



Review of Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 Follow up of 2010 audit recommendations

Report No. 21
Education and Innovation Committee
August 2013

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recommendations**

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Acknowledgements

The committee thanks those who briefed the committee and participated in its examination of this follow-up audit report. In particular the committee acknowledges the assistance provided by the Auditor-General of Queensland.

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Abbreviations and definitions

AIP	Annual Implementation Plan
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Chair's foreword

On behalf of the Queensland Parliament's Education and Innovation Committee I am pleased to present our consideration of the Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow up of 2010 audit recommendations*.

This follow-up audit considered the use of student data to inform literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. We were pleased to learn that the majority of recommendations that resulted from the audit in 2010 have been implemented. Our examination of the follow-up audit, and the department's advice to us as part of that, demonstrates that the department is working hard to implement the remaining two recommendations made by the Auditor-General.

We are optimistic there will be a positive effect on both teaching and learning at Queensland state schools resulting from this follow-up audit and the full implementation of the recommendations made by the Auditor-General.

I would like to thank all members of the Education and Innovation Committee for their continuing dedication and commitment to our portfolio areas.

I commend the report to the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary Menkens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'R'.

Rosemary Menkens MP

Chair

August 2013

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the House notes the contents of this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Education and Innovation Committee (the committee) was established by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 18 May 2012, and consists of government and non-government members.

Portfolio committees support the Parliament to fulfil its functions. A key function of the Parliament is to hold the government to account. One way that committees support this function is by considering the integrity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Government's financial management by examining government financial documents and considering the annual and other reports of the Auditor-General.¹ Committees then report back to the Parliament on their considerations, informing debate and ultimately, the decisions of the Parliament.

1.2 Role of the Auditor-General

The role of the Auditor-General is provided in the *Auditor-General Act 2009* and includes conducting performance audits of public sector entities and audits of performance management systems of government owned corporations.²

The Auditor-General may prepare a report on any audit conducted under the Act and table it in the Legislative Assembly. Standing Orders require that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly refer an Auditor-General report to the relevant portfolio committee as soon as practicable after it has been tabled.³

1.3 Review process

Auditor-General Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow up of 2010 audit recommendations* (the Auditor-General's report) was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 30 October 2012 and referred to the committee by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for consideration.

The committee has reviewed the Auditor-General's report, including the response from the Department of Education, Training and Employment (the department). To further inform the committee, representatives from the Queensland Audit Office, including the Auditor-General, provided a private briefing on 17 April 2013 and the committee subsequently sought advice from the Director-General as to implementation of two recommendations. That advice was provided on 29 May 2013.

1.4 Audit overview

A follow-up audit "... informs Parliament of the current status of the audit recommendations and whether changes the departments made address the issues originally raised."⁴ The report related to follow-up audits of three performance management system audits that were tabled in the Parliament in 2010.

Only one of the audits addressed in the Auditor-General's report relates to the committee's portfolio and is therefore considered in this report, that is, Report No. 6 for 2010 - *Using student data to inform teaching and learning*. The objective of the 2010 audit was to "... determine whether DET [the former Department of Education and Training] had effective and efficient systems to use student data to inform literacy and numeracy teaching and learning."⁵ The follow-up audit

¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* s94(1)(a)

² *Auditor-General Act 2009* s37A and 38

³ Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, 194B

⁴ Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p38

⁵ Report to Parliament No. 6 for 2010 – Using student information to inform teaching and learning, p1

considered the extent to which the eight audit recommendations made in the Auditor-General's report had been implemented by the now Department of Education, Training and Employment.

Student data considered by the audit includes both NAPLAN results and school-based data, such as in-class testing and data collected by schools about students. This data informs school specific strategies and targets in annual operation plans, is reported to stakeholders and informs teaching practices.

The former Public Accounts and Public Works Committee reviewed the original Auditor-General's report on this audit (Report No. 6 for 2010) and did not consider additional action necessary.

1.5 Summary of key findings

The follow-up audit found that of the eight recommendations made in 2010, six have been fully implemented and two have been partially implemented (recommendations four and seven). The recommendations are considered in the following chapter and summarised in the table at **Appendix A**.

