

Achieving Better and Fairer Schools

The case for full-service school models in Australia

The Mitchell Institute, Victoria University

November 2025



Acknowledgement of Country



The Mitchell Institute at Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/Yugarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).

About the Mitchell Institute

Established in 2013, the Mitchell Institute at Victoria University is a leading policy think tank and research centre. With a focus on education policy, systems and place, we are working towards a fairer and more productive society where every individual, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive.

Acknowledgements

The Mitchell Institute acknowledges the contributions of Professor Peter Dawkins AO, Professor Stephen Lamb, and our critical friends, whose advice and feedback informed the development of this report.

Suggested Citation

Molina, A., Doecke, E., & Hildebrandt, M. (2025). *Achieving Better and Fairer Schools: The case for full-service school models in Australia*. Mitchell Institute, Victoria University.

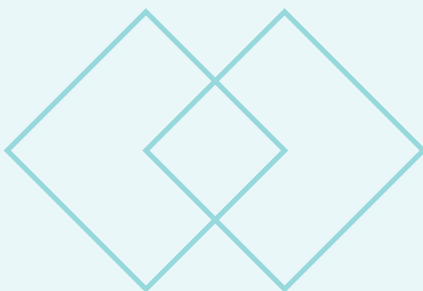
ISBN: 978-1-86272-887-5





Contents

Director's foreword	1
Executive summary	2
The case for full-service schools	7
What are full-service schools?	9
1. Holistic focus: Whole-child support	11
2. Integration at the core: The additional services are integral to the school	11
3. Place-based tailoring: The range of services are unique to every school community	11
4. Reaching in to reach out: Community access and community partnership	11
Why do we need full-service schools?	12
Who are full-service schools for?	20
Why invest in full-service schools now?	22
Full-service school models in policy and practice	23
Learning from established models	23
What is already happening in Australia?	24
International evidence: Lessons from the U.K., U.S. and beyond	27
What features make these models effective?	30
Why are these models rare?	34
Possibilities and potential in Australia	36
Making it happen – nationally and locally	36
Conditions for success	36
The need for a framework to get us there	38
Where to from here?	42
Making full-service school models a priority	42
References	43





As this report highlights, implementing full-service school models requires precision. If implemented properly, it could be possible to make them a reality without expanding overall funding.



Director's foreword

Australia has made record levels of investment in its schools but despite this the educational divide remains.

Even more concerning is that the gap in outcomes between students from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds continues to grow.

Too often the debate about education stops at the school gate. As this report shows, to really tackle the issue of inequality in schools, Australia needs to focus on what is happening outside the classroom just as much as what is being taught in it. Making the conditions right for learning requires a more holistic approach that involves students, their families and the wider community.

Full-service schools bring together education, health and community services to help remove the barriers to every student reaching their full potential. This is more than just about co-location – the intention is to redefine the culture and operation of schools. It is an acknowledgement that quality teaching alone cannot overcome the complex barriers to engagement that some children and families face.

Full-service school models have enormous promise. International evidence shows that they can lift student attendance, improve engagement, strengthen wellbeing, and enhance academic outcomes.

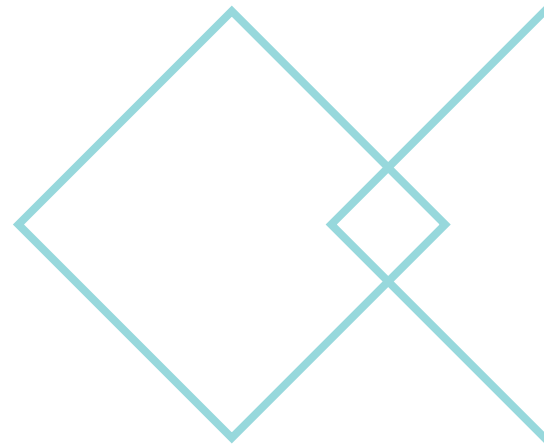
As this report highlights, implementing full-service school models requires precision. If implemented properly, it could be possible to make them a reality without expanding overall funding.

Reforms focusing on pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment play an important role in improving teaching and learning. But on their own, they cannot overcome the structural and social challenges that shape students' capacity to engage and succeed at school. Full-service schools may be the key to bridging that gap, enabling students to arrive ready to learn and teachers free to focus on teaching.

We have the policy impetus, the evidence and the opportunity to move from aspiration to implementation to make full-service schools a reality and finally close the educational divide.



Professor Peter Hurley
Director, Mitchell Institute,
Victoria University



Executive summary

Children growing up in disadvantaged circumstances are disproportionately affected by barriers that limit their engagement and opportunity to learn at school.

Full-service schools offer a promising way to address this challenge.

Educational inequality is one of the most urgent challenges facing Australia today. For decades, governments have invested heavily in schools with the promise that every child - regardless of where they live or their family circumstances - should have the opportunity to succeed.

Yet the evidence is clear: our education systems continue to reproduce, and in some cases deepen, the divides between advantaged and disadvantaged students.

The barriers to learning often begin well before a child enters a classroom. Poverty, housing insecurity, food scarcity, health issues, disability, and limited access to early learning all shape students' readiness and capacity to engage in education.

While schools remain central to students' learning and development, teaching and curriculum alone cannot overcome these challenges. Across a range of national measures associated with achievement, engagement, health and wellbeing, the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students is getting worse.

The challenges are more pronounced in schools serving communities with concentrated poverty that have greater need. This is because traditional schools are not equipped or resourced to provide

students and their families with the range of academic and non-academic supports that help to level the playing field.

Moreover, traditional schools were never designed to meet this breadth of need. They are rarely resourced to provide the integrated supports that some children and families require. This mismatch has profound consequences – not just for individual students, but also for schools, teachers and communities.

Full-service schools offer a clear, evidence-based way to deliver on that ambition.

What do we mean by full-service schools?

Full-service schools are designed to **redefine the culture and operation of schooling** so that improving student engagement, health, and wellbeing is valued as highly as academic learning. They provide **additional, integrated supports** that remove barriers to attendance, engagement, and learning.

These additional supports often include **learning services** such as tutoring, mentoring, or specialist clubs, alongside **health and wellbeing services** such as school-based healthcare, dental checks, counselling, parenting programs, and breakfast or lunch provision.

Full-service schools partner with community organisations, health providers, and government agencies. The aim is not to replace teaching, but to create the conditions in which teaching and learning can flourish.

