Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Discussion Paper:
Education in Western Australia

January 2024

Contents

Introduction

The role of the Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Commissioner for Children and Young People is an independent statutory officer who provides reports to the Parliament of Western Australia, relating to the three key platforms outlined in the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006* (WA)*:*

- promoting the rights, voices and contributions of children and young people
- monitoring and advocating to strengthen the wellbeing of all WA children and young people
- prioritising the needs of Aboriginal, disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

In addition, the Commissioner is required to have regard to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC). In undertaking these functions, the Commissioner engages with, and encourages the participation of, children and young people in decision-making by the Commissioner. The Commissioner is also required to work in cooperation with, and consult with, other government and non-government agencies. This includes the development of guidelines for government and non-government agencies regarding the participation by children and young people in decisions which affect them.

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* includes the right for children and young people to an education, that helps them to use and develop their talents and abilities.

Education: A national priority

Education has been a priority for each Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia since the establishment of the office in 2007.

Children and young people have the right to an education system that meets their needs, empowers them to reach their potential, to participate and contribute throughout their life.

In 2019 Australia's Education Ministers endorsed the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, which states:

> "Our vision is for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face."

While some children and young people are thriving in our current education system, there are many who are not. The inequitable outcomes in Australia's education system reflect, and in some cases exacerbate, broader social inequalities affecting children and young people.

Every child has the right to access education that supports them to thrive and to reach their full potential. The quality of children and young people's experience of education has a significant impact on their health and wellbeing at both an individual and population level. Children and young people have the right to a good quality education, where they are encouraged to go to school to the highest level they can.

The Commissioner advocates for an approach that hears the voices of all children and young people, families and communities regarding education. What is needed is an equitable and holistic approach to education that prioritises educational engagement, early identification and intervention for learning challenges; support for community and family engagement and which ensures the wellbeing of children and young people.

The voices of children and young people who are disconnecting from education, or who are from cohorts experiencing poorer educational outcomes must be elevated to ensure that the education system is equitable and meets their needs.

Reform requires a commitment to reducing inequality, and resourcing education to meet the complex needs of today's children and young people. This requires an integrated approach across government, ensuring that children can maintain connection to education whatever their support needs. We must re-establish the foundations of our education system, and do so in partnership with children, families and their communities.

Setting

In line with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the* Child, the Commissioner endorses the requirement, pursuant to Article 28 and Article 29, for education of children and young people to be directed to:

- development of the child's personality, talents, and abilities to their fullest potential
- development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society
- development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education and make them available and accessible to every child
- measures to encourage regular attendance at school, with a focus on reducing drop-out rates.[1]

The Commissioner advocates for education that is child and youth-centred, inclusive, equitable and empowering. Children and young people thrive when they are supported in their learning journey through a holistic collaborative approach that involves their families, educators, communities and multidisciplinary teams. Access to early years education is critical in ensuring all children receive the best start to their learning journey.

Sadly, the needs of many children and young people in our education system are not being met with many falling behind. More than one in three students are not meeting national literacy and numeracy proficiency standards, with one in 10 assessed as needing additional numeracy and literacy support to bridge the widening gap with their peers.[2]

Aboriginal students, students in regional and remote locations, and students with disability and complex needs are three times more likely to fall below minimum standards.[3] While connection to education and positive social relationships formed at school are key protective factors, many children and young people are often affected by under-enrolment, suspension and expulsion practices that exacerbate disconnection to education and widen the academic gap with their peers.[4] Children from low-socio-economic backgrounds and those in out-of-home care (OOHC), are often impacted more severely.

Maintaining connection to education and learning is a crucial factor in improving children and young peoples' educational attainment and social and emotional wellbeing. The rising rates of students who have been suspended or excluded from school in Western Australia is concerning. In 2022, 19,289 students were suspended (5.8% of total enrolments) and 104 students were excluded. This is a notable increase from 2012, when 11,715 students were suspended (4.4% of total enrolments) and 25 students were excluded.

