

# FRAMEWORK

for maximising engagement and  
re-engagement in education

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS





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# Our goal



The Department of Education and Training supports all children to remain engaged in education and training from early childhood through to Year 12 or equivalent. This includes encouraging students who are disengaged or at risk of disengagement to re-engage in education, training or employment, and expanding the diversity and flexibility of inclusive schooling options.



# Introduction

**Ensuring that all children and young people remain engaged in education and training, and then make a strong transition to further education, training or employment, is a priority for the Queensland Government.**

Safe, supportive and inclusive schools with high-quality curriculum and pedagogy are key to ensuring every Queensland child and young person has the chance to reach their full potential. Most children and young people do well in Queensland schools, for example:

- ▶ In 2016, Queensland schools demonstrated the greatest improvement in NAPLAN of any state or territory.
- ▶ More Queensland students, including Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, are successfully completing Year 12 than in previous years.
- ▶ In 2016, a record 97.8 per cent of the 51,022 Year 12 students had achieved a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement.

However, some children and young people experience barriers to successful participation. Disengagement<sup>1</sup> can happen at any phase of education, from early childhood through to senior secondary schooling. Timely and skilled interventions can support many students to get back on track. For other children and young people, there will need to be intensive and sustained interventions throughout their learning pathway. Still others may benefit from alternative environments outside of the mainstream system.

The *Framework for maximising engagement and re-engagement in education* outlines an evidence-based approach to meeting the needs of children and young people who are at risk of disengagement, or who are disengaged from education. The framework outlines components of a strong and inclusive system. It has been developed to support Queensland state schools, regional staff in the Department of Education and Training (DET) and other stakeholders to maximise engagement and re-engagement of young Queenslanders in education.

Readers may also like to refer to the *Practice Guide for youth engagement* which is a companion document that provides schools and other frontline staff with tools and further information to support their high-quality and inclusive practice.

For further insights into youth re-engagement refer to *Everybody's business*, which outlines some of the innovative approaches to youth engagement being delivered across Queensland.

<sup>1</sup> Fredericks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C. and Paris, A.H. (2004) School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence Review of Educational Research, 74 (1), p59-109. Fredericks et al. (2004) define engagement as consisting of three dimensions: cognitive — a student's psychological investment in their own learning; behaviour — a student's participation in learning activities; and emotional — a student's relationships with learning, teachers and others in the learning environment. Disengagement occurs when children and young people experience disconnection across one or all of these domains.

# A glossary of terms

## Alternative education settings

Alternative education settings, also known as flexible settings, flexi-schools or second-chance schools, provide opportunities to re-engage students in their learning by offering access to educational programs on sites separate to regular primary or secondary schools.

## At risk of disengagement

At risk of disengagement refers to children and young people who are moving towards disengaging from education. There are certain circumstances that place a child or young person at risk of becoming disengaged. There is no single cause of disengagement, nor does any number of risk factors indicate that a child will necessarily disengage; but there are characteristics that staff can determine if intervention is necessary:

- ▶ diminishing academic effort or not submitting assessment
- ▶ a history of poor attendance
- ▶ poor behaviour resulting in high numbers of suspensions, exclusions or cancellations of enrolment
- ▶ increasing antisocial behaviour
- ▶ involvement with the youth justice system
- ▶ substance abuse
- ▶ declining mental health
- ▶ homelessness or insecure housing
- ▶ in out-of-home care
- ▶ family dysfunction
- ▶ subject to bullying.

Early intervention is the most effective strategy that can prevent disengagement. While this list is not exhaustive, efforts need to be made by officers in different agencies to share information on children and youth to better identify candidates for intervention and create carefully tailored interventions.



## Case management

Case management refers to regular and sustained support provided to a child or young person who is disengaged that assists them to transition to an education, training or employment destination. Support can be provided through telephone contact or face-to-face contact with the child or young person, their family and other agencies.