Australian Governments have signalled their acknowledgement of the importance of wellbeing for learning. The recent long-term school funding agreement, the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034 (Better and Fairer Schools Agreement)*, calls for stronger connections between schools and the services that support students' learning and wellbeing.

This report examines how full-service school models work, what distinguishes them from traditional approaches, and what policy conditions are needed for their success in Australia.

It draws together national and international evidence to show how these models can help achieve the goals of equity, excellence, and engagement at the heart of the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*.

Principles for effective full-service schools

Full-service school models work as the locus of extended service provision, including integrated learning, health, social, and wellbeing supports for students and families through strong community partnerships. By embedding extended services of this nature alongside education, full-service schools recognise that learning is inseparable from the broader conditions of life.

These schools are designed to remove barriers to student learning, connect families with supports, and engage with the community. International evidence shows that this integrated approach can lift student attendance, improve engagement, strengthen wellbeing, and enhance academic outcomes.

International and Australian research and practice show that **four key principles** set full-service school models apart from traditional school delivery:



1. Holistic focus:

Support for the whole child – academic, health and wellbeing – is central.



2. Integration at the core:

Additional services are built into the school, rather than bolted on.



3. Place-based tailoring: Services are shaped by the unique needs of each school and community.



4. Reaching in to reach out:

Community partnership is pivotal to the model.



Together, these principles form the foundation of the full-service school model. Building on them, this report identifies the key **features** that evidence shows make full-service schools effective in practice and explores **how these features can be applied within Australian jurisdictions** as part of a genuine, system-wide implementation.

The principles define what full-service schools stand for; the features describe how they work; and the jurisdictional analysis illustrates how these elements **can be embedded, adapted, and scaled** to suit different state and territory contexts. This framework underpins the analysis and recommendations that follow, providing a roadmap for governments to design, implement, and sustain their own full-service school approaches aligned to the objectives of the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* and the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (Education Council, 2019).

“Education has the power to transform lives. It supports young people to realise their potential by providing skills they need to participate in the economy and in society, and contributing to every aspect of their wellbeing.”

— Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Council, 2019)



Why hasn't this happened already?

Australia has yet to adopt full-service school models at-scale. While elements of the full-service school approach can already be found in some Australian schools, initiatives remain highly variable.

Existing reforms are often shaped by jurisdictional priorities, local funding arrangements (including philanthropic contributions), and current state and territory partnerships. As a result, current delivery takes the form of a patchwork of promising activity rather than a coherent approach with best-practice principles.

By contrast, overseas models provide clearer evidence of what is possible when the approach is applied consistently and system-wide with established frameworks. The United Kingdom (U.K.)'s Full-Service Extended Schools and Community Schools in the United States (U.S.) demonstrate the benefits of a fully integrated approach: improved attendance, higher engagement, stronger family participation and better wellbeing.

Key features of successful full-service school models from overseas

Dedicated school-based coordination embedded in school leadership team to broker services efficiently and promote cultural change.

Multiyear, stable funding that sustains partnerships and prevents stop-start cycles.

Progress and impact assessment using a broad set of metrics: attendance, engagement, family participation, wellbeing and school climate – not just academic results.

Services selected and co-designed after an initial comprehensive needs assessment to ensure the extended services meet community priorities, rather than a generic one-size-fits-all approach to delivery.

Schools supported by inter-departmental and cross-agency governance, allowing them to focus on their students and communities.

Despite their promise, research also makes it clear why full-service school models remain relatively rare both internationally and domestically. They are difficult to establish, face many implementation barriers, and take substantial effort and investment to deliver well. However, the strength of their outcomes (including social return on investment) and their potential to

address inequality, clearly shows that full-service schools are needed now more than ever.

In this report, we show why Australia needs to adopt full-service schools as a national priority in order to reduce inequality and improve educational outcomes, and we show how it could work.

A new framework

Central to this is the creation of a framework for full-service school delivery that every jurisdiction should put into place to support full-service school models and maximise their potential.

This report draws on lessons from established international models to outline the key features for full-service school delivery that are non-negotiable and able to be applied in every state and territory. Establishing a rigorous and evidence-based framework for full-service school delivery, flexible to place and context, will assist systems in implementing the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* and its national priorities.

The *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* provides a unique opportunity for Australia's school systems to pursue bold reforms.

The Agreement ties new funding to reforms ... including greater wellbeing support for learning and engagement, including through full-service schools, counsellors, wellbeing coordinators and mental health workers.

— Jason Clare, Federal Minister for Education (31 July 2024)

Evidence suggests that moving towards full-service school models could support our schools to achieve greater excellence and equity in educational outcomes for more young Australians.

Yet the potential of these models will remain limited without a coherent framework for delivery, adapted for each jurisdiction, that reflects the key features of effective implementation outlined in this report.

Developing a framework for full-service school delivery consistent with these principles and features would enable jurisdictions to apply them within their own systems, supported by the leadership, investment, and continuity needed to sustain reform.



The case for full-service schools

Australia has an education system that performs well internationally but remains highly unequal.

Despite effort and investment, the Australian school system has not yet found a way to address the complex and compounding effects of disadvantage, and overcoming educational inequality remains one of the most urgent challenges of our time.

Comprehensive studies show that Australian schools deliver good outcomes for many, but not for all: key groups of young people remain excluded and do not achieve the benefits that schooling promises (Gonski et al., 2018; Lamb et al., 2020). For many young people, the reality of schooling still falls short of the aspirations set out in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* – that all young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active, informed members of their communities (Education Council, 2019).



Australian schools fall short of excellence when compared to the performance of schools in other high-income countries, largely due to entrenched educational inequality. While Australian schools may appear to perform well overall on international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), social gaps in achievement are large (De Bortoli, Underwood & Thomson, 2023; Hillman et al., 2023; Wernert et al., 2024). This reality is reflected in national assessments such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) which show marked patterns of educational inequality year-on-year (ACARA, 2025a). One driver of this inequality is the high level of social segregation across Australian schools (the separation and concentration of students into different schools based on their social background)—among the most pronounced in the OECD (OECD, 2018).

Despite decades of reform, educational inequality in Australia remains entrenched. Addressing it requires sustained effort and a commitment to approaches that work in practice, not just in principle.



