Submission to the Tasmanian Government's Independent Education Review

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The Tasmanian Principals Association (TPA) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Independent Education Review in line with the Terms of Reference outlined. This submission represents the collective insights and experiences of government school principals and educational leaders across Tasmania, with the Discussion Paper and guiding questions used as a framework for structuring our response.

Theme 1 - Defining Educational Success

What do you think are the reasons for finishing year 12?

Interpreting the question as the perceived 'drivers, influences or motivations' directly or indirectly for young people in our education system, it is acknowledged that these are multifaceted and unique to the individual. There were however, some prevailing 'reasons' and illustrations of these provided by members.

1. **Family Background and Generational Influence**:

   o Students' educational experiences are often shaped by the adults in their lives, whose own experiences influence their expectations. For many, generational attitudes about education—what it should provide and how it relates to career aspirations—can heavily impact students' engagement and perceived value of education. In many cases, this extends to the adults' understanding of educational pathways which may also be limited, creating challenges in guiding students as to what is available to them.

2. **Time to develop Career and Life Aspirations through Supported Experiences**

   o Many students may lack a clear understanding of career options or how to connect their interests to pathways, leading to lower aspirations. Families may not have the knowledge to effectively support students in identifying practical next steps, contributing to students' uncertainty. Students aged 15-17 may not be developmentally ready to make major career decisions, and schools/colleges in the year 11/12 space can play a vital role by offering structured, supported experiences like vocational education and training (VET) programs and work placements. These experiences help students explore interests in a supported low-risk environment before committing to a long-term career path.

3. **As a pre-requisite step for Tertiary Education**

   o For students that have a firm understanding of their chosen pathways post year 12, the commitment and aspiration to finish year 12 is an investment that they have already made well in advance, often with the support and resources of school staff, family, or external supports to guide them along the way. The driver

for those on a pathway to tertiary education, would typically be completion of pre-tertiary subjects aligned with their career or bachelor degree of choice. Typically these students have determined this pathway well before year 11.

4. **Functional and Life Literacy**:

   o Senior secondary education, particularly in Years 11 and 12, can have an individualised focus on practical life skills and functional literacy for a learner, which are essential for students to succeed in adulthood. These programs can provide the life competencies needed for independence. This phase allows students to develop both emotionally and socially, which is crucial for their decision-making and readiness for life beyond school.

5. **Mandatory Schooling (Education Act)**:

   o The perception that students must stay in school because it is mandated by legislation can negatively affect motivation. When students and families feel that attendance is a legal obligation, the focus may shift from learning for growth and exploration to mere compliance.

6. **'Point in time' Achievement, Success and Outcomes (Latin definition of 'success')**:

   o If we consider the Latin root of success, "to come close after," it highlights the idea that success is a journey or progression. In the context of education (in line with the Ed Act) this motivation is highly variable and could be interpreted as the achievement of the TCE, TCEA, Big Picture Credential, VET Qual, AsBA. Sucess for others is more relational and about gaining meaningful experiences with others, and the capacity to pursue one's interests. Some students have a 'transactional' view with success simply the achievement of completing the mandated 'final year' of senior secondary schooling irrespective of their attendance levels or subject hours completed.

Finishing Year 12 – Definition and Measurement:

How do we measure "finishing Year 12"? Is it by receiving an ATAR, attaining a certificate, completing all general coursework, or simply fulfilling the requirements set by the Education Act? The broader question becomes: What is the purpose of finishing Year 12 and the societal value that we want to place on defining success this way? Is it about preparing for the next step (whether that be further education, employment, or personal development), or is it about meeting a statutory requirement?

Finishing Year 12 should perhaps be measured by the readiness of students to move into the next phase of life, whether that means pursuing higher education, joining the workforce, or successfully navigating adulthood.

What do you think success looks like during and after the formal years of school?

Like the minimum literacy guarantee, we believe there should be a co-designed definition of the base level of success or achievement that we are committed to every young person experiencing through their formal education in Tasmania.

However, above this, school leaders firmly believe in and value that success looks and feels differently across a cohort of learners and the following considerations should be made;

Success begins as a motivating factor for learners from day one.

- It involves building and sustaining strong relationships and connections with the school.

- A key element for success is the development of self-belief in students.

- It needs to be differentiated and acknowledged beyond the current narrow societal definitions.

- Parental engagement and access to support services play a crucial role in determining student success.

- Success involves fostering a love for lifelong learning.

- It is reflected in students becoming positive contributors to society.