## Disengagement

Disengagement is a term used to describe many things, from students who are cognitively disengaged but attending, through to scenarios where students are prevented from attending. Schools play the most important role in recognising when students begin to disengage and for developing intervention plans to retain young people in school. Schools are also responsible for attempting to re-engage young people when they have been absent from school for up to 15 days. For the purposes of DET data reporting, disengaged young people are defined as “*a child or young person who has stopped attending for at least 30 consecutive school days, or who is not enrolled in an eligible option as set out in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (EGPA)*”. Eligible options during the compulsory participation phase include state and non-state schools, vocational education and training courses or employment.

## Functional behavioural assessment

A functional behavioural assessment is an evidence-based process for identifying the cause of problem behaviours. This type of assessment looks beyond the form of the behaviour itself (how it looks and sounds) and focuses on identifying significant and specific environmental factors associated with the occurrence of problem behaviour. Data is collected and analysed to identify the purpose or function of the problem behaviour, and a function-based individual student support plan is put in place.

## Involved with youth justice

A child or young person who has been charged with, or found guilty of, a crime and has been involved in the youth justice system — for example, court order, bail, probation, transitioning out of youth detention.

## Pop-up classroom

Pop-up classrooms are temporary ‘pop-up’ arrangements for students who require immediate and temporary responses to their learning needs in an accessible location (for example, students in youth justice who are waiting placement in a mainstream school or alternative setting, or students who require case management prior to placement). These classrooms enable teachers to provide direct education at a location the student can access.

## Positive learning centre

There are 15 positive learning centres located across Queensland which provide an alternative program for students of compulsory school age, enrolled in a state school, who may require intervention beyond the capacity of a mainstream classroom. The aim of the centres is to re-integrate students into mainstream schooling or into more appropriate learning or vocational pathways.

## Success coach

School leaders at some schools pool their resources to assign an existing staff member, or engage a new person, to act as a success coach at the school. A success coach works with the principal and teachers to identify students at risk of disengaging, to develop intervention and support tactics; to act as a mentor for the student; and to advocate on the student's behalf. They may also create an individualised Student Success Plan in collaboration with the student, their family and school staff.

## Trauma-informed practice

Trauma-informed practice is an approach based on knowledge and understanding of the impact of trauma on people's lives. Trauma can have a long-lasting impact on children's development which can often reduce their capacity to concentrate and learn. Teachers can make an enormous contribution to the lives of traumatised children by building trusting relationships with them which in turn encourages children to develop an attachment to their school and a love of learning.

## Transition

**Transition can have two possible definitions.**

- ▶ Firstly, in the case of all children and young people broadly, transition refers to the normal advancement from one education setting to the next as they progress in their education, i.e. from early years to prep, primary school to secondary school, between schools during their education, completion of Year 10 or Year 12 to further education and training or employment.
- ▶ Secondly, in the case of disengaged children and young people, transition refers to when they have been successfully placed into an education, training or employment destination that meets the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 requirements for compulsory participation. Eligible options can include:
  - state, non-state schooling and registered home education
  - VET, which encompasses accredited vocational education and training qualifications from certificate I level to advanced diploma or associate degree level. This can also include an unspecified VET course, or other basic courses (for example, short courses) and skills sets. It also includes enrolment in Queensland Government-funded literacy and numeracy training funded through the VET Investment Plan, or enrolment in Commonwealth Government-funded programs such as the Skills for Education and Employment or Adult Migrant English Program
  - apprenticeships and traineeships
  - Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) programs
  - at least 25 hours per week of paid employment (full-time, part-time or casual)
  - higher education.

## Youth Engagement Hub

A Youth Engagement Hub is the system established by each regional director to lead youth engagement and re-engagement in their region. They are designed to respond to the unique geographic and demographic context of each region, but usually include inter-agency collaboration, reporting and identification of disengaged young people, support to schools, and complex case management.



# A system of programs and services

## TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

**Queensland's schooling system aims to meet the needs of all students from Prep to Year 12. This means building a strong system of options for children and young people who are at risk or disengaged.**

### INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM SCHOOLING

Safe, supportive and inclusive schools with high-quality curriculum and pedagogy are an essential component of a strong system.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to meeting the needs of any student. All schools need to provide differentiated responses to their students. Many students experience challenges at various junctures in their school life, and for most students, remaining at their school provides their best chance of success. Queensland state schools are resourced to provide a wide range of support, such as the Positive Behaviour for Learning approach, and targeted interventions.