Improving the conditions for learning

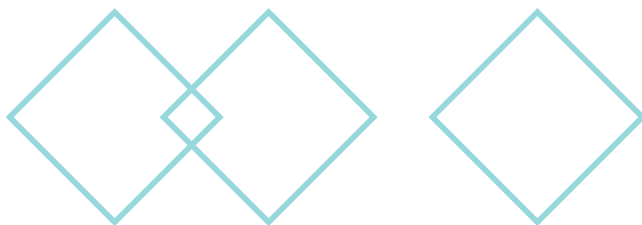
One model attracting increasing interest for its potential to reduce school inequality is the full-service school approach. Building on the Independent Expert Panel's Review to inform a Better and Fairer Education System, all Australian States and Territories have recently signed the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*, which is now in place until 2034. The Agreement sets out National Reform Directions that represent commitments to areas of action to help systems achieve greater equity and excellence, improve wellbeing for learning and engagement and foster a strong and sustainable workforce (Australian Government Department of Education, 2025).

This new Agreement provides a timely opportunity to strengthen how schools connect with other learning, health and wellbeing services to support students. While few large-scale examples of full-service schools currently exist across jurisdictions, every system has now committed – through the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* – to initiatives that 'support connections between schools and other non-school services to support students to come to school ready to learn.' The Agreement identifies full-service school models as a primary example of how this commitment can be realised in practice.

What are full-service schools?

In Australia, attempts to address inequality in students' educational outcomes have not delivered lasting change. Traditional approaches to schooling historically have not worked in a number of communities, particularly in remote and rural communities and for communities serving disadvantaged populations.

In theory traditional schools often focus on classroom interaction and instruction, and they may leave to others dealing with parts of student and family life that can sometimes act as barriers to engagement and learning. In practice, however, teachers and school leaders are often required to respond to a wide range of wellbeing and social issues that extend beyond their remit. Despite their best efforts, limited resources and specialist capacity make it difficult for schools alone to address complex needs that influence student engagement and learning.



Different from traditional schools

Full-service schools take a different approach. Rather than expecting schools and teachers to manage every challenge alone, they bring education, health, and wellbeing services together around the needs of children and families. They place the whole child, and all the child's needs, at the centre of their planning and provision.

Such schools seek to foster school-community collaboration with the aim of engaging and supporting students by improving school climate and ensuring schools are inviting places. This is especially important given the recent declines in student engagement and attendance rates.

Full-service school models centre their efforts on eroding the barriers that students face to engage and learn in school. As such, full-service schools can be primary or secondary schools and are positioned to offer a continuum of integrated supports for students across different stages of learning.

Primary schools are typically seen as ideal sites due to their potential for early intervention and co-location with early learning services, thereby engaging families before formal schooling begins. However, integrating full-service models into secondary settings can also address the specific needs of adolescents and their families, including programs tailored to promote re-engagement in education, access to social services, case management, or programs to plan student career or post-school transitions into tertiary education, vocational education and training or work.

Teachers are supported

Full-service school models are also specifically designed to support the work of teachers, recognising that they should not be expected to resolve every issue alone. Teachers are often the first to identify when a student or family is in need and many already go above and beyond to support them through challenging life circumstances. The full-service school model does not add to the demands placed on teachers; by integrating wraparound services, it acknowledges that addressing complex student needs requires a shared, multidisciplinary approach, and enables teachers to focus more fully on teaching and learning.

Full-service school models also enable teachers to collaborate with other professionals and service providers, including allied health, to strengthen connections with students and families. Coordinating health and wellbeing services within schools is intended to create stronger and healthier school cultures, which in turn can boost teacher morale, wellbeing, and effectiveness. International evidence shows that full-service school models can have a positive impact on teachers and the overall school environment, strengthening belonging and connectedness (City Connects, 2020).

Extending services to support students, families and their communities

Full-service schools provide additional learning, health, and wellbeing supports to remove the barriers that some students face to attend, engage and learn in schools. Examples of additional services include long day care, dental services, breakfast/lunch programs, community education courses and/or community access to school facilities. There are many others. Some services target student learning (e.g., mentoring, tutoring, extended academic activities, specialist clubs), others target engagement and wellbeing (e.g., parenting support and family learning, meal programs, mental health and wellbeing services).

There are four key principles, which set the model of full-service schools apart from traditional school delivery.



Holistic focus: Whole-child support

Full-service school models enhance student learning, engagement, and wellbeing by acknowledging that a range of factors beyond the classroom matter for student learning at school and their educational outcomes. Full-service schools recognise that quality teaching alone cannot overcome the barriers to effective engagement that some children and families face, and work to build a holistic and cohesive approach that supports the full spectrum of student needs—academic, cognitive, physical, mental, and social-emotional. By integrating wraparound services and embracing community partnerships, the full-service school model strives to ensure every student can thrive.



Integration at the core: The additional services are integral to the school

In full-service school models, the provision of health, wellbeing or learning supports are not regarded as an add-on, or as subsidiary to the school's traditional operations. The set of extended services are integrated into the school's core business and given prominence by the school leadership team. All supports are delivered in an integrated way as part of the school's program. Some services may be provided at school premises, others via the school at off-site locations nearby, or through online or digital methods.

The intention of full-service models is to redefine the culture and operation of schools, whereby improving student engagement, health, and wellbeing become as important as promoting academic learning.



Place-based tailoring: The range of services are unique to every school community

The extended supports offered within each full-service school may be different by location and community. This is because the health, wellbeing and learning initiatives are targeted and tailored to address student and community needs, which may differ from place to place. While there may be some core supports across sites, the services are identified through community networks and intensive consultation in-situ, rather than devised by a standardised formula unlikely to suit every school and community. This approach means the full-service school model can adapt to community needs and pivot or change if needed.



Reaching in to reach out: Community access and community partnership

In full-service school models, schools partner with community organisations, including health and social services, to provide comprehensive supports for students. The partnerships aim to ensure that schools and their communities work together to meet the needs of students and families.

Services offered by full-service school models are typically accessible to families and members of the community, but students are the central focus. In some cases, the best interests of the students may be served by schools being funded to operate beyond traditional hours, providing after-school programs and other activities that engage with families.

Rather than keeping families at a distance, full-service schools invite them in and may provide the first point of contact for services that address need. Communities are engaged as active collaborators in planning and decision-making of the wraparound supports. Through this inclusive approach, the full-service model forges stronger connections between schools, families and community, connections which benefit student academic achievement, engagement, and wellbeing (Emerson et al., 2012).