Supporting the increasing complexity of student needs in classrooms is a growing challenge for teachers and schools.[5] Many schools have stated they do not receive adequate funding, training, and resourcing to appropriately provide for the complex needs of vulnerable students and those with disability.[6]

Children and young people have a lived experience of the education system that is unique to their generation, cultural and historical context.

Their views on how schools are currently meeting their needs around learning, inclusivity, safety, engagement, and wellbeing are particularly important to consider in policy development,[7] and they should be systematically engaged in co-design, monitoring and quality improvement of the education system and their own education providers.

In 2023, the Commissioner released a Policy Statement on Education endorsing the right of every child to an education that supports them thrive and be able to access holistic support to improve their emotional, social, cultural and physical wellbeing. In line with national and international evidence, the Commissioner endorses the following approaches to education:

- a culture of high expectations
- child and youth centred
- inclusive and equitable
- safe, fair and respectful learning environments
- engagement in learning from early years and supported, successful transitions
- empowering children and young people to participate and contribute throughout life
- collaboration with families, community and support services.

Themes

Building strong foundations for learning in the early years

All children, and their families, should be provided support in their early years to establish strong foundations for successful learning.

Research shows that school and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people are strongly related to their early development.[8] In their early years, children undergo rapid growth that builds the foundational social, emotional, cognitive, and communication skills that support their health, development and wellbeing throughout their life.[9] The social, emotional and material environment in which they live, learn and grow during these early years has a life-long impact.[10] Parents or carers and families are a child's first and most enduring teachers. The home environment can provide many informal learning opportunities and experiences that contribute to a child's learning and development. This means early child learning and development is best supported when their parents are too - by community-based services that are culturally secure, safe, and where connection and belonging

are fostered.[11] Partnership with families in children's early years builds a foundation for positive relationships between educators and families that can support children throughout their education.

Despite children's potential being relatively uniform across the population, children who experience disadvantage in their early years are less likely to be developmentally on track, and more likely to be vulnerable across one or more developmental domains.[12] The gap in ability and achievement between children who are developmentally vulnerable at the start of school and their peers persists or increases as they progress through school.[13] While most children in Western Australia are on track, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) has identified that one in five children are already vulnerable by the time they reach school.[14]

Identifying and addressing barriers to early learning and providing effective early intervention services to support child development has the potential to positively impact life trajectories. Quality, evidence-based Early Years Programs (EYP) and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) have been shown to assist with cognitive, emotional and social development. Such programs have been shown to be of particular benefit for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.[15]

Unfortunately, 39.8 per cent of Western Australian children who were assessed as developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains on the AEDC did not have access to ECEC.[16] It must be a priority to ensure that each child and family has access to local, affordable ECEC has the potential to reduce developmental vulnerability.

Some community-based early learning programs take an active approach in building and strengthening relationships with families in their local community. Through the implementation of evidence-based early learning approaches, families are supported as their child's 'first teachers', to be actively involved and engaged in their child's learning and development.

Parents and caregivers are also offered training to take on the roles of learning assistants and facilitators, providing them with employment and further fostering culturally safe environments for families.

In Western Australia, the Child and Parent Centres provide a range of easily accessible programs and services for families and their children, including early learning programs, maternal and child health services and child support activities. Allied health services such as speech pathologists, physiotherapists, dieticians and occupational therapists may also be available in some locations. An evaluation of the Child and Parent Centre Initiative demonstrated that, overall, the initiative was meeting the expectations, goals and outcomes being sought.[17]

The Commissioner continues to support the development of quality early years programs through her engagement with programs including the Early Years Partnership, Regional Early Education and Development (REED) and as Patron for the Play Matters Collective.

Questions – Building strong foundations for learning in the early years

1. How might Western Australia build a more sustainable and accessible foundation to support children and families engage in early education and care?

2. What more could be done to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families to engage in foundational learning and development activities?

3. Is there a structured approach to identifying, delivering and funding early education and care opportunities?

4. Should the WA Government continue to invest in Child and Parent Centres?

5. Given that Aboriginal children are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable upon school entry, what can we do to improve access to, and participation in, formal informal learning opportunities to improve school readiness?