Furthermore, students are able to maintain peer relationships, transport arrangements, uninterrupted study and a sense of inclusion and connectedness with their school community. Additionally, mainstream schools, for the main part, achieve greatest economy of scale and are therefore more cost-efficient.

Some young people experience complex situations that warrant an alternative arrangement. DET will work to minimise the need for this where ever possible, as mainstream schooling generally offers the best outcomes for young people. However, it is recognised that for a small number, alternative education will be their path through to Year 12 or equivalent.

## Participation options for young people

For over a decade, apprenticeships, traineeships and accredited training have provided strong participation options for 15–17 year olds during their senior schooling. These options form part of our “schooling” system outside of traditional classrooms.

## Flexibility within schools

Many principals have created alternative programs or settings within their schools to respond to the needs of children and young people who are at risk of disengaging.

These can include:

- ▶ alternative classrooms — which provide customised approaches for a small number of students in the school
- ▶ flexi-schools — separate spaces that may be situated on- or off-site and provide customised and targeted support to students.

DET supports and encourages these practices, while underlining clear evidence that shows that the likelihood of a child or young person’s success increases when they remain included in mainstream education.

## Special schools

Special schools play an important role in educating a small number of Queensland children with disabilities. Such children must meet strict eligibility requirements to gain enrolment. Special schools are not designed as destinations for disengaged students, although some students with disability who meet the eligibility requirements may also experience disengagement.

## ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PATHWAYS

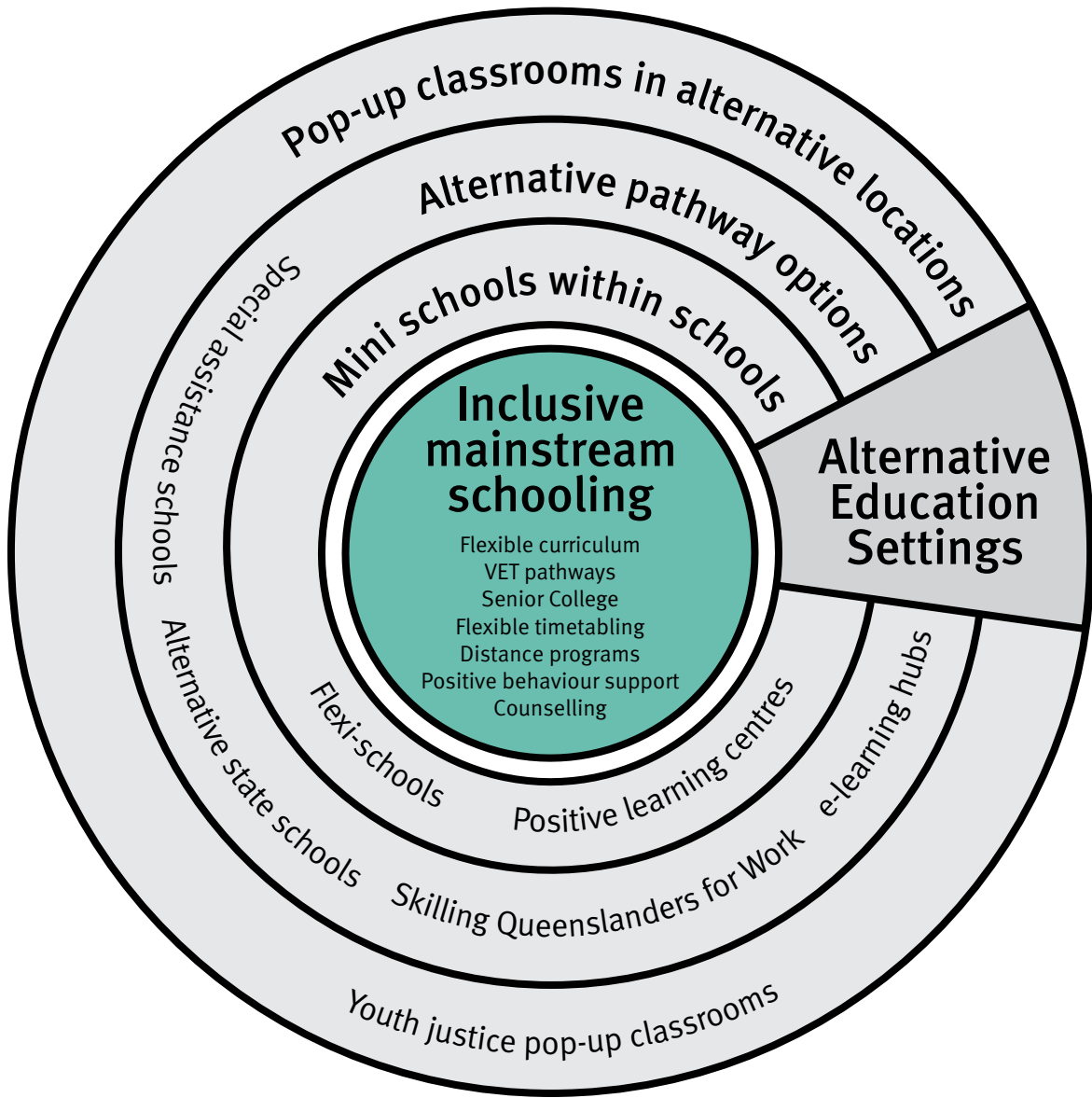
It is vital to maintain the right balance of learning pathways and options. School principals should focus on the retention of their students, including those with more complex needs or challenging behaviours.