Why do we need full-service schools?

The most successful education systems in the world focus on excellence and equity simultaneously (OECD, 2012). They make sure that all students, regardless of their background and circumstances, achieve their full potential and contribute to society. Systems that bring health, family and community services into schools show smaller gaps in student achievement linked to socioeconomic background, higher levels of student wellbeing, and stronger relationships between schools and families (OECD, 2019).

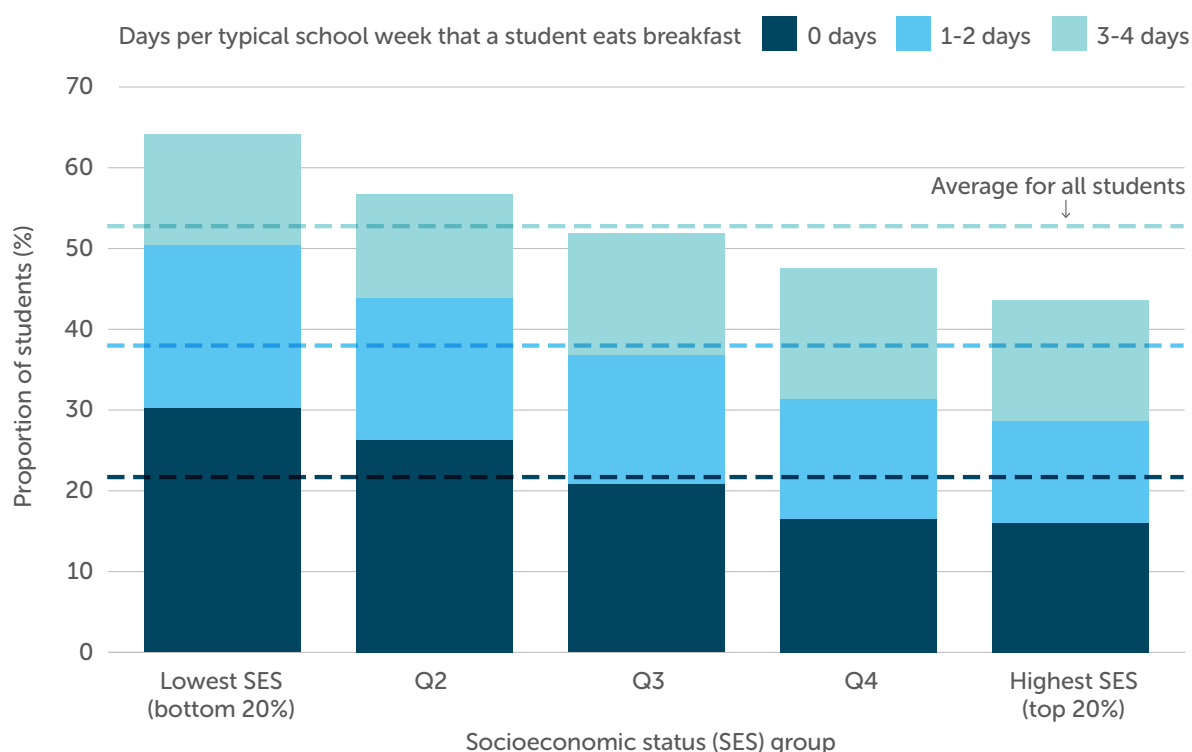
Not all students in Australia have life circumstances that foster educational engagement and success. Some students face disproportionate barriers to learning. Many students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, First Nations students, students with disability, and those living in rural or remote communities face disproportionate barriers to learning that stem from their life circumstances and the places where they live.

These challenges range from unmet basic needs such as food insecurity, lack of stable housing, and limited access to healthcare, to reduced parental support and exposure to unsafe environments. Such circumstances not only impact student attendance and participation, but also their capacity to focus, connect, and thrive in the classroom.

A wide range of factors outside of the classroom can significantly hinder students' engagement in education and shape their outcomes. For instance, data from PISA (2022) shows that fewer than one in two 15-year-old students in Australia ate breakfast every day before school during a typical school week in 2022. Figure 1 shows that the proportion of students skipping breakfast at least one day in a typical school week was higher for students from the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) background (64%) compared to students from the highest SES background (43%). Conversely, almost twice as many students from the lowest SES background did not eat breakfast any day before school compared to the highest SES students (30% compared with 16%, respectively). Students who are not eating breakfast regularly before school may have less capacity to focus, connect and thrive in the classroom compared to those who eat breakfast regularly during a typical school week.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to skip breakfast before going to school

Figure 1: Days per week that students eat breakfast before going to school during a typical school week, by SES quintiles (%)



Source: PISA 2022 (OECD, 2022)

Students from disadvantaged families often lack essential learning resources at home—such as ICT tools, school materials, and access to extracurricular or academic enrichment. PISA (2022) found that socially disadvantaged 15-year-old Australians were less likely than their advantaged peers to participate in creative and cultural activities like music, theatre, art, or writing, both at school and at home.

Similarly, there are significant differences in family involvement by student socioeconomic background. Family involvement, participation, and engagement with school and student learning makes a difference for student

learning, health and wellbeing (De Bortoli et al., 2024; Sheridan et al., 2019).

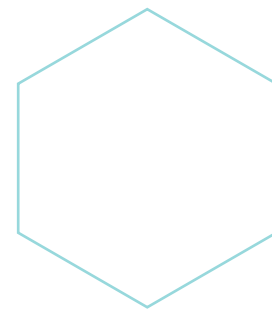
The disproportionate barriers to learning faced by some Australian students illustrate why inequality in education is so difficult to overcome. These inequities stem partly from the differences in the lives and circumstances of children and young people – factors that shape their readiness and capacity to learn long before they enter a system that is far from a level playing field. The traditional model of schooling often struggles to address these challenges, and many schools are not resourced to provide the necessary academic and non-academic supports their students need.

Educational inequality is getting worse

Analysis of data on student progress and outcomes highlights the growing and deeply concerning disparities in student achievement, engagement, and health and wellbeing outcomes across Australian schools. The results suggest that currently many Australian schools are failing to overcome the barriers to learning faced by many students, pointing to the need for bold approaches to tackle educational inequality.