Learning and educational attainment

All children and young people have the right to receive an education that supports them to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Educational engagement and attainment vary throughout the life of the child, with multiple milestones and transitions occurring throughout their schooling. This includes commencing formal learning at kindergarten; the transition to primary school and then to secondary school, as well as annual transitions as students progress through their schooling journey.

The Mparntwe Education Declaration acknowledges that children and young people of today will face a future characterised by rapid technological and social change, as well as complex economic, social and environmental challenges.[18] Attainment of foundational skills and knowledge facilitate children and young people's further learning, and underpin participation in the community, access to services and realisation of rights throughout their life.[19]

High quality, evidence-based curriculum and teaching practices are required to support children and young people to attain proficiency in core skills and knowledge including literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.[20] Education approaches must consider the full needs of each individual student to ensure their strengths are highlighted. Areas for development should be identified and plans be developed to support them. Evidence-informed teaching and learning models must be adopted in the context of the best interests of children, including:

- whole school approaches to curriculum development and planning
- multi-tiered systems of supports (whole class, small group, and one-on-one settings)
- explicit instruction and early intervention for literacy and numeracy.[21]

The significant shift to digital communications and service provision means that attainment of digital literacy is increasingly important. Being able to manage online identity, communication, participation and safety are all key skills. Access to equipment and services needs to be supported for children and young people whose families are unable to provide the necessary resources.

Children and young people will flourish in safe and positive learning environments with lots of encouragement, genuine praise, and positive feedback. When teachers have high expectations for all students, this has a significant impact on a student's success at school.[22] Evidence demonstrates that teacher quality has the strongest impact in contributing to student performance, with good teachers having the greatest influence for children with educational disadvantage.[23] Parental engagement in a child's education at home also has a contributing effect on learning attainment, emphasising the important role schools and teachers play in developing trusting and collaborative relationships with parents.[24]

It is critical to understand that success is measured differently by individuals, families and communities. Not all students want to follow a tertiary education pathway - ensuring there is support for students to make informed decisions about their futures and pathways, including providing alternative pathways beyond Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and university, is a crucial role that schools play. Methods of assessment also require review as standardised approaches do not always meet the needs of individual students, with many assessments having little or no relevance to the life experience of the student.[25]

Engaging children and young people in the planning and development of learning activities and experiences is one way to make sure that learning is relevant and meaningful. In addition, engaging them in decision making across the school environment also provides opportunities for improved learning and outcomes.

In the 'Speaking Out About School and Learning' survey, students indicated that they are more engaged in learning experiences that cater to their learning requirements, needs and interests.[26] They particularly appreciated learning experiences that enabled greater choice and were relevant to their lives.[27] Critically, we must also engage parents and families and communities to support the educators and students in their future aspirations.

Attending school or participating in alternative learning arrangements such as home-schooling, School of the Air (SOTA) or the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE), are essential for unlocking all students' opportunity to achieve their full potential. New technologies are reshaping the way education is being delivered, bringing fresh challenges and opportunities for the Western Australian education sector. With online education already being used to supplement learning opportunities for regional and remote students,[28] there is capacity to explore what online delivery of education and services can mean in these contexts.

Questions: Learning and educational attainment

1. Is there opportunity to review assessment tools to ensure relevance for differing experiences, especially when considering the needs of vulnerable, disadvantaged and Aboriginal students?

2. How can we improve school communities so that all children and young people feel connected, valued and supported?

3. How can schools provide a more holistic education that balances the focus on academic achievement with a view to embedding foundational skills and supporting social and emotional wellbeing?

4. What opportunities are there for alternative learning settings that are not just focused on managing students with complex needs?

5. How can we better include children and young people in decision making in their school communities?

6. What can we do to support children and young people with all of their needs – social, physical, cultural and educational – that supports the education system and schools in improving outcomes?

