

Information Sheet No.29

What is school improvement?

A major role of the school board is to plan, monitor, analyse and report on school performance in the four domains of schooling: Learning and Teaching, Student Environment, Leadership and Management and Community Involvement. The school, in conjunction with the school board and the school community, conducts self-assessment of performance and strategically plans for improved student outcomes. The current three-year cycle of school improvement for ACT government schools commenced in 2004. In 2008, the Department of Education is reviewing the school improvement guidelines.

What are the purposes of school improvement?

1. to encourage whole school community involvement in planning for, and improving, student learning;
2. to provide a means for schools to be accountable to their school community and to government; and
3. to enhance public confidence in individual schools and the system as a whole.

What is the review process?

In the first year of review, the school conducts system designed satisfaction surveys of parents and carers, staff and students to establish baseline perception data. Survey questions are in five sections: overall satisfaction, and the four domains of schooling. Schools and their community collect, sort and rate all self-assessment data and prepare a report on the process. The school strategic plan is drafted by the school improvement committee based on agreed priorities for approval by the school board. Schools may establish working groups or utilise existing school committees to contribute to the development of the school plan.

In the second year of review, the school improvement committee, in conjunction with the school board, develop and implement an action plan for the year. Under the leadership of the principal, the committee foster ongoing collection, sorting and rating of evidence and engage staff, parents and carers and students in ownership of the school improvement process. The committee write a self-assessment report on achievements for the year.

In the third year of the cycle, the school improvement committee use self-assessment tools to critically review and rate achievements against the strategic plan and other areas of performance. The principal, in conjunction with the committee, write a self-assessment report in preparation for external validation. In term three, a panel of four educators verify the triennial planning and claims made in the self-assessment report. The panel then write a panel report to summarise their findings.

How can parents and carers participate?

We encourage parents and carers to take the opportunity provided by the surveys, focus groups or forums to comment on the school's operations. Additionally, P&C associations can provide input and should receive feedback on the process through the P&C representative on the school board.

Refer also to the *Policy on Reporting to the Community on School Programs and Performance 2006* on the Department's website under 'Policies' ★