Figure 2 reveals growing social gaps in Reading and Numeracy skills across year-levels (Years 3, 5, 7 and 9) recorded using NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) between 2008 and 2022. Social gaps are the gaps in achievement between students whose parents hold a Bachelor degree or above and students whose parents completed Year 11 or below. The top panel in Figure 2 reports results for Reading, while the lower panel reports the results for Numeracy.

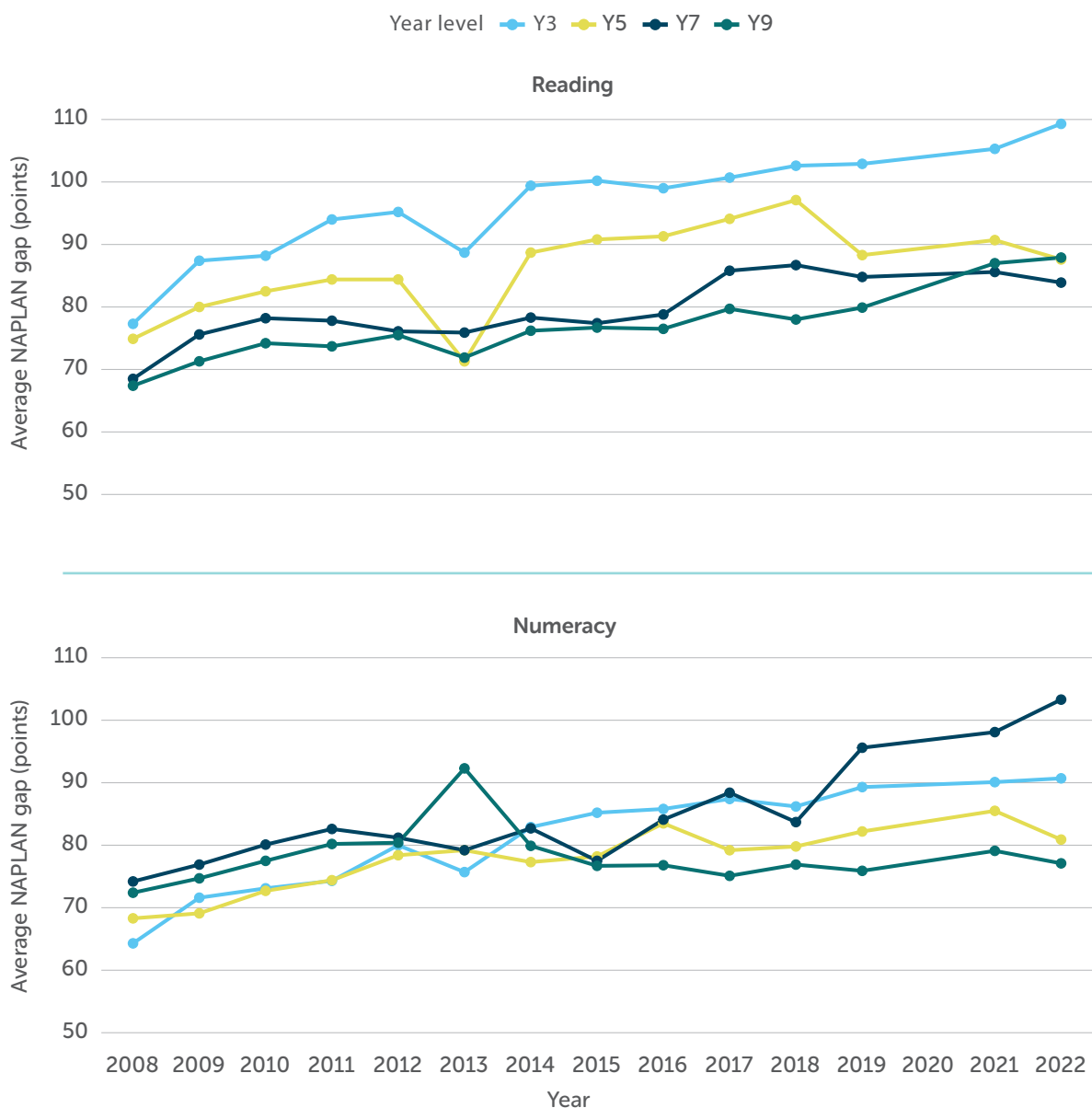
Students whose parents have a Bachelor degree or above consistently achieve higher Reading scores than students whose parents completed Year 11 or below. While in 2008 the social gap was 77.3 points for Year 3 students, and 67.4 for Year 9 students, these gaps were 109.3 and 87.9 in 2022, respectively. Numeracy results show a similar pattern.



The results suggest that currently many Australian schools are failing to overcome the barriers to learning faced by many students, pointing to the need for bold approaches to tackle educational inequality.

The educational divide in Reading and Numeracy continues to widen

Figure 2: NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy gap by parental education (Bachelor degree or above vs Year 11 or below) between 2008 and 2022



Source: ACARA (2025b).

Note: 2020 NAPLAN data missing as it was not administered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Differences in student NAPLAN achievement, which is calculated in points, can be equated to an academic achievement gap in years.

In 2022, the Reading achievement gap between students from socially disadvantaged and socially advantaged backgrounds was equivalent to 2.3 years of learning among Year 3 students, and 5.1 years of learning for Year 9 students (Expert Panel, 2023). This clearly demonstrates that learning gaps which emerge early, widen over time and are difficult for students to catch up and overcome within traditional models of schooling (Expert Panel, 2023).

The differences in student achievement go deeper than just marking how well students take a test. Poor student achievement is often associated with other negative outcomes. Students who fall behind in school and struggle to achieve, tend to have poor school attendance, they are less likely to complete secondary school, undertake post-school studies, benefit from good employment opportunities and their earning potential is diminished (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020; Lamb et al., 2020).

Student achievement has a strong correlation with various other factors, which are no less important, such as health outcomes and other non-cognitive measures including confidence and views about citizenship (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023; Lamb, et al., 2020). NAPLAN scores are also lower for students with mental disorders, compared with those without mental disorders (Goodsell et al., 2017).

Challenges in student engagement

Student attendance in Australia has deteriorated, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is the most disadvantaged schools that have experienced the sharpest decrease in average attendance rates over time (ACARA, 2024). Student engagement and attendance help in understanding whether schools are reaching all students and whether students are able to participate in learning.