Equity and inclusion

The Commissioner advocates for upholding the rights of all children and young people to be actively and meaningfully engaged in quality educational activities without discrimination.[29] All children and young people must be able to access and participate in learning opportunities directed at skills and knowledge attainment, as well as all school related activities and relationships.[30]

Recognising and responding to the diverse needs of children and young people is key to ensuring that systemic barriers to quality education, learning processes and outcomes are addressed so that no child or young person is left behind.[31] All students should be supported to fully engage with their education, and to see the strength of their culture and identities reflected in curriculum, pedagogy, learning activities and educational leadership.[32] To realise everyone's right to education, WA's system should be culturally secure for learners of diverse cultural backgrounds, accessible for children with or without disability, appropriate for students of all genders, and safe for all students.

Some cohorts of students face barriers to education that is reflected in disparity between cohorts in in attainment, achievement and participation. Addressing such barriers may require additional targeted strategies to enable participation in education on an equitable basis with their peers.

However, lack of opportunity to fully participate in education must not be confused with children and young people lacking potential to learn and achieve. The expectations of educators influence children and young people's behaviour and

educational outcomes – a culture of high expectations for all children and young people is a crucial factor in their engagement in education.
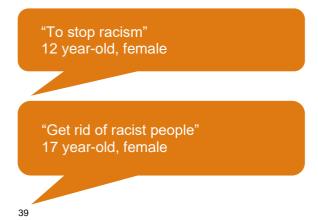
Children and young people in out-of-home care,[33] involved in the youth justice system,[34] and with complex needs[35] may be especially vulnerable to disengagement from education when the barriers they face to participation are not addressed. Education can offer a sense of belonging, consistency, reliability and achievement that reduce vulnerability and disadvantage.[36] Ensuring that these children and young people have the support they need to participate in education and achieve equitable outcomes with their peers is critical.

Children and young people with disability have been particularly vulnerable to experiencing barriers to participation in education. The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability identified formal and informal gatekeeping (such as under-enrolment and segregated classes), exclusion from activities, lack of reasonable adjustments, restrictive practices and inflexible curricula practices as barriers to participation in education affecting people with disability.[37]

Children and young people also consistently identify racism as a key component of their disengagement from education – this is especially Aboriginal children and young people.

In 2016, the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People undertook an extensive consultation with more than 1,200 Aboriginal children and young people.[38] Many of those who participated expressed a wish for a more cohesive community. Comments included:

> "I would make it so that everyone is treated the same and people don't judge us Aboriginals 'cause we have different coloured skin"
> 14 year-old, male

"To stop racism"
12 year-old, female

"Get rid of racist people"
17 year-old, female

39

Schools are identified as the predominant location for racism to occur among children – with the majority of perpetrators being other children. As such, schools need a renewed focus on systems and policies that perpetuate racism. Programs such as 'All Together Now' promote resources to assist in reducing racism in Australian schools.[40] The Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework for Culturally Responsive Schools provides a continuum for schools to assess their progress towards cultural inclusivity.[41] Such resources should be closely considered and inform schools' approaches in addressing discrimination.

Questions: Equity and inclusion

1. How do we ensure the National Child Safe Principles are embedded in all Western Australian Schools?

2. What approaches are used to assess the implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework for Culturally Responsive Schools Framework and progress towards inclusivity?

3. How do we embed a framework for differing multicultural and culturally and linguistically diverse communities to ensure we celebrate their difference and address racism?

4. How can children and young people be supported to express their views in culturally safe ways?

5. For children and young people with disability and complex needs, how can we ensure equitable access to a quality education?

Connection to education

For children and young people, engagement in education and attending school fosters a sense of connection, belonging and social wellbeing.

Children and young people who become disconnected from education are at higher risk of health and mental health issues, behaviour that is harmful to themselves or others and contact with the youth justice system.[42] These children and young people are less likely to attain core literacy and numeracy skills. As well as falling behind in academic skills, disengagement with education means losing the opportunities for social and emotional skills development provided within a community of peers, mentors and services.

Disconnection from school can therefore have significant, lifelong adverse consequences. Being absent from school is a risk factor for disconnection from education, as is falling behind in learning.[43] Identifying and addressing the causes of absenteeism before disengagement becomes entrenched is key to supporting the learning outcomes of students at risk of disengagement.

