

# Independent Schools Tasmania (IST)

## Submission to the Independent Review of Education in Tasmania

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### 1. Executive Summary

This submission by Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) is a response to the Independent Review of Education in Tasmania (2024). As the peak body representing the independent school sector in Tasmania, IST provides insights, data, and targeted recommendations to ensure a full and fair understanding of the sector's contributions, challenges, and opportunities in contributing to the shaping the future of education in Tasmania.

### 2. About Independent Schools Tasmania

IST is a peak body for independent schooling in Tasmania that works closely with the other two sectors of education in the state. IST supports Tasmanian independent schools, represents the sector on state and national issues and engages with State and Federal Government and agencies, as well as other key stakeholders and the wider Tasmanian community.

The independent schooling sector in Tasmania is a diverse and growing group of non-government schools which serve a wide range of communities.

Independent schools are generally not-for-profit institutions founded by groups in the community. All independent schools are registered with the relevant state or territory education authorities and comply with relevant territory and federal education legislation and regulation.

Independent schools are primarily accountable to their parent and school communities through a Board or governing Council. One independent school in Tasmania operates within an approved system authority.

### 3. Context and Importance of Independent Schools in Tasmania

The independent schooling sector in Tasmania is a dynamic and diverse component of the state's educational landscape, serving over one in seven Tasmanian students. In 2023, enrolment in independent schools grew by 3.6%, reflecting the sector's capacity to meet the varied educational needs of Tasmanian families. Independent schools are committed to educational excellence, personalised learning, and strong community engagement, providing essential options and pathways for students from diverse backgrounds, including those experiencing disadvantage or residing in rural and remote areas.

#### 3.1 Key Contributions and Distinctive Features of Independent Schools

- **Diverse Faiths and Philosophies:** Independent schools in Tasmania offer education delivered in line with a wide range of faiths and philosophies. This diverse provision ensures families have the opportunity to choose an institution that is consistent with and supports their own view of life and education.
- **Diverse Educational Offerings:** Independent schools offer a range of curricular and co-curricular programs, including academic and vocational pathways. Innovative programs include advanced STEM education, unique Vocational Education and Training (VET) opportunities, and holistic education models that integrate social, emotional, and spiritual development.

- **Tailored Support for All Learners:** Independent schools focus on personalised education approaches, ensuring that each student receives the support needed to achieve their full potential. This includes interventions for at-risk students, specialised programs for students with disabilities, and support for students in rural and remote areas.
- **Commitment to Family and Community Engagement:** Independent schools actively engage with parents and communities through partnerships, regular communication, and collaborative decision-making processes, enhancing student outcomes and fostering a strong sense of belonging and shared responsibility for educational success.

### 3.2 Key Challenges and Areas for Improvement

While independent schools contribute significantly to Tasmania's education system, they face several challenges, including:

- **Workforce Development:** There are significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified and quality educators, particularly in rural and remote regions. Enhanced teacher training options, professional development opportunities and workforce support mechanisms are needed to train, attract and retain talented teachers and leaders in Tasmania.
- **Funding Certainty:** Independent schools receive less government recurrent funding on average per student compared to government and Catholic schools in the state. In 2021-2022, the average government funding per Tasmanian independent school student was \$14,350, compared to an average of \$17,190 per Tasmanian Catholic student and an average of \$23,950 per Tasmanian government student.

In addition, constant review and restructuring of how and for what independent schools are funded by government means school governors and leaders are less able to predict the future financial capacity of a school. This negatively impacts the ability for independent schools to strategise and plan for continued improvement and growth with any level of certainty.

## 4. Introduction

Independent Schools Tasmania represents the perspective of the independent school sector, a vital part of the state's educational ecosystem, offering diverse, innovative, and high-quality education options to Tasmanian students and their families in each region. This submission addresses the key themes outlined in the review's consultation paper and provides evidence-based recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and equity of Tasmania's education system.