In 2024, the average attendance rate of students in Australia's most disadvantaged schools was 9.9 percentage points lower than for students in the most advantaged schools (81.6% compared with 91.5%), up from a 6.6 percentage points gap in 2018 (87.6% compared with 94.2% in 2018).

The student attendance level (the percentage of students with attendance at or above 90%) of students in the most disadvantaged schools in 2024 was much lower (44.0%) than that of students in the top advantaged schools (69.9%). Again, the difference in attendance levels by school socio-economic context have increased between 2018 and 2024 (ACARA, 2024).

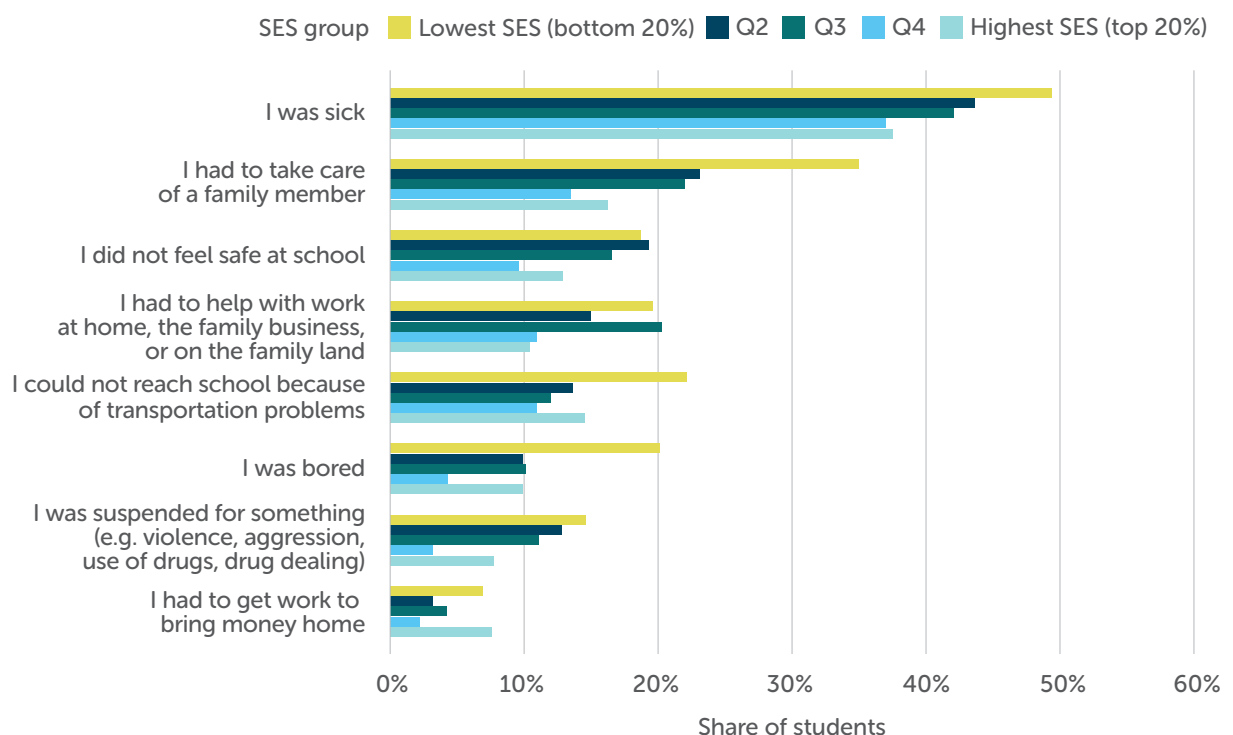
PISA 2022 provides a perspective on the factors influencing student absenteeism of 15-year-old students who missed school for more than three months. Socially disadvantaged students (students in the lowest SES quintile) in Australia are almost three times more likely than their advantaged peers (students in the highest SES quintile) to miss school for more than three months in a row (7.0% compared to 2.4% in lower secondary school). Figure 3 shows that the most common reason is because students were sick (42.8%), followed by family caring responsibilities (23.4%), lack of safety at school (16.0%) and working commitments at home (15.8%).

Of those students who missed school for more than three months in a row, socially disadvantaged students are twice as likely as socially advantaged students to report that they missed school for long periods of time because they had to take care of a family member and because they were bored. They were also almost twice as likely to say that they were suspended or that they had to help with work at home. As in many countries, Australian students living in disadvantage face barriers to learning outside the school that limit their engagement.

Disadvantaged students more likely to miss school

Students from more disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to miss school for extended periods

Figure 3: Reasons for missing school for three or more months in a row, by SES quintiles (%)



Source: PISA 2022 (OECD, 2022).

Student health and wellbeing are key

The health and wellbeing of students, families, educators, and the wider community are critical in Australian schools. Student mental health is also a cause of concern in Australia because of the impacts on student learning, attendance and engagement.

According to the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (2013–14), students aged 4 to 17 years suffering major depressive disorder in the past 12 months were on average 20 days absent from school, while students suffering anxiety disorder were on average 12 days absent from school (Lawrence et al., 2015, p.31).

This is particularly problematic considering that according to parents and carers, around 14% of Australians aged 4 to 17 years experienced a mental health issue (e.g., anxiety, depression) within the past year, equating to roughly 560,000 children and adolescents annually (Lawrence et al., 2015). Based on information from young people aged 11 to 17 years themselves, roughly one in five (19.9%) had high or very high levels of psychological distress.

Children and adolescents from low-income households, with parents or carers who had lower levels of education and higher rates of unemployment, were more likely to experience mental disorders in the past 12 months. Rates were also higher among those living in non-metropolitan areas, with the pattern being particularly pronounced among males (Lawrence et al., 2015).

Schools play a crucial role in identifying health and wellbeing need and providing direct services or issuing referrals for students to get help. Of all parents who reported that their child had experienced emotional or behavioural problems in the Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 40.5% said that a school staff member had suggested so, and that it was mostly suggested by teachers or principals (Lawrence et al., 2015). Similarly, of all young people aged 4 to 17 who accessed health services for mental health concerns, more than one in five (22.6%) were referred by their school.

However, strengthening the role of schools to be more effective at providing timely, school-based support for students is essential. Delivering mental health prevention initiatives through schools has been identified as a cost-effective investment that can help reduce educational inequality (Black Dog Institute, 2016). Placing a priority on health and wellbeing is essential not only for students' academic achievement and social-emotional development but also for supporting teacher wellbeing and fostering stronger, more resilient communities (Lawrence et al., 2015).