- Success should be co-defined with partnerships between schools, further education, industries, and the employment sector.

- Ultimately, it's about empowering students with the skills and knowledge to make informed choices for their future.

How can we better encourage young people to aspire to achieve their ambitions?

Understanding an individual's ambitions requires, trust, respect and a gradual exposure to experiences, information, knowledge and skill building over a sustained period of time. Ambitions are rarely static or singular and we would be ill-placed to assume that these can or should be pre-determined by historical, family, socio-economic, geographical or cultural factors.

The following considerations should be made;

- Focus on the learner's capabilities across the entire education system, as these are tied to their ambitions.

- Listen to students and give them agency in their learning journey.

- Provide flexible learning options tailored to individual learners.

- Ensure that learning is relevant and engaging.

- Move beyond traditional bureaucratic, middle-class processes to address the needs of diverse cultural and demographic groups.

- Eliminate barriers to accessibility, such as scheduling constraints, transport, and resource availability.

- Remove the barriers created by current certification systems

- For every student to receive a recommended pathway at the end of Year 12.

- Backward map the Schools Recommendation Program, aligning how skills, knowledge, and dispositions are measured from Prep to Year 10. This has shown that we do not need to be reliant on the 'sorting' mechanism of the ATAR

What is working well and why?

Public education in Tasmania has much to be proud of. With a dedicated workforce committed to the interests of the young people in our care, there are examples statewide of sustained individual and large scale success and growth. The narrow view of success, which is more widely understood and reported by the media, works well for a specific group of students and is effective as it has remained largely unchallenged for decades. However, there is broad acceptance from educational leaders that more work needs to be done in valuing success that isn't defined simply by attainment measurements.

There is a **realization that change is needed** in the system (just by virtue of this review) and the positive flow-on effect that this then has on whole of system and workforce aspirations.

We are seeing the positive impact from schools and colleges that are adopting **trauma-informed, inclusive approaches** to focus on the holistic child. **Flexibility** in learning, provided through consultations with schools, colleges, and workplaces, is beneficial. This needs to be considered in the paradox of choice, where there is a 'tipping point' when too many options impacts rigour and viability. **Vocational learning opportunities** before Year 11 are effective an example being **Packages of Learning** where the appropriate staffing resources are available.

Dual pathways, such as combining VET qualifications with the TCE play a crucial role in supporting a young person to explore a passion or potential career direction. Many young people select their subjects for year 11 based on their most likely particular field of study or work, then find this vocation or study path can change dramatically. Hence the dual pathway can provide flexibility, success and fulfilment for post year 12. **Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASBAs)** are increasing statewide and this may be due to a range of factors that would be worth exploring by the Review. **Dual enrolments** with VET-specific sites contribute positively to the experiences of year 11/12 students and this has been possible with the resource to extend high school sites to years 11 and 12. The development of **parallel pathways** eg Big Picture credentials to success is working well and should be explored further

Theme 2 - Strengthening supports and engagement for all

What do families do well to support their children and young people in their learning?

School leaders observe almost all parents demonstrating a strong desire for their children to succeed in education. Families tend to be more engaged during the early years of their children's schooling, taking advantage of opportunities to connect with schools through early education programs such as through CFLCs, pre-kinder, and LiL programs for children aged birth to 4. Some families set high expectations for their children and provide the necessary support to help them meet these expectations. Engagement between home and school varies significantly among families, influenced by factors such as socioeconomic context and individual circumstances. This engagement may include supporting consistent language about school values, reinforcing early reading skills, or supporting school routines. Regular, respectful communication between families and schools plays a crucial role in student engagement and success.

What support helps families to do this?

1. **Understanding and Meeting Families' Needs**:
   Schools need to understand where families are at and meet them at their specific points of need.

2. **Access to Professional Support & External Family Support Providers**:
   Families benefit from access to professional support staff within schools and a clear referral pathway to external services when needed.

3. **Parental Confidence and Competence**:
   Building confidence and competence in parents is crucial for supporting their children's education. There are successful examples of programs that support this, but a prevailing inclusive school community culture will always have a greater impact than a program.

4. **Think Differently About Child Development Education**:
   Incorporating fundamental child development studies into the Year 9-10 curriculum can help future parents understand early child development and attachment.

5. **Health and Education Alignment**:
   There is a need for better alignment between health and education services, starting from prenatal care and continuing through early childhood programs into school years.

What can be done to better support students who are struggling or at risk of falling behind to get back on track?