### 4.1 Theme 1: Defining Educational Success

#### Context and Current Situation

The Consultation Paper calls for a definition of educational success that reflects Tasmania's unique context. Independent schools in Tasmania define success through a holistic approach encompassing academic achievement, character development, social and emotional growth, and preparation for life beyond school. This vision is grounded in the faith or philosophy of each school, shaping educational practices and desired outcomes for students.

The Heads of the three Education sectors in Tasmania (Government, Catholic and Independent) form an Advisory Council on Education (ACE) to the Tasmanian Minister for Education. ACE is currently undertaking an aligned yet separate project that seeks to define success for Tasmanian students at the conclusion of their formal education. Conclusion of formation education in this context aligns with the definition provided in the Public Consultation paper (*That students participate in an Approved Learning Program until they complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification such as a Certificate III or an apprenticeship, or until they turn 18 as required in the Tasmanian Education Act (2016)*).

It is understood that ACE will be providing a separate Submission to the Independent Review. IST will be utilising the opportunity to provide feedback to the ACE Submission through the Sector Head (IST's Executive Director) and through a transparent and confidential survey for all Tasmanian school Principals facilitated by ACE. Whilst further recommendations may come from the ACE Submission, below are some initial recommendations for Defining Educational Success.

#### **Recommendations for Theme 1:**

- **Broaden the Definition of Success:** Include non-academic outcomes such as social-emotional development, character traits, demonstrated achievements and civic engagement in the definition of educational success.
- **Promote Diverse Pathways:** Recognise the value of multiple post-school pathways, including vocational education, apprenticeships, and other non-university routes, and promote these options to students, families, and the community.
- **Share Best Practices and Success Stories:** Identify, showcase and celebrate best practices where schools are demonstrating a broader definition of educational success.
- **Develop Metrics for Holistic Success:** Develop metrics that encompass both academic and non-academic outcomes, ensuring they are included in state and national reporting frameworks.
- **Collaborate with ACE on Defining Success:** Ensure that the unique perspectives and holistic approaches of independent schools are fully integrated into state-level definitions and strategies.

## **4.2 Theme 2: Strengthening Supports and Engagement for All Learners**

### **Context and Current Situation**

Independent schools are committed to providing supportive and inclusive learning environments. They provide personalised education practices, family and community involvement, and tailored support for students from diverse backgrounds, particularly those who are disadvantaged or at risk of disengagement.

The key consideration in Theme 2 of the Review Consultation Paper is how all Tasmanian learners can be collectively supported to get the most out of their education and reach their potential. This question will be responded through the framing of an independent school's:

- a) Vision
- b) Curriculum

- c) Pedagogy
- d) Structure
- e) Engagement

#### Vision of a student

Independent schools are known for articulating and communicating a clear vision of who they believe a student to be, and their place within our society and world. This vision, usually founded on a faith or philosophy, underpins all the school expresses, including the characteristics, skills and knowledge they hope to see evident in their students throughout their educational journey.

This vision is highly visible to the community (internal and external to the school) and is one of the key measures a school will use to evaluate their consistency and success as an educational institution (related to Theme 1). It is often this vision that will be the compelling reason a family will enroll their children into a particular school.

Finally, this single vision, articulated with age-and-stage relevance, will guide how a student is nurtured and educated for the entirety of their independent education, which in some cases will be fourteen years or more.

#### Curriculum

All Independent schools are required to teach an approved curriculum, and this requirement is evaluated by an external Authority each time the school is re-registered. That evaluation requires the school to demonstrate rigor in:

- How the curriculum is delivered, consistent with their stated faith or philosophy.
- How the curriculum is scoped and sequenced from Prep through to Year 10.
- How the curriculum is aligned with other recognised curriculum frameworks such as the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* and the TASC accredited senior secondary courses offered in Tasmania.
- How the entire curriculum (K – 12) is reviewed and refined in a systematic manner.
- How student achievement, against the curriculum, is assessed, moderated and reported with validity, clarity and transparency.
- How student achievement and other pertinent data is reported annually to the school community, relevant authorities and the wider community.