At the same time, it is important that options are available for young people who cannot thrive in mainstream settings. A principal’s decision to refer a student to an alternative setting should only occur after there have been significant attempts to meet the student’s needs, respectful consultation with the student and their parents/carers, and careful consideration of the alternative options. (See the *Practice Guide for youth engagement* for processes for transitioning students in and out of alternative settings.)

Alternative options may include, but are not confined to:

- ▶ non-state special assistance schools
- ▶ schools of distance education (where specialist programs are provided)
- ▶ programs funded through Skilling Queenslanders for Work for young people aged 15 or older and no longer at school:
  - Get Set for Work
  - Youth Skills
  - Ready for Work
  - Community Work Skills
  - Work Skills Traineeships.

# RE-ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM



## Pop-up classrooms

In some cases, children and young people cannot be immediately transitioned into an appropriate learning setting. These students require immediate and temporary responses to their learning needs in an accessible location (for example, students involved in the youth justice system who are waiting placement in a mainstream school or alternative setting, students who require case management prior to placement). In these cases, temporary “pop-up” arrangements can be established, with teachers providing direct education at alternative locations.

## Intervention models

**Targeted, timely and sustained interventions play an important role in maximising engagement and outcomes.**

Education professionals all know that prevention is better than intervention, but where this fails, early intervention is the key to success.

Across all education and training settings, some children and young people require intervention to support them to remain engaged in their education or training setting. Such interventions might include:

- ▶ behaviour support based on functional behaviour assessment
- ▶ individualised case management
- ▶ attendance improvement plans
- ▶ success coaches
- ▶ mentors
- ▶ behaviour support
- ▶ counselling
- ▶ welfare support (for example, bus fares, uniforms, food)
- ▶ referral to health services, or other services
- ▶ complex case management panels.

Intervention is everybody’s business, and everyone in a school plays a role in supporting young people in need of intervention. The most effective interventions are delivered by a cohesive team, under the leadership or guidance of someone skilled and experienced in intervention and in assessment of individual student needs. In many cases, multidisciplinary teams are required to provide the necessary professional support including psychological, behavioural and educational expertise, and cross-agency collaboration or referrals should be considered as part of an intervention plan wherever necessary.

## Re-engagement approaches

Where students become disengaged from education or training, a concerted effort will be made to ensure they are supported to re-engage.