1. **Improved Collaboration and Information Sharing**:
   Better alignment and communication between schools, ARL, and NGOs (e.g., Smith Family) at the regional and school cluster level are needed.

2. **Enhanced Outreach for Marginalized Families**:
   There is a need to improve outreach opportunities for birth-to-4 families, with special consideration for marginalized groups such as those with EAL backgrounds and those facing socioeconomic disadvantage.

3. **Increased Access to Support Staff**:
   More social workers, psychologists, youth workers, speech therapists, and occupational therapists should be available in schools to provide specialised support.

4. **Rethinking the Role of School Health Nurses**:
   The scope of work for school health nurses needs to be adjusted to better support at-risk students.

5. **Reducing Judgment in Academic Monitoring**:
   Academic measurement and monitoring can sometimes lead to a sense of judgment or disconnect with families, which should be addressed sensitively.

6. **Embedding Inclusive Practices**:
   Inclusive practices should be deeply embedded as a standard approach within schools.

How can we ensure all Tasmanian learners get the most out of their education and reach their full potential??

A tri-partisan political commitment to the resourcing and strategic direction of public education in Tasmania is fundamental to every learner having the best possible opportunities for success across the journey of their formal education and beyond. This starts with education funded to **100% of the School Resourcing Standard, through the school gate, as an absolute minimum.**

Principals and school leaders can see further opportunities to set the course for a nation and world leading public education system. Student centred examples include; sample **student voice and provide agency** to the solutions, **prioritise connection and belonging** to maximise opportunities to reach their full potential.

System level and strategic considerations should include; **contemporary research to understand the barriers** experienced by young people, greatly improved **information/data sharing between sectors** as students move, **greater supports for marginalised groups/at risk** eg youth justice, **community centred approaches** - how are we accessing wider community connections, identify how schools utilise and benefit from the initiatives of external providers.

Local level considerations could include; q**uality provision in tier 2/3** to retain students in learning to reach their potential, **provide 'contextual curriculum flexibility'** to schools so that curriculum provision can consider the whole child and student strengths to enhance engagement, **uniformity of student transition** eg year 6-7 – one school can have 8 different expectations on what information is shared about a young person, families are often subjected to the **variability of communications between schools** and individual teachers; this influences on the extent of their positive engagement.

<u>Theme 3 - Outcomes at the conclusion of the formal years of schooling</u>

How best can students be supported to successfully complete and achieve by the end of year 12?

A **collective responsibility** where every educator takes responsibility for ensuring that all students are known, feel safe, and are engaged in learning. This could involve closer monitoring and personalised attention to each student's needs. Schools should have access to **systems and processes to collaborate more effectively** to ensure continuity and that each child is known throughout transitions. Online systems, like those used in other states, can help schools share critical student information beyond just academic data. *Example*: In Victoria, schools use platforms where teachers, counsellors, and administrators can access comprehensive student data, including their goals and strengths, which could serve as a model for Tasmania. **Prioritising student data beyond academic achievements** and include their ambitions, strengths, and unique needs, giving a fuller picture of their potential and direction. **Clarifying pathways** as many students and families may not fully understand the pathways available in Tasmanian education. It's crucial to challenge assumptions and provide clearer guidance on educational and career pathways. **Ongoing support for transitions** such as from primary to secondary school or from Year 10 to 11, should be supported with resourcing and seen as ongoing processes rather than singular events, with many schools doing this successfully. **Early and continuous conversations with students about their future pathways** starting as early as kindergarten can help them feel more informed and prepared for post-education life. Instead of framing Year 12 completion as an obligation, the focus should **shift toward "preparing for post-education pathways**," which could include vocational training or direct employment options.

'What are the Top 2-3 priorities or changes you believe are needed so all Tasmanian young people can complete Year 12 or an equivalent?'

1. **Redefining Year 12 Completion:**
   There is a need to redefine what counts as completing Year 12 or its equivalent. This could mean moving beyond the current benchmarks, such as the TCE (Tasmanian Certificate of Education) and associated criteria, and creating a more inclusive and flexible qualification system.

Example: By removing rigid requirements and introducing broader qualifications, students could engage in more personalized pathways, like vocational training, that still lead to recognized achievement.

2. **Major Curriculum Reform**:
Principals see the need for a comprehensive curriculum overhaul. The current structure is considered a barrier, and addressing this could better align with students' diverse needs and ambitions.