No additional recommendations were made in the follow-up audit report.

2. Examination of the report

2.1 Fully implemented recommendations

The performance management system audit conducted in 2010 found that although the department had “... *good practices and systems to support staff to analyse student data and use it to inform teaching and learning*”, these practices were not applied consistently across schools and regions.⁶ The follow-up audit observed an improvement in the use of student data and concluded that:

*The department can now more clearly measure performance and improvement. Teachers and principals are also better equipped to analyse and use the student data to inform literacy and numeracy teaching and learning.*⁷

In the response from the department to the draft Auditor-General’s report, it was noted that “[t]he department has been working hard to lift the performance of all schools ...”⁸

The Auditor-General concluded that the department has fully implemented recommendations 1-3, 5, 6 and 8 through the following activities:

- Introduction of teaching and learning audits from 2010. This requires that all state schools be audited at least every four years, and a school data report be provided to school principals at least twice a year.
- Publication of curriculum units for students in Prep-Year 10 for English, maths and science. Available resources include templates and examples such as lesson and assessment plans.
- Conducting performance reviews of regional operational plans. This takes place twice a year, whereby each region analyses its performance and reports to the department’s executive management. The regional report links back to other relevant plans.
- Implementation of a principal supervision and capability development framework, whereby supervisors regularly discuss matters, such as school performance, principals’ capabilities and development needs, with their supervisors.
- Departmental review of its School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework 2012-15.⁹

2.2 Partially implemented recommendations

The follow-up audit found that two recommendations were only partially implemented.¹⁰ These relate to performance management of teachers and data that is included in school annual reports, and are considered below.

Performance management processes

Recommendation four was that the department “*[s]trengthen existing performance management processes to ensure feedback is provided to teachers on their skills, competencies and development needs to implement the school’s curriculum plans*”.¹¹

The follow-up audit found that the department has made progress towards achieving this recommendation through developing a performance framework for all staff. The framework includes four phases, and supports such as information sheets and templates are provided for each phase.

⁶ Auditor-General’s Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p2

⁷ Auditor-General’s Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p2

⁸ Auditor-General’s Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p34

⁹ Auditor-General’s Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p17

¹⁰ Auditor-General’s Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p14

¹¹ Auditor-General’s Report 6: 2010 *Using student data to inform teaching and learning*, p8

However, the recommendation was not considered to have been fully implemented as the department does not require the phases to be documented and therefore cannot demonstrate that relevant feedback is provided to teachers, which is a key part of the recommendation.¹²

The Auditor-General's report notes that although the Public Service Commission Directive on employee performance management does not specifically require that the process be recorded or documented, the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* requires that written feedback be provided to teachers.¹³ This framework was endorsed by Education Ministers in August 2012.

Risks identified in the follow-up audit that are associated with not documenting the phases or feedback include:

- The framework may not be being applied and teachers may not receive feedback to support their professional development, improve teaching practices or recognise achievements,
- There may be different recollections about what was agreed or discussed between teachers and their supervisors, without documents available for clarification, and
- Managing unsatisfactory performance is made more difficult due to the lack of records to support actions leading to and decisions made about this process.¹⁴

The committee wrote to the department in April 2013 to seek advice on whether the partially implemented recommendations would be implemented, and if so, by when. In its response about recommendation four, the department acknowledged the introduction of an annual performance review process, which is included in the *Great Teachers = Great Results* action plan. The action plan indicates that teachers and school leaders will be formally appraised by their supervisor and observed in the classroom.

The department also advised that a report will be developed each year, to provide a rating of teachers' overall performance for that year. The *Great Teachers = Great Results* action plan notes that the annual performance review framework will identify "... the skills, knowledge and effort teachers and school leaders should reflect in their practice to be considered high performing."¹⁵

A factsheet on *Great Teachers = Great Results* states that "[a]nnual performance reviews will identify high performing teachers and determine where more effort is needed to lift performance at individual, school and system levels."¹⁶

The performance review process is planned to commence in 2014, with full implementation completed by 2016.

