting of the school plan.
 - 4.2.2 Implementing the policy.
 - 4.2.3 Incorporating strategies within the school plan that comply with the policy.
 - 4.2.4 Supporting staff to participate in learning pathways to build competencies in Aboriginal cultures.
 - 4.2.5 Monitoring the effectiveness of their plans.
 - 4.2.6 Reporting on achievements in Aboriginal education through improved practices and student outcomes
- 4.3 Educational Services are responsible for:
 - 4.3.1 Consulting with the NSW AECG Inc. and communities
 - 4.3.2 Implementing the policy.
 - 4.3.3 Developing plans that comply with the policy.
 - 4.3.4 Monitoring the effectiveness of their plans.
 - 4.3.5 Reporting on achievements in Aboriginal education against outcomes and targets.
- 4.4 The Director, Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement:
 - 4.4.1 Is responsible for publication and currency of the policy and coordination of support material through consultation with, and endorsement from, the NSW AECG Inc.
- 4.5 The Executive Director, Aboriginal Education and Communities:
 - 4.5.1 Monitors progress on the implementation of this policy and report to the Deputy Secretary, Schools Operations and Performance.

4.6 The Secretary:

- 4.6.1** Is responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the policy and reporting to the Minister, the NSW AECG Inc. and the broader NSW community on the implementation of the policy and achievements within Aboriginal education.

5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

- 5.1** Schools will report through the school's annual report.
- 5.2** The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation will evaluate nominated Aboriginal education programs on request of the Schools Operations and Performance Division.
- 5.3** The department will report on outcomes for Aboriginal students in the department's Annual Report.
- 5.4** In honouring the Together We Are, Together We Can, Together We Will - Maintaining a Collaborative Partnership into the Future partnership agreement, the department will collaborate with the NSW AECG Inc. in the monitoring and evaluation of strategies and will report on progress in implementing this policy against outcomes and targets for Aboriginal education. The department will also consult with the NSW AECG Inc. on future policy directions.

6. Contact

- 6.1** Director, Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement
(02) 7814 3507

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