3. **Commitment to Funding and Reform:**
There must be a universal, non-political commitment to educational reform and funding. Ensuring that education is free from political influence would provide a stable foundation for necessary changes to take place.

4. **Clear Pathways and Engagement:**
It's important that communities have a clear understanding of the available pathways for students to complete Year 12 or its equivalent. In addition, secondary education offerings should be engaging and relevant to all students to maintain their interest and help them succeed.

'What are the most important ways to support choice for students?'

1. **Curriculum Flexibility and Engagement**:
Supporting student choice starts early. Curriculum provision should be connected from early childhood through to senior secondary years, ensuring students can explore different subjects and develop interests that inform later choices. The current certification restrictions, like being unable to study both visual art and photography, should be loosened to offer more diverse learning options.

Example: Allowing students to tailor their course selections based on personal interests (like combining arts subjects) gives them more control over their learning pathways.

2. **Addressing Geographic and Resource Disparities**:
Curriculum choices are often limited by geographic location and teacher availability. Providing equitable access to resources, regardless of a student's location, and ensuring that there is a diverse range of subjects and qualified teachers across regions is crucial for real choice.

3. **Flexible Learning Structures**:
Principals suggest challenging the traditional 5-day, 40-week school model, particularly in Year 11 and 12. This might involve flexible delivery methods and more adaptable timetabling to meet individual student needs and provide greater choice.

4. **Clear Communication of Pathways**:
Schools need to improve how they communicate available pathways to students and families, helping them make informed choices based on their interests and aspirations. This also includes valuing all pathways equally—whether academic,

vocational, or other directions—so that students see each as a valid route to future success.

5. **Innovative Resourcing**:
   To truly expand choice, educational resourcing must adapt. This includes investing in resources that support different ways of delivering education, whether through technology, alternative timetables, or new learning environments.

Theme 4 - Support for our teaching workforce

How to Attract More Great Teachers and School Leaders

1. **Competitive Compensation and Incentives**:
   Although salary discussions are currently off the table, Tasmanian principals highlighted that they are among the lowest-paid nationally, despite facing challenging conditions. Offering financial incentives, such as eliminating HECS debt for new teachers, could help attract more talent. Models like Queensland's practice of paying first-year recruits to work in rural areas were also noted as effective.

2. **Reviving Intern Recruitment and University Connections**:
   Principals suggested reinstituting intern recruitment programs, which previously had a strong research base and were effective. Additionally, there is a need for stronger collaboration between universities and schools. Experienced teachers should be involved in reshaping teacher education programs to ensure they are relevant and practical.

Example: Experienced teachers could be brought into university settings to co-design and deliver parts of the curriculum, ensuring new teachers are equipped with real-world skills and perspectives.

3. **Positive Public Perception and Cultural Shift**:
   Public opinion about teaching is often negative, and this needs to change. Universities should incentivise students to stay in teaching degrees, while media and public commentary should promote teaching as a valued profession. Programs that publicly appreciate the work of teachers would help shift the narrative.

4. **Targeted Support for Early Career Teachers**:
   Principals advocated for a better funding model to support coaching and mentorship during the first five years of teaching. These formative years are crucial for retention, and with proper support, early career teachers can feel more confident and competent.

How to Retain and Support Existing Teachers and School Leaders

1. **Flexible Work Arrangements and Leadership Support**:
   Principals emphasized the importance of flexible employment options, such as allowing experienced leaders to adjust their full-time equivalent (FTE) status to suit

their lifestyle. This would help retain talent by giving them more control over their careers. Additionally, providing mentorships and clear career pathways for teachers at all stages could prevent burnout and encourage long-term commitment.

2. **Reducing Pressure and Priorities**:
   The increasing pressure on schools to address broader societal issues, combined with the ever-growing list of teacher responsibilities, was identified as overwhelming. Reducing the number of priorities for teachers would allow them to focus more deeply on their core tasks. Principals stressed that teachers need work conditions to be prioritised.

3. **Positive Media Representation and Public Commentary**:
   Principals expressed frustration over negative media portrayal and the lack of recognition for the work educators do. Public commentary needs to shift from "teacher bashing" to highlighting what is working well in schools. An appreciative, positive model of communication, both in the media and within the school system could boost morale.

Example: Media campaigns or public appreciation initiatives could highlight teacher success stories, helping to reshape the public's view of education professionals.

4. **Autonomy and Flexibility in Resource Allocation**:
   The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the potential for flexible resource allocation, and principals urged for more autonomy in how schools use their resources. This would allow schools to tailor support to their specific needs, making better use of coaching models and external collaborations.