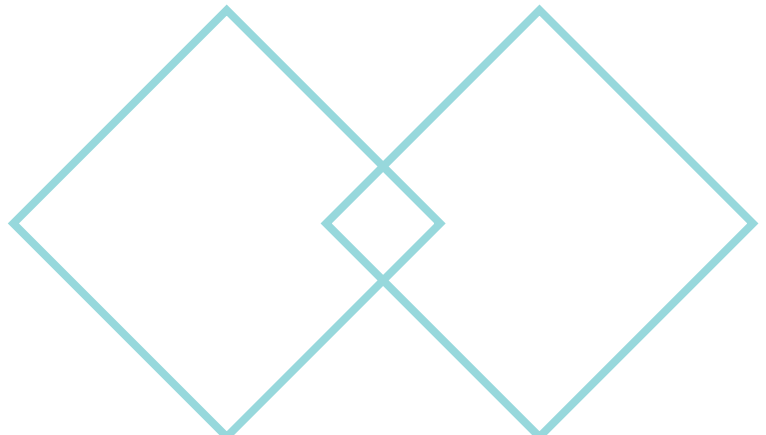
School segregation is exacerbating inequality

National data provide a picture of significant discrepancies in achievement, engagement and health/wellbeing between disadvantaged and advantaged students. In our analysis, we looked at student achievement, engagement and health/wellbeing discretely. In real life, these areas intersect with one another and have a compounding effect. For example, providing a learning intervention to a student with low achievement, may not be effective if the student is not engaged with school or is experiencing poor health.

Poverty concentration in schools also matters. The concentration of disadvantage in certain schools is associated with environments that are less conducive to learning, with higher teacher turnover, difficulties in attracting staff, poor classroom behaviour, low attendance and poor facilities, which taken together weaken the school's ability to meet complex student needs,

even with committed staff (Molina, 2023). As such, disadvantaged students attending disadvantaged schools are doubly disadvantaged (OECD, 2018), and Australia shows one of the highest levels of socioeconomic segregation of disadvantaged students in schools among developed countries (OECD, 2018). The high levels of poverty concentration in Australia places greater pressure on some schools over others.

Segregated schools which concentrate disadvantaged student cohorts require additional support to deliver the academic and non-academic outcomes expected from them. School leaders and teachers in these contexts can only succeed if they are supported to deliver the wraparound services that help to address the challenges faced by their students and families. Full-service school models are essential in these contexts.



Who are full-service schools for?

Serving students, supporting families, strengthening schools and communities

Not all schools need to – or should – adopt a full-service school model. Strategic, system-level investment is essential to maximise this reform’s potential.

Our analysis of student engagement and learning outcomes shows that inequality is worsening, and evidence suggests that the greatest challenges are found in schools serving communities experiencing concentrated poverty and higher levels of need. These schools, which work primarily with disadvantaged student cohorts, require additional support. Too often, they have not been

equipped or resourced to provide students and their families with the range of academic and non-academic supports needed to help level the playing field.

Internationally, full-service school models are most commonly first introduced in communities facing greater social and economic disadvantage – where the need for integrated supports is most acute. Schools in these contexts serve students with complex needs and benefit most from access to extended services. Over time, such models strengthen the ecosystem around children and young people, contributing to healthier and more resilient communities.



Students benefit academically and emotionally because barriers to learning—such as hunger, trauma, or untreated health issues—are reduced through health and wellbeing supports, so they can attend school more regularly and engage and focus more fully on learning.



Families gain easier access to services like counselling, healthcare, employment assistance, and parenting programs, which may improve engagement in their children’s education.



Schools and teachers get the support they need to tackle complex and multifaceted social, health or wellbeing issues, relieving teachers from being the primary responders. Wrap-around services create school environments more conducive to teaching and learning.



Disadvantaged communities benefit, as schools become safe, trusted spaces for support, connection, collaboration, helping to ensure that vulnerable members of our community don’t fall through the cracks.

As well as considering community characteristics for school selection, well-established international models look at the readiness and commitment of schools to embrace the significant cultural and operational changes involved in becoming a full-service school.

The Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) program run by the Federal Department of Education in the U.S., for instance, not only supports schools in the operation and implementation of the model but also provides assistance in the planning and pre-implementation stages. Evidence suggests that supportive school leadership, existing experience schools have in working with a range of community agencies, a clear plan for implementation, experience with coordinating services, and the ability to support community access to school facilities are other important factors to success.

One possibility is for Australian systems to adopt a two-stage implementation strategy for full-service schools. In the first stage, schools would be identified based on indicators of need across students, families, and the broader community. In the second stage, selected schools would be invited to submit an expression of interest, accompanied by a detailed project plan that aligns to their jurisdiction's framework for full-service school delivery. This would ensure that full-service schools are first implemented where they are most needed, and that schools and communities are prepared and motivated to embrace the significant challenges involved.

It is important to recognise that every disadvantaged school holds the potential to evolve into a full-service school—creating meaningful benefits for students, families, and the wider community. Over time, the initiative could expand to include schools across metropolitan, regional, and rural areas, supporting a phased and inclusive implementation that strengthens reach and impact.



Why invest in full-service schools now?

They can be effective at improving excellence and equity

Research indicates that when integrated effectively, the delivery of multiple services that collectively support students, families, and the wider community contribute to a broad spectrum of short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes, including:

- student academic, behavioural, and social-emotional improvements;
- stronger student-teacher relationships;
- enhanced school climate;
- increased teacher satisfaction;
- improved parent-teacher collaboration;
- deeper family engagement;
- greater community trust;
- reductions in crime; and,
- better overall community health indicators (Maier et al., 2017).

Full-service school models may be able to reduce educational inequalities through properly addressing student and family needs and help the system to achieve better outcomes for all.

They are cost-effective

Evidence from multiple studies overseas shows that full-service school models deliver substantial benefits, with outcomes far exceeding the costs involved. For example, a U.S.-based review of full-service school models found that cost-benefit studies indicated a strong return on investment, generating up to USD \$15 (AUD \$23) in social and economic value for every dollar invested (Maier et al, 2017). Cummings et al. (2007) found that the benefits of the Full-Service Extended Schools initiative in the U.K. over three years resulted in a GBP £2.2 (AUD \$4.5) return for every GBP £1 (AUD \$2) invested. In this case, the largest benefits were attributed to improved student attainment and skills, followed

by better health and behaviour such as reduced smoking and alcohol use.