#### Pedagogy

Whilst a particular pedagogy (a method and practice of teaching) is not required to be delivered in or through independent schools, there are a number of compelling reasons for why a consistent and rigorous pedagogy will be pursued within an independent school in Tasmania.

As previously discussed, independent schools are committed to a pedagogy that is consistent with the faith or philosophy that is the school's purpose for existence. In addition, investment in a pedagogy that has school-wide consistency is critical to ensure:

- All educators are knowledgeable of and trained in evidence-based pedagogy that provides maximum impact on student learning and achievement.
- The partnership experience of families is planned and predictable over the life of their educational journey with a particular school.

- An educator workforce spanning multiple years and developmental stages of a student (more than fourteen years in some cases) can deliver an agreed curriculum through agreed means.
- Compliance with external authorities and agencies that evaluate the school on a regular basis can be demonstrated.

### School structures

In Independent schools, a coherent vision of who a student is, what they require to flourish (curriculum) and how they are to learn (pedagogy) are some of the key determinants of how a school is structured (not only the range of years of schooling, but also how those years are grouped. For instance, some schools may have a vision for how a student in the middle years may need to be nurtured, and so may structure a school with a particular middle-years delineation).

This structure will further shape the experiences a student and their family will encounter throughout their school journey (for instance, student may participate in particular experiences in particular campuses or locations of a school)). Again, this structure will shape the style and type of built and natural environments provided for the students to connect and learn in.

Independent schools are intentional, based on their purpose of education and vision of students, about how their learning is structured, delivered and experienced by students as they progress through the ages and stages of education. This intentionality enables a student to experience their education in as sequenced and seamless a manner as is possible.

### Family engagement

Independent schools, by their nature, recognise the primary role parents play in the nurture and education of their children. These schools exist to partner with parents in this role, so quality and caring engagement with every family is vital for every independent school.

In returning to the key question considered in Theme 2 of the Consultation Paper (*how all Tasmanian learners can be collectively supported to get the most out of their education and reach their potential*) IST would conclude that students are best supported when:

- i. Families are seen as the primary nurturers and educators of their own children and are invited as partners to establish and deliver education for their children.
- ii. Students engage with a sequenced and seamless curriculum.
- iii. All teaching is evidence-based, explicit and delivered whole-of-school.
- iv. Students and families are required to make limited transitions between schools and stages of education, and any transition is supported to be as smooth and seamless as possible.

### **Recommendations for Theme 2:**

- **Families as Partners:** Confirm expectations that families are partners in the decision-making and delivery of education for their children.
- **Evidence-based Pedagogy:** Confirm expectations that all students will receive teaching that is evidence-based and explicitly applied through all years of their

required education.

- **Sequenced and Seamless Curriculum:** Ensure a student’s curriculum experience is sequenced and seamless, irrespective of the school or schools they attend.
- **Develop Targeted Support Programs:** Implement programs for students at risk of disengagement or falling behind, including those with disabilities or from diverse cultural backgrounds. Ensure these programs prioritise timely accommodations, adjustments and interventions that demonstrate continued student improvement and engagement.
- **Implement Early Intervention Programs:** Advocate for the implementation of early intervention programs for at-risk students, including support for literacy and numeracy, behavioural interventions, and social-emotional learning initiatives.
- **Utilise Data to Tailor Supports:** Use data analytics to identify students at risk of disengagement or underachievement and to tailor interventions that support their unique needs, improving retention and success rates.
- **Increase Resources for Wellbeing:** Expand funding and resources for mental health and wellbeing services within schools to address students' holistic needs.
- **Provide Professional Development in Inclusive Education:** Develop specific professional development programs that focus on inclusive education strategies, ensuring teachers are well-equipped to support diverse learners, including those with special needs or from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- **Enhance Digital Learning Resources:** Expand access to digital learning tools and resources, especially for rural and remote students, ensuring equity in access to high-quality education regardless of geographical location.

### 4.3 Theme 3: Outcomes at the Conclusion of Formal Years of Schooling

#### Context and Current Situation

Independent schools offer diverse pathways, including university preparation, vocational education, and school-based apprenticeships. However, there is a need to ensure all students are aware of and have access to the full range of possible post-school options.

