Facing the Facts: Progress and the DoE's strategic plan

SSTUWA
State School Teachers' Union of WA



Our Plan for Public Education in Western Australia is out and many of us are cautiously optimistic about where public education could go.

In two and a half years of campaigning we have seen some promising progress in relation to Facing the Facts. This plan could move things along considerably.

So far, significant progress has been made on 13 recommendations* and some good progress has been made on a further 24 recommendations**.

The new strategic plan responds quite directly to 20 Facing the Facts recommendations***, demonstrating that the SSTUWA continues to be heard through consultation processes and our lobbying.

The emphasis on equity and inclusion, workforce wellbeing and capability, rebuilding some regional support and services, strong community partnerships and consistency across schools while maintaining local responsiveness are welcome.

But it is troubling that there are still significant gaps in the response. There is limited real emphasis on Aboriginal education. The progress on education regions looks very modest.

In addition, while the plan goes to respecting staff and professional growth, it is not explicit about increasing teacher autonomy and rebuilding professional authority and respect.

And there are no specific performance targets nor time-bound milestones. Still, there could be a lot to celebrate here if good intentions are translated into reality.

We have yet to see how these changes will be enacted and how they play out – and a significant implementation gap persists.

The Department's strategic plan now incorporates considerable recognition of the intent and language of Facing the Facts and SSTUWA submissions in relation to agency capability, pathways to post school success, disability and regional education.

However, it largely recasts response to the issues as a laundry list of programmatic initiatives rather than fully coherent and aligned system reform. It leaves key structural issues - especially resourcing, reform overload, workload, excessive compliance demands, governance, accountability, support and services - only partially addressed.

The question remains as to whether the Department can devise an effective workforce strategy and muster the leadership, organisational capability and culture that will be required to deliver.

Happily, consultation on a strategic approach to workforce planning has finally begun. We can at least see some progress on appreciation for change management with the planned provision of an additional school development day to support alignment of school planning to system planning and much strengthened consideration of disability and inclusion. Much more support will be required.

It is also worth noting that while it falls short of the explicit change flagged in the ACT, the plan and the last Schools Agreement signify significant erosion of some aspects of the flaws and excesses of IPS. So, let's be hopeful but let's keep our focus on the facts that need to be faced.

*** (Recommendations 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27)**

****(Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11,12, 13, 16, 22, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 45, 46)**

*****(Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 20, 21, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41)**



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