This may occur through a range of approaches. In many instances, where enrolling schools become aware of prolonged student attendance issues, they will make every effort to re-engage the student. This occurs through case management back into the school setting from which the student disengaged, or referral to another eligible option.<sup>2</sup>

In some cases, other agencies may refer the student to the regional office, or the regional office will seek out young people not attending schooling. Officers within the region will take a direct role in supporting disengaged young people and managing their positive transitions. In addition, regional Youth Engagement Hubs work with schools and other agencies to support students to re-engage in education, training or employment, and collaborate with other agencies that may be working with those young people.

<sup>2</sup> Parents may be prosecuted if they do not fulfil their legal obligations in regard to enrolment and attendance of their child at school, or participation in an eligible option in accordance with the *Education (General Provisions) Act (2006)*.







# Passing the baton

**Where children and young people are at risk of disengagement or have disengaged every effort should be made to ensure that the student experiences seamless support as they receive intervention, or are referred into another setting.**

This means that the school or educational setting that is working with the student must ensure they 'pass the baton'. We all know that it's only through extensive practice and thorough communication that a relay team can master the skill required to pass a baton from one to the other while maintaining both speed and precision. The same dedication and in-depth communication is required from schools and educational settings working with students to transition them between different environments. To ensure a young person receives the support they need to succeed, every organisation along the way needs to stay connected and assume responsibility for that young person until the process is completed.

In addition, when a young person transitions from the care of other Queensland Government agencies, the school or education setting needs to support that young person's integration so they can enjoy a positive education experience. There are a number of ways to do this, including:

- ▶ delivering orientation programs
- ▶ offering the student a success coach, mentoring or buddy programs
- ▶ establishing regular communication with other agencies involved in the young person's support
- ▶ determining school staff who are the 'best fit' to support the young person
- ▶ establishing a case manager for the young person until they are clearly on a pathway to success
- ▶ assessing the student's eligibility for any supplementary programs or supports the school offers
- ▶ offering counselling and guidance to support the student's integration in the school community
- ▶ offering short-term literacy or numeracy courses to improve the student's capacity to succeed in mainstream classes
- ▶ accessing a Youth Engagement Hub for guidance and support with complex cases
- ▶ recognising and engaging with the student's parents or carers.

# Governance

**Strong governance is a vital component of a responsive and effective education and training system. An effective governance system ensures accountability and transparency through:**

- ▶ **clear roles and responsibilities**
- ▶ **targeted responses at every level**
- ▶ **effective collaboration.**

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Whole of government

The Queensland Government fosters a shared vision for maximum engagement of children and young people in education or training, and will:

- ▶ collaborate to ensure all relevant government agencies who work with children and young people adopt a coordinated approach to youth engagement
- ▶ support the Youth Engagement Alliance — a forum for Queensland Government agencies, schooling sectors and other stakeholders to partner in our efforts to improve the re-engagement of young Queenslanders in education, training or employment. Visit [www.qld.gov.au/youthengagementalliance](http://www.qld.gov.au/youthengagementalliance).

### The Department of Education and Training — central office

The Department of Education and Training sets the overarching policy for engagement in education and training, allocates resources, and monitors outcomes, and will:

- ▶ work with other agencies, community-based organisations, special assistance schools and other stakeholders at a system-wide level to remove any barriers to collaboration
- ▶ ensure policies, procedures, OneSchool and other resources support regions and schools to support all students
- ▶ support consistent and objective evaluation of alternative approaches to inform future investment
- ▶ ensure that resourcing mechanisms recognise the role that schools and regions play in maximising engagement and re-engagement.

## Regional directors and regional DET teams

Regional directors and regional DET teams support the effective implementation of education and training programs and services at a local level, and will:

- ▶ ensure schools retain and deliver high-quality programs that maximise all student outcomes
- ▶ consider school and regional data, including the complete picture provided by combined retention, exclusion and cancellation data
- ▶ work collaboratively to support the provision of high-quality responses to children and young people at risk of disengaging from education in their region
- ▶ identify and address disengagement where disengagement is prevalent
- ▶ support ongoing liaison with relevant agencies and other stakeholders
- ▶ work with schools (including, where appropriate, non-state schools) to support better networking of resources
- ▶ lead a regional Youth Engagement Hub in each region.