A key consideration in Theme 3 is how better choice of learning and career pathways can be supported for all students. In considering and planning for these outcomes, independent schools in Tasmania seek to:

- a) Provide a complete learning journey
- b) Identify each student’s strengths and needs
- c) Plan for student learning and growth
- d) Provide training and learning consistent with an identified post-school pathway.

#### Providing a complete learning journey for students

Many Independent schools in Tasmania offer a complete learning journey through the years of primary and secondary education (K – 12). Where this is not a possibility (i.e. where a school concludes at Year 6 or Year 10), schools will often work within specific structures or arrangements whereby students can transition in a highly supported manner to another school or campus where their learning journey can be completed. Such arrangements enable students and families to transition to another school or campus which has a consistent philosophical or faith foundation to the school from which they are transitioning.

This opportunity is premised on the concept that families have intentionally selected a school according to its philosophy or faith position and see it as beneficial to have consistency in such a position throughout the complete learning journey of their child. In addition, such an opportunity provides consistency of relationship and support for students and families over a partnership that could last more than fourteen years.

#### Identify each student’s strengths and needs

A key opportunity arising from consistent relationship between a family, student and school is the deep and dynamic understanding of each student’s strengths and needs that is collaboratively formed over time. This understanding is formed and refined over the various physical, emotional, social and educational stages of a student’s learning journey. Even where a student may need to transition to a new school, the intentional arrangements in place between schools allow the relationship with and understanding of the student and their family to be shared between all members of the partnership.

#### Plan for student learning and growth

Consistency of partnership and relationship between parents, a student and a school is the strongest factor in planning for effective student learning and growth.

Independent schools are increasingly looking to work collaboratively with other schools and educational institutions (e.g. Registered Training Organisations) to increase the range of learning and training opportunities for their students. This may mean that a school forms formal partnerships or agreements with other institutions to access learning options or packages (face-to-face, virtual or hybrid) to best suit the learning and training needs of their own students.

#### Provide training and learning consistent with identified post-school options.

As noted above, Independent schools in Tasmania are increasingly providing school choices and pathways that prepare every student for a post-school option students themselves have identified as desirable. Whilst the majority of Tasmanian Independent schools prepare students for and provide TASC accredited senior secondary courses, increasingly Tasmanian Independent schools are also:

- Providing an expanded range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) options in schools from more traditional industry areas like hospitality, construction, fitness and IT to new and emerging areas like drone pilot, renewable energy, aviation, education services and aquaculture delivered from Certificate II to III.
- Embracing School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (ASbAs) as a strategy for introducing VET for individual students offered in a range of industry areas.
- Exploring the options of work-related programs through the Packages of Learning program developed under the Years 9-12 Project. These packages align general

curriculum with vocational learning around industry areas like Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Architecture and Construction, Health and Community Services and Hospitality and Tourism.

- Adopting an enterprise-based approach to VET where schools actually employ ASbAs to run IT servicing in schools or aquaculture operations such as oyster farming.
- Enhancing the place for formal career education in schools by utilising the Years 9-12 *Careerify* website established to be a student-centered career information hub.
- Adopting more of a career planning approach to career education in part driven by the Years 9-12 Project where teachers in independent schools were given access to reduced cost Graduate Certificate in Career Education.
- Ensuring students from years 9-12 experience workplace learning through Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning programs and Vocational Placement programs a part of VET in Schools initiatives.
- Undertaking work-related programs under the new Year 11-12 curriculum. Subjects such as Work Readiness, Enterprise at Work and Pathways to Work are courses which are TCE accredited.
- Undertaking part-time work which for many students is their first encounter with the world of work and may include accredited training. For example, Customer Service and Food-handling Skills are recognised as part of the McDonalds Training Package.