By addressing these areas, Tasmanian schools can attract and retain quality teachers and leaders, ensuring they remain energised, supported, and capable of delivering excellent education.

Theme 5 - Accountability for improved outcomes

'What helps teachers and school leaders implement initiatives so that the focus on improvement is maintained?'

1. Differentiation and Contextual Flexibility

- **Tailoring Initiatives to Local Contexts**:
  Principals emphasised that the success of initiatives depends on how well they fit within the specific contexts of individual schools. Recognizing that schools are at different stages in their journey is crucial. A one-size-fits-all approach creates challenges and fatigue among staff. Differentiation helps identify where each school should begin implementing an initiative based on its unique needs and resources.

Example: For literacy programs, schools with different demographics may require distinct starting points. Schools serving diverse populations may need additional foundational work before rolling out the broader initiative.

2. Pacing and Managing Initiative Fatigue

- **Slowing the Rollout**:
  The number of initiatives schools face is overwhelming, contributing to initiative fatigue. Principals stressed the need to pace rollouts more effectively. Schools need time to fully understand, implement, and monitor one initiative before moving on to the next.

- **Clear Implementation Plans and Pre-conditions**:
  Principals called for clear, well-communicated implementation plans for schools, particularly with major reforms like MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support). Foundational systems, such as human resources and transfer procedures, should be solidified beforehand to support successful implementation.

  Example: If schools are implementing a new approach to student well-being, the timeline should account for foundational staff training, ensuring HR processes are in place for hiring specialized support staff before full implementation begins.

3. Understanding the 'Why' and Grand Plan

- **Universal Buy-In**:
  For any initiative to succeed, teachers and school leaders need to understand the underlying purpose, or the 'why.' This understanding fosters commitment and universal buy-in. A clear vision that outlines how each initiative fits into the broader plan helps school staff see how their efforts contribute to long-term goals.

- **Mapping Ahead**:
  Having a 'grand plan' that shows how initiatives will unfold over time is essential for planning. Schools can align their resources, budgets, and efforts in advance when they have a clear understanding of upcoming priorities.

4. Supportive Infrastructure and Resource Planning

- **Access to Contemporary Data and Monitoring**:
  Principals stressed the importance of having accessible, contemporary data that allows for quick tracking of progress. Schools need systems that can monitor growth within their specific context, rather than being compared across schools. Data should provide useful feedback that helps guide implementation and improvement efforts.

- **Advanced Resource Planning**:
  Resource planning is another critical factor for success. Schools must have a budget and resources in place well in advance to ensure local-level implementation

is seamless. Initiatives requiring new materials, such as decodable books for literacy, need timely funding and procurement.

5. Wellbeing and Valuing Staff

- **Staff Wellbeing and Support**:
  Principals highlighted that supporting teachers' wellbeing is essential to maintaining a focus on improvement. Structured support, such as pastoral care and growth focused coaching, helps teachers feel valued and nurtured. Regular conversations about how initiatives are going also create a supportive environment.

- **Valuing Time for Teaching**:
  Time is one of the most valuable resources for teachers. Quarantining time for the craft of teaching allows educators to focus on their professional growth and the effective implementation of new initiatives. When teachers feel respected and supported both personally and professionally, they are more motivated to engage in improvement efforts.

  Example: Schools could establish regular check-ins with teachers during the rollout of a new initiative, providing pastoral support and professional development tailored to their needs. This ensures teachers feel confident and supported, which, in turn, improves their performance and engagement.

By prioritizing these areas—differentiation, pacing, understanding the purpose, resource planning, and staff wellbeing—schools can maintain a sustainable focus on improvement while implementing new initiatives effectively.

'How do we ensure that policy initiatives are effectively implemented and that resources are used to improve learning outcomes?'

1. Contextual Flexibility and Principal Empowerment

- **Context-Specific Implementation**:
  Principals highlighted the need for schools to have the autonomy to adapt policy initiatives to their unique contexts. What works in one school may not be suitable for another. Allowing principals to collaborate with their leadership teams on how best to implement initiatives ensures that they are tailored to the needs of the school community.

- **Local Decision-Making**:
  Principals should be entrusted with making decisions that reflect their school's particular needs, resources, and student demographics. This autonomy empowers school leaders to align system priorities with local contexts, ensuring more effective outcomes.

  Example: A rural school might implement a policy differently than an urban school, factoring in available resources, student population, and the specific challenges faced by the community.