## Schools and school leaders

Schools and school leaders provide high-quality services for children and young people, and will:

- ▶ lead safe, supportive and inclusive state schooling with high-quality engagement opportunity and appropriate intervention
- ▶ collaborate as part of a network of schools to share resources and learnings
- ▶ take responsibility for retention, exclusion and cancellation data
- ▶ show extreme vigilance with respect to decisions to move students out of mainstream settings (see *Practice Guide for youth engagement*)
- ▶ support every early leaver to make a strong transition to an eligible option
- ▶ give careful consideration to offering tailored, in-school approaches, such as flexi-schools, to meet the needs of their most at-risk students
- ▶ consider relevant legislative obligations with respect to enrolling students who have become disengaged
- ▶ marshal existing school resources to deliver outcomes for all enrolled students, including students who are at risk of disengaging or who are disengaged
- ▶ recognise their responsibility for “passing the baton” where they make a decision to move their student into an alternative education setting
- ▶ recognise their role as a leader within a community of schools and work with networks of schools to find ways of using resources to meet the needs of their most at-risk and disengaged students and, where possible, disconnected students
- ▶ recognise and actively support other agencies that may be involved in the lives of some young people.

# WHAT IS A REGIONAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT HUB?

**A Youth Engagement Hub is the system established by each regional director to lead youth engagement and re-engagement in their region.**

The Youth Engagement Hubs provide regional directors with the authority and structures to lead engagement and re-engagement in their region by:

- ▶ tracking and re-engaging children and young people who are disengaged
- ▶ supporting mainstream schools to retain the vast majority of students
- ▶ fostering innovation and good practice
- ▶ allocating discretionary resources
- ▶ building collaborative capability, including with partner agencies
- ▶ supporting evidence-based decision-making.

Regional Youth Engagement Hubs complement the significant achievements of state schools in providing safe, supportive and inclusive schools that deliver outcomes for every student. Youth Engagement Hubs are designed by regional directors. They will not be uniform across the state. They will be designed to meet the unique geographic and demographic context of each region.

According to regional circumstances, Youth Engagement Hubs may establish:

- ▶ regional systems to identify and re-engage children and young people who are disengaged
- ▶ alternative sites for young people who are disengaged and are not thriving in mainstream settings
- ▶ partnerships and networks with and between mainstream, alternative and flexible settings to strive for a continuum of programs and services for all children and young people
- ▶ governance arrangements that foster better collaboration and multi-agency approaches, including regional or local memorandum of understanding
- ▶ partnerships and networks of state schools to support retention of students in mainstream settings.

Youth Engagement Hubs *may*:

- ▶ be established as teams in regional offices, schools or other settings; in virtual settings; or a combination of both
- ▶ consist of a single hub, or a network of hubs throughout regions
- ▶ include external agents (for example, community-based organisations, special assistance schools, other government agencies), or co-opt this collaboration as required.

## PROCESSES FOR TRANSITIONING STUDENTS OUT OF MAINSTREAM SETTINGS

Inclusive education ensures that schools are supportive and engaging places, and that every state school student is learning and achieving in a safe, supportive, inclusive and disciplined learning environment every day in every classroom.

With initiatives such as Investing for Success, and the provision of Positive Behaviour for Learning and Learning and Wellbeing Frameworks, state schools are supported to assist all students, including those most in need, to achieve improved outcomes at all levels of schooling.

However, some students may benefit from placement in positive learning centres or alternative education settings.

Decisions to transfer students from mainstream settings should not be made lightly. Regional officers, principals and their staff should collectively consider a range of factors related to the young person's best interests, and consult openly with the young person and their family prior to recommending the transfer of a student.

Processes for transitioning students out of mainstream settings and back into mainstream settings are set out in the *Practice Guide for youth engagement*.