#### Supporting Independent schools in the expansion of these school pathways

Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) has made a major commitment to the uptake of VET in Tasmanian Independent schools with the appointment of a part-time VET consultant to nurture and support such programs. This has seen an increase in interest and uptake of VET programs from 50% of independent schools four years ago to 90% currently. Currently, less than 20% of students in independent schools complete a VET qualification by the conclusion of Year 12, although this is likely higher if Units of Competence in Health and Safety, Responsible Service of Alcohol and Barista Services are included. Across all sectors in Tasmania, around 30% of Tasmanian students achieve a VET qualification in any year.

This commitment by IST is not underwritten by any funding at a state or national level.

In returning to the key question considered in Theme 3 of the Consultation Paper (*how to better support choice of learning and career pathways for all students*) IST would conclude that these outcomes are most achievable when:

- i. A student's learning journey is as uninterrupted as possible by school transitions
- ii. A student is well known and understood due to a deep and continuing partnership between a family, student and school
- iii. Learning and training appropriate to each student is provided or facilitated by the school
- iv. Choices and pathways available during formal education are rich, real and rewarding for students based on their post-school hopes and plans.

#### **Recommendations for Theme 3:**

- **Uninterrupted Learning Journeys:** Provide as much opportunity as possible for students to move through their learning journey in as uninterrupted way as possible.



- **Ensure Smooth Transitions:** Implement strategies to support smooth transitions between different educational stages, particularly for students moving from middle to senior secondary education.
- **Develop Career Pathways Programs:** Create comprehensive career pathways programs in collaboration with local industries and vocational training organisations, including work experience, apprenticeships, and dual enrolment opportunities.
- **Expand Career Guidance and Counselling:** Strengthen career guidance and counselling services in schools to ensure that all students understand the full range of career and further education options available to them, tailored to their interests and strengths.
- **Increase Access to VET and Work-Integrated Learning:** Advocate for greater access to VET programs and work-integrated learning opportunities, particularly in emerging industries, to align education with future workforce needs.
- **Promote Vocational Education:** Increase awareness of and value for vocational education and training (VET) and other non-university pathways among students, families, and the community.
- **Strengthen Partnerships:** Develop partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and higher education providers to offer diverse and relevant learning opportunities.
- **Facilitate Seamless Transitions for School Leavers:** Develop support structures for school leavers transitioning to employment, further education, or training, including mentorship programs, alumni networks, and partnerships with post-secondary institutions.
- **Support Equity in Access to Pathways:** Ensure equitable access to diverse learning pathways for all students, including targeted support for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, rural areas, and underrepresented groups.

#### 4.4 Theme 4: Support for Our Teaching Workforce

##### Context and Current Situation

Recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers, especially in rural and remote areas, remains a challenge for Independent schools. Ongoing professional development and support for educators are critical to maintaining and improving teaching quality.

How Theme 4 of the Public Consultation Paper is being considered and addressed in Tasmanian Independent schools will be explored through:

- a) Participation in training of pre-service teachers
- b) Focused Professional Learning for educators and educational leaders

##### Participation in training of pre-service teachers

Independent schools in Tasmania are increasingly engaged in the training of pre-service teachers. Independent schools are moving from solely being places where education students undertake teaching placements to being pre-service employers and co-creators of the experiences and learning of these tertiary students. This has resulted in pre-service teachers who are more aware of and trained for the experiences and opportunities available to them as teachers in independent schools. This training and awareness go beyond the

expected knowledge and ability in curriculum design and pedagogical practices to becoming experienced in rhythms and routines of a school year, engagement with school and learning management systems, participation in school-directed Professional Learning, and planning for and leading of co-curricular experiences such as camps and excursions. Involvement in such experiences as a pre-service teacher has increased the preparedness and suitability of graduate teachers for a role in a school.

#### Focused Professional Learning for educators and educational leaders

A requirement from the [Tasmanian Government's Final Report to Government: Lifting Literacy](#) is that 'every educator engages in focused professional development in literacy every year appropriate for their teaching role' (Recommendation 8). Practitioner feedback received as part of the focused professional development being delivered by Independent Schools Tasmania is that following such professional learning educators are more confident in the delivery of their literacy programs, more focused in what they deliver, and experiencing increased outcomes for students as a result. The principle behind that recommendation (*That teaching aligns with contemporary peer-reviewed evidence, including cognitive research, and is explicit and systematic*) is one many independent schools are committed to as they sharpen their focus on what teachers will be trained in, and how that training will occur.