2. Inquiry Cycles and Adequate Time

- **Sufficient Time for Inquiry and Reflection**:
  Principals pointed out that policy implementation requires adequate time for schools to stay in inquiry cycles, where they can assess, adjust, and improve initiatives. Tight deadlines and expectations for rapid growth are counterproductive. Schools need to be allowed to progress through inquiry cycles at a pace that allows for genuine reflection and improvement.

- **Balancing Growth Expectations**:
  While there is pressure for significant growth in a short time, this needs to be tempered with realistic timelines that allow for gradual, sustainable improvement. Policies that impose rapid change often miss the opportunity for deep, meaningful learning and adjustment.

  Example: A reading program may require several inquiry cycles to assess its impact, make adjustments, and fully integrate it into a school's culture, rather than expecting immediate results within a single term.

3. Data Sharing and Inter-agency Collaboration

- **Streamlined Data Sharing Systems**:
  Effective policy implementation relies on systems that facilitate the sharing of data, not only within education but also across other agencies such as health and child services. Principals emphasised the need for better alignment and coordination of child-focused priorities across multiple agencies to address the holistic needs of students.

- **Coordination Across Agencies**:
  Schools are often tasked with responsibilities beyond teaching and learning, such as addressing health and social outcomes. For policies to be effective, there must be improved collaboration and coordination between schools and other agencies, ensuring that education policies align with broader social services to support student well-being and learning.

  Example: A school working on improving student attendance could benefit from better collaboration with health services to address underlying health issues impacting attendance, rather than addressing attendance in isolation.

4. Focus on Core Priorities

- **Key Priorities for Improvement**:
  Principals suggested that not all initiatives directly impact learning outcomes. There is a need to focus on core areas like attendance, engagement, and high-quality Tier 1 teaching, rather than adopting broad, one-size-fits-all policies (e.g., reading

modules for every site). This targeted approach ensures that resources and professional development efforts are channeled toward initiatives with the most significant impact on learning.

- **Choice in System Priorities**:
Providing schools with some degree of choice in system-wide priorities enables them to focus on initiatives that are most relevant to their specific context. By aligning system goals with local needs, schools can prioritize initiatives that will have the most substantial impact on student outcomes.

  Example: For some schools, focusing on improving teacher professional development in Tier 1 teaching strategies may have a more significant impact than a mandated system-wide literacy program.

5. Addressing Basic Needs and Student Well-Being

- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Feeling Safe**:
Principals underscored that many schools must address fundamental student needs before they can focus on learning. Students must feel safe and have their basic needs met before they can engage in academic learning. Policy initiatives must take this into account and ensure that school environments are supportive and nurturing.

- **Student Well-Being as a Priority**:
Initiatives that prioritise creating safe and supportive learning environments are essential for long-term success. Our system must provide the enabling conditions so that all schools can create learning communities where students feel secure, both physically and emotionally, as a foundation for learning.

  Example: A school might prioritize initiatives focused on student well-being, such as anti-bullying programs or mental health support, as a precursor to academic improvements.

6. Celebrating Success

- **Celebration of Growth and Success**:
Principals stressed the importance of celebrating incremental improvements and successes. By acknowledging and celebrating the progress made in implementing School Improvement Plans (SIPs), schools can maintain momentum and build morale among staff and students. This approach fosters a positive culture that values effort and growth, even in small steps.

- **Building Positive Narratives**:
Rather than focusing solely on shortcomings or challenges, schools should celebrate the great things happening in their communities, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement and recognizing achievements along the way.

Example: Schools might celebrate small gains in student engagement or incremental growth in literacy outcomes, even if full implementation of a literacy initiative is ongoing.

7. Audit and Accountability

- **Audit of Non-School Business Units**:
  Principals suggested auditing the impact of non-school business units to determine their contribution to learner outcomes. This would provide accountability and ensure that the resources and efforts of these units are directly supporting schools in improving learning outcomes.

- **Focus on Initiatives That Directly Impact Learners**:
  An audit would help determine which initiatives have the most direct impact on learning and ensure that schools are not burdened with policies that are peripheral to student success.

  Example: By auditing the effectiveness of external business units, schools could reallocate resources from less impactful initiatives to those that provide more direct support to student learning.

By focusing on contextual flexibility, giving schools time for inquiry, enhancing collaboration with other agencies, prioritizing core initiatives, addressing basic student needs, and celebrating success, Tasmanian principals believe that policy initiatives can be more effectively implemented and better support learning outcomes.