# Evaluation

## It is important to collect and use reliable evidence to inform decision-making.

Education and training settings should implement a plan to collect, analyse and discuss data on academic outcomes, attendance, behaviour and student wellbeing — for both formative and summative purposes. Together these data provide:

- ▶ an overview of the progress of individual students, priority cohorts, whole-school and system levels
- ▶ insights into the academic, social and behavioural needs of students
- ▶ insights into the effectiveness of specific approaches.

### Success measures for evaluating outcomes of alternative settings

The Department of Education and Training has established a clear key performance indicator framework for early childhood, school, and vocational education and training settings. This framework includes indicators that cascade at the provider, regional and central office level.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) has also developed *An Outcomes Framework for Queensland Independent Special Assistance Schools*, which is available to all member schools.

High expectations for students, in terms of strong academic gain and learning, and strong transitions, are a key attribute for all school environments, including flexible and alternative education settings. These important outcomes should be measured.

Changes in wellbeing can also provide important insights into student progress. Wellbeing data often require subjective and qualitative judgments to be made by personnel on the effectiveness of their program, in line with DET's standards of evidence.

The following measures provide an overview for a wide range of data to describe the outcomes of an alternative setting.

In isolation, no one set of data provides a rigorous picture of outcomes for students. However, the multiple measures of success we are proposing present a robust overview of the outcomes that an educational setting can deliver for its students.

The use of current and accurate data to measure the success of alternative settings is necessary to achieve valid results.

### Achieving a balanced view of success

We are proposing the following five measures for evaluating the success of alternative settings, noting that wellbeing is a new measure, underlining its importance to a student's engagement and success in learning.

These measures need to be interpreted as a whole. Each data set works together to provide a holistic picture of distance travelled in the wellbeing, learning and transitions of individual students, as well as overall outcomes for the school.

We are continuing to develop and assess tools to assist in evaluating alternative settings. While the use of these measures is not mandated, the measures are designed as a mechanism for schools to reflect on student improvement in a holistic way.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS IN ALTERNATIVE SETTINGS

<p><b>Engagement</b></p>	<p>Engagement data should be read in conjunction with a range of other indicators. For example, what is the relative gain in other areas? What was the wellbeing of the student when they were enrolled? What is the wellbeing of the student now? How does this relate to attendance and school disciplinary absences?</p>
<p><b>Achievement and learning</b></p>	<p>Student academic achievement and learning is a key outcome for any school. For some individual students and cohorts, wellbeing data can provide an important context for judgments about their learning. The goal of the school would be to view distance travelled in wellbeing and academic gain over time.</p>
<p><b>Destinations</b></p>	<p>Strong student transitions are a key goal for all schools, and student destinations provide an indication of how schools support their students to succeed. For our most at-risk students, an integrated picture of the wellbeing, achievement and learning needs to be taken into account when making a judgment about the destinations of students.</p>
<p><b>Quality and satisfaction</b></p>	<p>Satisfaction of parents and students is an important indicator of the performance of a school. Satisfaction cannot stand alone as the only measure of outcomes — but should be considered in conjunction with other indicators.</p>
<p><b>Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>Learning and engagement may not occur where a student is experiencing significant physical, emotional or social barriers. Many young people require multidisciplinary support, and schools can play an important supporting role. Distance travelled in wellbeing (which can include resilience, academic self-concept and perseverance) is an important indicator of outcomes — however, it is not the sole measure of school outcomes.</p>