Similarly, leaders of independent schools that demonstrate strong learning growth outcomes for students confirm that a relentless attention to leading teachers in a focus on student learning is their core role. Whilst acknowledging that there are other aspects to the role of leading a school, nothing is as important, or prioritised over, the task of being a leader of learning.

Regarding Theme 4 of the Consultation Paper (*Support for our teaching workforce*) IST would conclude that it is vital that:

- i. Initial teacher training is firmly aligned with the purpose, curriculum and pedagogies of Tasmanian schools
- ii. Teachers are trained and resourced to focus on the core element of their role – the delivery of high quality, evidence-based teaching
- iii. Educational leaders are equipped and resourced to focus on the core element of their role – ensuring positive outcomes for students

#### **Recommendations for Theme 4:**

- **Expand Pathways for Teacher Training:** Create and promote alternative pathways for teacher training and certification, particularly in high-demand areas, to attract a more diverse teaching workforce.
- **Evidence-based Teaching Practices:** Focus on pre-service programs that enhance evidence-based teaching practices, leadership skills, and support for early-career teachers.
- **Improved Focus on Relationships:** Ensure that initial teacher education includes training in developing and maintaining constructive relationships with students, parents, school colleagues.
- **Attract and Retain Qualified Educators:** Develop strategies to recruit and retain educators in rural and remote areas, including incentives, housing support, and career advancement opportunities.
- **Reduce Administrative Burdens:** Minimise administrative tasks for teachers to allow more time for teaching and learning.

- **Foster Mentorship and Peer Support Programs:** Develop mentorship and peer support programs to support early-career teachers and enhance teacher retention, particularly in challenging teaching environments.
- **Support Teacher Wellbeing:** Provide resources and programs that support the mental health and wellbeing of teachers, recognising the importance of teacher wellness in maintaining high-quality education.
- **Leverage Technology for Professional Development:** Use digital platforms to provide flexible, accessible professional development opportunities for teachers, particularly those in rural and remote areas.

#### 4.5 Theme 5: Accountability for Improved Outcomes

##### Context and Current Situation

Independent schools are committed to transparency and accountability, but there is a need for measures that are fair, transparent, and meaningful, focusing on actual educational outcomes rather than compliance.

In considering Theme 5 of the Consultation Paper, Independent schools would see the following principles as key in ensuring decisions arising from the Independent Review are actioned equitably and efficiently to ensure improved learning outcomes for every student.

##### Improvement is a whole-of-state, cross-sector priority

This Review considers the education of all Tasmanian students and must result in priorities that all education sectors across the state can commit to. Any reforms must be sector-blind and focus on improved outcomes for every Tasmanian student.

##### Evidence-based reforms that have clear targets for achievement over realistic timeframes

Reform targets must be founded on a sound evidence base that demonstrates outcomes are achievable and sustainable for the full range of students being educated in Tasmania. Reforms must be expressed as clear targets with implementation and achievement outcomes realistically set based on the resources Tasmania is able to allocate to this reform. Timeframes must also consider:

- The cyclical nature of schools and education more broadly
- Other state and national reforms Tasmanian schools are already committed to
- The implications of the political cycle in the state and nation
- The unique demands currently being experienced by the Tasmanian education workforce.

##### Equitable funding for full implementation

State reforms must be accompanied by commensurate state funding that enables each sector to implement and embed required outcomes. Each sector faces unique implementation challenges based on their size, spread and governance structure, and fair resourcing must be provided to ensure each sector is able to achieve desired outcomes despite those challenges.

##### Clear and measurable outcomes that enable public reporting of progress and achievement

It is important that all high-level required outcomes arising from Review are:

- Clear and measurable
- Reportable publicly in an aggregated form for the state
- Able to be evaluated by sector at a Ministerial or advisory level
- Able to be evaluated by school at a sector and school leadership level.