Students with complex care needs are more likely to experience under-enrolment, suspension, expulsion and disengagement.[44] Where students have experienced trauma, disciplinary responses to manage disruptive behaviour such as suspension can entrench poor wellbeing. Additionally, strategies of suspension or expulsion have been shown to increase the risk of criminal or problematic behaviour and may increase the likelihood of adverse consequences for the student and the community more broadly.[45]

Alternative learning pathways can be an important strategy, but options need to be maintained to support pathways to participation in mainstream education where it will best suit children and young people's needs. This should include addressing systemic barriers to participation for children with complex needs.[46]

Children and young people who are disengaged from education understand why the school system is not working for them and should be consulted regarding their needs. As individuals, children and young people should have access to appropriate support mechanisms to express their views, address issues or concerns about their education or wellbeing.

Australian Royal Commissions and Inquiries investigating the safety of children in educational institutions have consistently reported children having experienced lacking a voice, being disbelieved or silenced when trying to report abuse or access support.[47]

Education providers have the responsibility to ensure that children and young people are safe, and their concerns are heard. This should include implementing child-friendly and culturally safe complaints systems, with age-appropriate and inclusive communication strategies.

Children and young people may also need support to communicate effectively in difficult circumstances. Given the impact of disengagement from education, consideration could be given to the establishment of advocacy services for children and young people who are at risk of school exclusion or disconnection.

Questions: Connection to education

1. What initiatives are available in schools to foster children and young people's engagement with education? What initiatives are available to prevent their disengagement?

2. What systemic barriers to participation do children with complex needs experience, and how can they be addressed by the education sector?

3. What support mechanisms can schools put into place to enable children to express their views, and raise issues or concerns about their education or wellbeing?

4. What options are available to support children and young people with complex needs to participate in mainstream education, where doing so best suits their needs?

5. Should schools consider establishing advocacy services or advocate roles to better serve children and young people who are at risk of school exclusion or disconnection?

Social and emotional wellbeing

All children and young people should be supported in ways that have a positive impact on their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.

Children and young people have told the Commissioner for Children and Young People that that having friends and good relationships at school, families that are engaged and interested and teachers who care about their wellbeing and future are important components of staying engaged in schools.[48]

Although most children and young people in WA generally report positive outcomes, many children and young people identify mental health and wellbeing as amongst their top concerns, and do not always feel safe at home, school or in their community.[49]

"Everyone should be able to have someone to [talk to] mental health issues about, but some people don't, and I am grateful I do. Some kids I know do cope with drugs and alcohol, which is not something anyone my age should have to resort to."
14 year-old

"I think it's important that schools put more effort into dealing with bullying and mental health issues."
17 year-old

"I didn't have any friends in primary school because I was different…. I came to high school and found one friend who has been really nice to me […] She is my only friend, but she still makes me feel like I belong […] and makes me want to come to school."
12 year-old

[50]

The perception of these children and young people is supported by other research which identifies that a sense of belonging at school and the degree to which students report liking school has an important influence on student motivation, engagement, participation and academic outcomes.[51] [52]

The Mparntwe Declaration states that alongside the focus on literacy, numeracy and learning, the education curriculum must support the wellbeing, mental health, and resilience of young people.[53]

Despite the importance of wellbeing for learning and participation, the 2022 Productivity Commission Review of the National Schools Reform Agreement (NRSA) found that wellbeing was not being systematically prioritised and recommended that greater transparency regarding student wellbeing outcomes would encourage more effective support for students.[54]

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA's Speaking Out Survey and Indicators of Wellbeing data[55] are WA's key data sources regarding student wellbeing, and improvement of those outcomes.

Although the background data of the PISA provides some data regarding wellbeing, the Commissioner's Speaking Out Surveys cover a broad range of topics related to wellbeing. The Speaking Out Surveys are holistic and are representative samples at population level. which are complemented by follow-up research with cohorts identified as being at risk.

Schools are well placed to help children and young people learn skills to develop meaningful relationships with others, encourage resilience, and assist in self-regulating their emotions and behaviour.[56] The expertise of schools in teaching skills, concepts and habits as well as the development of safe and supportive peer communities can positively influence wellbeing outcomes for young people. Evidence-based curriculum and school-based programs can assist children, young people and their families to develop good relationships and a sense of belonging to school communities.