School annual reports

Recommendation seven was that the department revise school annual report requirements for state schools to "... ensure that information reported allows stakeholders to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of school performance."¹⁷ In response to this recommendation, the department revised its annual report template and *Annual Reporting Policy for All Queensland Schools*. However, the follow-up audit found that stakeholders cannot assess the effectiveness and efficiency of school performance due to the type of information reported. For example, targets set in the

¹² Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p19

¹³ Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p19

¹⁴ Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p20

¹⁵ Great Teachers = Great Results, A direct action plan for Queensland schools, p7

¹⁶ Great Teachers = Great Results Fact Sheet, A direct action plan for Queensland schools, p2

¹⁷ Auditor-General's Report 6: 2010 *Using student data to inform teaching and learning*, p8

Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) which includes actions to reflect the strategic priorities of the school plan; or previous years' results are not reported.¹⁸

The Auditor-General notes in the follow-up audit that including the goals, performance measures and targets from the AIP in annual reports would provide stakeholders with more valuable information, allowing them to better assess school performance.¹⁹ An AIP "... outlines the key actions to be taken over the course of the school year to reflect the strategic priorities of the school plan."²⁰

In the department's response to correspondence from the committee, it advised that it has revised the reporting requirements for school annual reports. The 2012 school annual report template required schools to outline AIP priorities, progress made on these priorities and to include performance data for the previous three years, where available.

Committee comment

The committee is pleased that six out of the eight recommendations made by the Auditor-General have been implemented by the department. Implementation of these recommendations will have greatly assisted school staff to analyse student data and use it to inform teaching and learning. Although student outcomes were not a focus of the audit, we hope that as a result of the department implementing the Auditor-General's recommendations, we will see improved outcomes for students.

It is anticipated that the introduction of an annual performance review process (recommendation four) will assist in improving teaching and learning when implemented in full. The committee considers it important that teachers are formally appraised and receive timely feedback on both their strengths and areas that require improvement. Again, this has the potential to affect student outcomes. The committee appreciates that it can take time to properly implement change of this scale. The committee also acknowledges the work that has been undertaken to strengthen existing performance management processes, for example, through developing a performance framework.

The committee is satisfied that recommendation seven has been implemented, through the department guiding schools to include relevant data for the current year plus the previous two years, including AIP priorities and progress on these priorities, as part of the annual reporting template. These actions will greatly assist stakeholders to better assess the effectiveness and efficiency of school performance.

With regard to the number of previous years' data the department requires schools to provide in annual reports, the committee notes that data for the previous two years is required, not three, as advised by the department in correspondence. The committee considers the provision of two previous years' data, plus the current year, is an appropriate period of data to inform stakeholders of school performance.

¹⁸ Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p20

¹⁹ Auditor-General's Report 2: 2012-13 *Follow-up of 2010 audit recommendations*, p20

²⁰ Department of Education, Training and Employment, Annual Planning and Review Processes, <http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/accountability/performance/planning-process.html>

Appendix A - Status of 2010 Auditor-General recommendations implemented by DETE

AG recommendation in 2010	Fully implemented	Partially implemented
1. Provide teachers and principals with access to further training in the skills and competencies necessary for them to analyse the full range of student data	✓	
2. Strengthen guidelines for regions about how to use a broad range of data, including information on school systems to prioritise the support provided to schools to improve outcomes for students	✓	
3. Ensure that school curriculum plans and assessment policies are regularly monitored for compliance with the department's standards	✓	
4. Strengthen existing performance management processes to ensure feedback is provided to teachers on their skills, competencies and development needs to implement the school's curriculum plans		✓ DETE could not demonstrate that teachers received feedback on their skills, competencies and development needs
5. Revise the department's model for planning, monitoring and reporting on the delivery of regional services to provide greater clarity of responsibility to this part of the organisation	✓	
6. Review school planning processes to ensure that the principal's supervisor provides regular feedback and monitoring of the implementation of the priorities in school and annual operation plans	✓	
7. Revise the requirements for school annual reports to ensure that information reported allows stakeholders to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of school performance		✓ Stakeholders didn't get sufficient information in annual reports to assess how successful schools were in meeting goals
8. Review the objectives and performance measures relating to schooling in its strategic plan and service delivery statement to ensure they are measurable and relevant	✓	