This statement is made on the basis that any new reporting requirements for schools or sectors are dependent on allocation of additional resourcing due to the costly nature of data collection and management.

Regarding Theme 5 of the Consultation Paper (*Accountability for Improved Outcomes*) IST would conclude that the above principles are necessary for transparency and accountability.

#### **Recommendations for Theme 5:**

- **Focus on Meaningful Outcomes:** Implement accountability measures that prioritise meaningful outcomes over compliance-driven processes, allowing for flexibility and innovation within schools.
- **Support Reporting and Data Management:** Ensure new reporting requirements come with appropriate funding and support to manage data collection and reporting effectively.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** Promote sector-wide collaboration to share best practices and improve accountability and student outcomes.
- **Develop Tailored Accountability Frameworks:** Advocate for accountability frameworks that are tailored to the unique contexts of independent schools, ensuring they measure diverse educational outcomes, including non-academic achievements.
- **Implement Continuous Improvement Cycles:** Support the use of continuous improvement cycles within schools, where data-driven insights inform regular review and enhancement of educational practices.
- **Enhance Transparency in Reporting:** Improve transparency by providing clear, accessible public reports on school performance that include a range of outcome measures and contextual information.
- **Align Accountability with Support Structures:** Ensure that accountability requirements are aligned with the support structures provided to schools, recognising that meaningful improvement requires both high standards and adequate resources.

## **6. Conclusion**

Independent Schools Tasmania is committed to working collaboratively to improve educational outcomes for all Tasmanian students. This submission seeks to provide constructive recommendations to help shape a more equitable and effective education system for the future.

By focusing on these areas, IST believes that Tasmania's education system can better meet the needs of all students, regardless of background or location, and foster a culture of continuous

improvement and innovation.

IST looks forward to working collaboratively with the Tasmanian Government, other education sectors, and stakeholders to achieve these goals and build a brighter future for every learner in Tasmania

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## Appendix 1: Collated Recommendations

### Recommendations for Theme 1:

- **Broaden the Definition of Success:** Include non-academic outcomes such as social-emotional development, character traits, demonstrated achievements and civic engagement in the definition of educational success.
- **Promote Diverse Pathways:** Recognise the value of multiple post-school pathways, including vocational education, apprenticeships, and other non-university routes, and promote these options to students, families, and the community.
- **Share Best Practices and Success Stories:** Identify, showcase and celebrate best practices where schools are demonstrating a broader definition of educational success.
- **Develop Metrics for Holistic Success:** Develop metrics that encompass both academic and non-academic outcomes, ensuring they are included in state and national reporting frameworks.

- **Collaborate with ACE on Defining Success:** Ensure that the unique perspectives and holistic approaches of independent schools are fully integrated into state-level definitions and strategies.

### Recommendations for Theme 2:

- **Families as Partners:** Confirm expectations that families are partners in the decision-making and delivery of education for their children.
- **Evidence-based Pedagogy:** Confirm expectations that all students will receive teaching that is evidence-based and explicitly applied through all years of their required education.
- **Sequenced and Seamless Curriculum:** Ensure a student’s curriculum experience is sequenced and seamless, irrespective of the school or schools they attend.
- **Develop Targeted Support Programs:** Implement programs for students at risk of disengagement or falling behind, including those with disabilities or from diverse cultural backgrounds. Ensure these programs prioritise timely accommodations, adjustments and interventions that demonstrate continued student improvement and engagement.
- **Implement Early Intervention Programs:** Advocate for the implementation of early intervention programs for at-risk students, including support for literacy and numeracy, behavioural interventions, and social-emotional learning initiatives.
- **Utilise Data to Tailor Supports:** Use data analytics to identify students at risk of disengagement or underachievement and to tailor interventions that support their unique needs, improving retention and success rates.
- **Increase Resources for Wellbeing:** Expand funding and resources for mental health and wellbeing services within schools to address students' holistic needs.
- **Provide Professional Development in Inclusive Education:** Develop specific professional development programs that focus on inclusive education strategies, ensuring teachers are well-equipped to support diverse learners, including those with special needs or from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- **Enhance Digital Learning Resources:** Expand access to digital learning tools and resources, especially for rural and remote students, ensuring equity in access to high-quality education regardless of geographical location.