Evidence based practices which support student belonging at school include commitment to positive relationships from school leadership, support for learning from adults, peer support, 'real-life curriculum' student-centred activities and acceptance and promotion of diversity.[57] In addition to these benefits, schools are well placed to implement health promotion strategies, to intervene early and/or connect children and young people experiencing mental health challenges to other services.[58] As such, increasing the availability of allied health services, including psychology, social work, occupational therapy and youth work at schools can greatly enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

Using evidence-based wellbeing programs and informing quality improvement processes with monitoring data also has the potential to improve student wellbeing. Systemic reviews of evidence undertaken by the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) have identified the following principles and programs for improving student wellbeing:

- school leadership commitment to improve belonging
- student-centred activities that foster belonging and connectedness, including real-life curriculum activities and inclusive participation increase acceptance of diversity
- activities encouraging peer connection, such as peer mentoring, can improve belongingness. AERO recommends peer mentoring programs occur at least once a week for at least a year and include social and academic activities.

Connection to culture, spirituality, community and Country, particularly for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) students and staff, should be recognised as social and emotional wellbeing priorities. The Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework developed by the WA Department of Education provides guidance and must be resourced and fully implemented.[59]

Transitions between home, early learning settings, primary, secondary, and post-compulsory education are recognised as periods where additional support is needed for children, young people, and their families. Effective transitions can help establish a sense of belonging for students and their families.[60] Building positive relationships with children and families, working with children's strengths and collaboration between educators can all support effective transitions.[61]

Teachers should be supported to better meet the social and emotional needs of children and young people, with ongoing learning about child social and emotional development and wellbeing forming a key component of a school's professional development plan.[62]

Questions: Social and emotional wellbeing

1. How might a standard national dataset and monitoring approach for wellbeing assist schools to systematically prioritise social and emotional wellbeing?

2. How might schools be better supported to deliver evidence-based programs that

help to develop students' social and emotional wellbeing?

3. How can schools develop or improve integrated pathways into allied health services to better support students?

4. What might full implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework in schools look like?

5. What does a culturally responsive learning environment look like for students?

6. How might children and young people be consulted early and often as to what might best support their social and emotional wellbeing?

7. How can teachers be better supported to meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs?

Student experience

Student experience is a critical factor for success for students. In 2018, the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People undertook consultations with 1,812 West Australian school students, in Years 3 to 12, about school and learning.[63]

Children and young people identified nine factors influencing their engagement in school and learning and these were divided into two categories – primary and secondary factors. These factors taken together have significant impacts on a student's level of engagement in school and learning.

Primary factors
- Having friends and positive relationships with other students.
- Teachers who have a genuine interest in the student's wellbeing and future.
- Families that are involved and interested.

Secondary factors – About learning

- A positive, fair and supportive classroom environment.
- Teaching and learning that is interesting and relevant.
- choices and a say on decisions that affect them.

Secondary factors – About the student

- Feeling safe.
- Help to overcome personal issues.
- Feeling physically and mentally well.

Student experience: The Speaking Out Survey

The Speaking Out Survey is a robust and representative survey of the wellbeing of children and young people in WA. In 2021, more than 16,500 children and young people from all regions of WA in Years 4 to 12, shared with the Commissioner their experiences and views on engagement in education, mental health, safety, connection to community and how they access sources of support.[64]

While the majority of students in Years 4 to 6 reported liking school and learning, many students in Years 7 to 12 said they do not like learning, do not feel like they belong at school and feel it's less important to attend regularly.[65] Only two thirds of high school students felt that teachers care, believe and listen to them.[66]

Questions: Student experience

1. How can we ensure that secondary school students continue to enjoy learning?

2. What can be done to improve engagement of families in their children's learning?

3. How can we ensure that WA schools have a structured approach to hearing student voice and demonstrating a commitment to action?

4. What can be done to support student's mental health, wellbeing and safety at school?

5. Can changes be made to the curriculum to show that students understand the relevance and importance of the work they undertake?

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