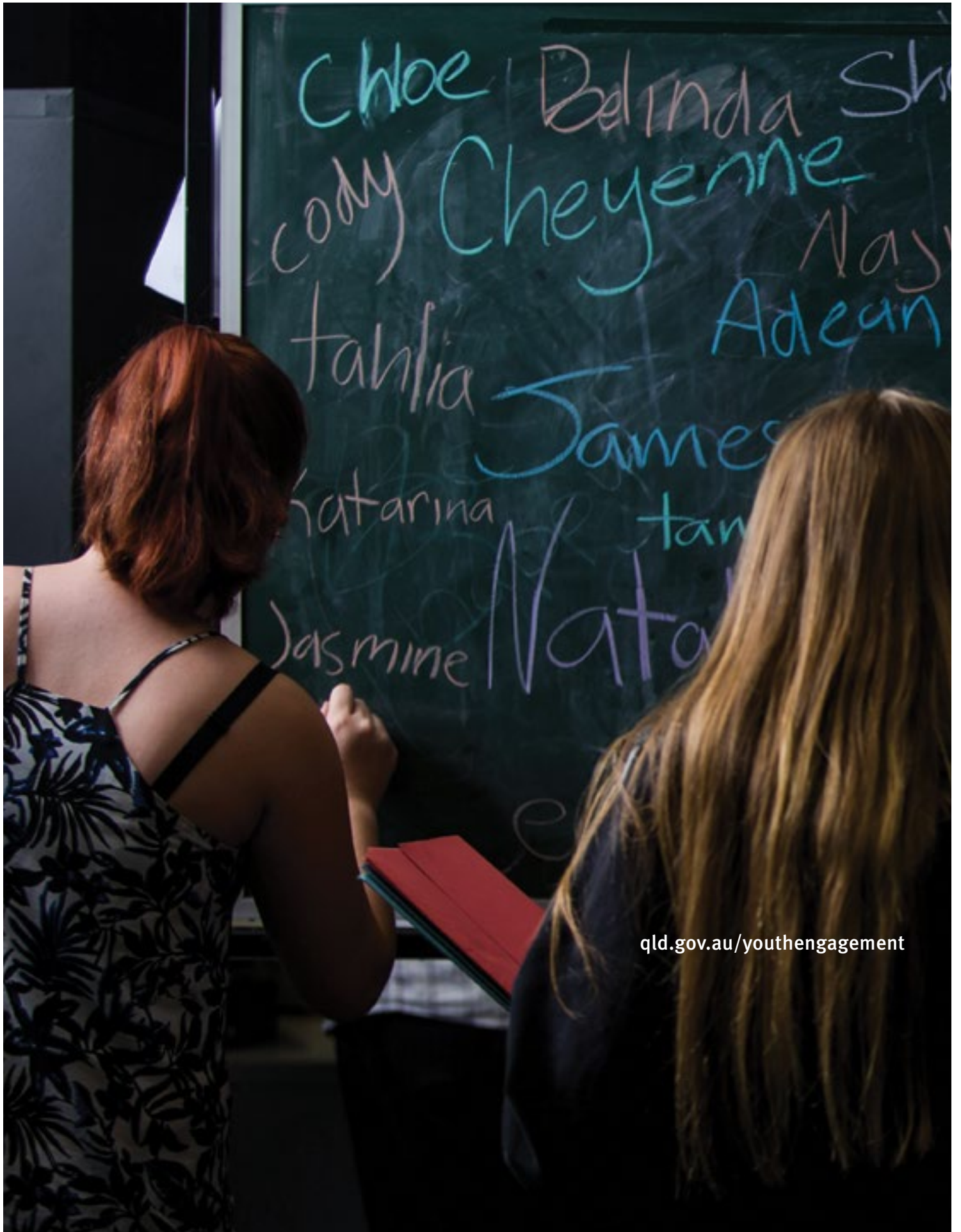
An overview of potential data sources can be found in the *Practice Guide for youth engagement*.





# A shared commitment

Every child and young person deserves the chance to succeed. The components of a strong and inclusive education and training system, outlined in this framework, offer a range of evidence-based approaches to support Queensland state schools, DET regional staff, and other stakeholders in helping all Queensland children and young people to fulfil their potential. The *Practice Guide for youth engagement*, a companion to this framework, provides practical tools to assist in implementing components of the framework. We will continue to develop tools to support the delivery of strong and inclusive education and training and to foster a spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility across the sector in supporting young Queenslanders at risk of disengaging.



Chloe Belinda Skye  
Cody Cheyenne  
Nasy  
Adean  
Tahlia  
James  
Katarina  
tan  
Jasmine Natalia