### Recommendations for Theme 3:

- **Uninterrupted Learning Journeys:** Provide as much opportunity as possible for students to move through their learning journey in as uninterrupted way as possible.
- **Ensure Smooth Transitions:** Implement strategies to support smooth transitions between different educational stages, particularly for students moving from middle to senior secondary education.
- **Develop Career Pathways Programs:** Create comprehensive career pathways programs in collaboration with local industries and vocational training organisations, including work experience, apprenticeships, and dual enrolment opportunities.

- **Expand Career Guidance and Counselling:** Strengthen career guidance and counselling services in schools to ensure that all students understand the full range of career and further education options available to them, tailored to their interests and strengths.
- **Increase Access to VET and Work-Integrated Learning:** Advocate for greater access to VET programs and work-integrated learning opportunities, particularly in emerging industries, to align education with future workforce needs.
- **Promote Vocational Education:** Increase awareness of and value for vocational education and training (VET) and other non-university pathways among students, families, and the community.
- **Strengthen Partnerships:** Develop partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and higher education providers to offer diverse and relevant learning opportunities.
- **Facilitate Seamless Transitions for School Leavers:** Develop support structures for school leavers transitioning to employment, further education, or training, including mentorship programs, alumni networks, and partnerships with post-secondary institutions.
- **Support Equity in Access to Pathways:** Ensure equitable access to diverse learning pathways for all students, including targeted support for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, rural areas, and underrepresented groups.

#### **Recommendations for Theme 4:**

- **Expand Pathways for Teacher Training:** Create and promote alternative pathways for teacher training and certification, particularly in high-demand areas, to attract a more diverse teaching workforce.
- **Evidence-based Teaching Practices:** Focus on pre-service programs that enhance evidence-based teaching practices, leadership skills, and support for early-career teachers.
- **Improved Focus on Relationships:** Ensure that initial teacher education includes training in developing and maintaining constructive relationships with students, parents, school colleagues.
- **Attract and Retain Qualified Educators:** Develop strategies to recruit and retain educators in rural and remote areas, including incentives, housing support, and career advancement opportunities.
- **Reduce Administrative Burdens:** Minimise administrative tasks for teachers to allow more time for teaching and learning.
- **Foster Mentorship and Peer Support Programs:** Develop mentorship and peer support programs to support early-career teachers and enhance teacher retention, particularly in challenging teaching environments.
- **Support Teacher Wellbeing:** Provide resources and programs that support the mental health and wellbeing of teachers, recognising the importance of teacher wellness in maintaining high-quality education.
- **Leverage Technology for Professional Development:** Use digital platforms to provide

flexible, accessible professional development opportunities for teachers, particularly those in rural and remote areas.

#### **Recommendations for Theme 5:**

- **Focus on Meaningful Outcomes:** Implement accountability measures that prioritise meaningful outcomes over compliance-driven processes, allowing for flexibility and innovation within schools.
- **Support Reporting and Data Management:** Ensure new reporting requirements come with appropriate funding and support to manage data collection and reporting effectively.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** Promote sector-wide collaboration to share best practices and improve accountability and student outcomes.
- **Develop Tailored Accountability Frameworks:** Advocate for accountability frameworks that are tailored to the unique contexts of independent schools, ensuring they measure diverse educational outcomes, including non-academic achievements.
- **Implement Continuous Improvement Cycles:** Support the use of continuous improvement cycles within schools, where data-driven insights inform regular review and enhancement of educational practices.
- **Enhance Transparency in Reporting:** Improve transparency by providing clear, accessible public reports on school performance that include a range of outcome measures and contextual information.
- **Align Accountability with Support Structures:** Ensure that accountability requirements are aligned with the support structures provided to schools, recognising that meaningful improvement requires both high standards and adequate resources.