Other systems are already seeing the benefits

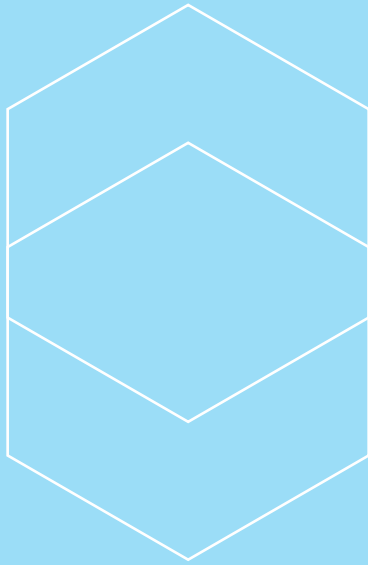
Given the measured benefits of this initiative, California, in the U.S., is making an historical investment of USD \$4.1 billion (AUD \$6.2 billion) committed to ensure that every school in a high-poverty community will become a Full-Service Community School (Burns et al., 2023). The state of New York supported schools to transition to a full-service model initially in 2013 and now has a network of over 420 'Community Schools' in operation (Maier & Rivera-Rodriguez, 2023).

The U.K's Full-Service and Extended Schools pilot program introduced in 2003 was such a success that the Government's intention was for all schools to operate as 'Extended Schools' by 2010 (Cummings et al., 2011). These international initiatives include robust evaluation frameworks which have gathered empirical evidence to help inform the Australian approach.

We need to be bold if we want to confront inequality head on

In order to achieve excellence and equity simultaneously, as the most successful education systems in the world do, Australian schools need to take new and innovative approaches.

Full-service school models are an important step in this direction. On all measures – student achievement, engagement, health and wellbeing – the social gaps are growing. We also know that school in disadvantaged communities are often not equipped to address complex student, family and community needs. The extended services offered by full-service school models may help make schools healthier and happier places to learn, for students, community and teachers as well.



Full-service school models in policy and practice

Learning from established models

In this section we examine lessons from full-service school models in Australia and overseas. We show how Australian initiatives aligned with full-service school models have developed in highly variable forms, often shaped by jurisdictional priorities, local funding arrangements and existing partnerships, which create a patchwork of promising activity rather than a coherent national system.

While these local variations provide valuable opportunities for innovation, international experiences offer a more mature blueprint. We look to several comparable systems – particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom – where full-service school models are further advanced, providing established frameworks for governance, partnership, funding and evaluation that we can learn from.

Looking at these examples alongside local initiatives highlights the features which make these models successful and the common barriers they face. Together, they offer lessons that could inform clearer policy direction for full-service school models here in Australia.

What is already happening in Australia?

Full-service school models are not new. In Australia, a range of initiatives have similarly sought to support students, families and communities through integrated service provision, operating under different names such as community hubs or community schools.

What is new is the support and momentum around this policy imperative. The *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* establishes a shared reform agenda across all states and territories, with commitments to foster stronger connections between schools and non-school services to help students come to school ready to learn. While few large-scale full-service school examples currently exist, the Agreement creates the governance setting and collective momentum needed for jurisdictions to design and implement their own approaches.

Included in the bilateral agreements associated with the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*, Australian jurisdictions commit to activities to realise the national objectives, outcomes and reforms. Through their bilateral agreements, states and territories retain substantial discretion in the design and delivery of school reform. This flexibility provides scope for each system to shape a framework for full-service school provision suited to local needs – supported by Commonwealth investment and informed by shared learning across jurisdictions.

The following table outlines the current commitments made by Australian jurisdictions to implement initiatives related to full-service school models within their bilateral agreements.



JURISDICTION	REFORM	TIMING
Australian Capital Territory	Working with schools, local communities and service providers to design, trial and implement a community school approach to meeting the wellbeing and learning needs of Australian Capital Territory public school students through access to community coordinators, mental health workers and multi-disciplinary services.	Design in 2025 for implementation from 2026
New South Wales	Expand wellbeing coordinators in New South Wales public schools to strengthen access to health and allied services.	Commencing from 2026
Northern Territory	Expand multi-disciplinary teams and implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support within government schools and across the system through regionalised delivery models, for example, student wellbeing officers.	Commencing 2025, with staged rollout
Queensland	Extend access to healthcare professionals (such as general practitioners) in primary schools with the greatest need, including prioritisation of partnership school locations.	From 2029
South Australia	Provide public school students with access to student-centred advice and evidence informed services aimed at supporting wellbeing, through, for example, through anti-bullying and violence prevention initiatives.	From 2028
Tasmania	Build on quality supports for schools by drawing on the expertise of multidisciplinary teams to improve universal supports through targeted, individualised and intensive support, particularly in most disadvantaged schools. Strengthen wellbeing support teams in schools and greater access to school mental health supports. Strengthen student engagement through enhanced school-family engagement. Strengthen supports and engagement for all learners at all stages of their education.	From 2025
Victoria	Continue to provide initiatives that identify student learning needs early and provide tiered and targeted, intensive supports, in line with evidence-based teaching and a multi-tiered system of support.	Continuing
Western Australia	Trial place-based approaches to delivering a full-service schools model in at least four public schools from 2026 to inform development of a full-service schools framework for expanding linkages between schools and other community, health and social services, and undertaking an independent review in 2028.	From 2026 (with planning from 2025)

It is apparent that jurisdictions are adopting very different ways to foster connection between schools and non-school services to support students. Only Western Australia has formalised a commitment to full-service schools in four sites (one in an outer regional or remote location), while the Australian Capital Territory intends to design, trial and implement a community school approach. Specific staffing for reform initiatives, including wellbeing coordinators (New South Wales) and student wellbeing officers (Northern Territory) are included in some commitments.

Providing greater accessibility to healthcare professionals is prioritised for Queensland primary schools, while the focus in South Australia is to support wellbeing through specific school-based initiatives. Tasmania has committed to initiatives targeted to engage students and improve learning by ensuring schools meet their various needs, through family engagement and the help of multidisciplinary teams.

While each jurisdiction takes a different approach, all current policy commitments share a strong focus on student wellbeing and on addressing the social, physical, and mental health needs that influence learning. However, not all have chosen to pursue these goals through a full-service school approach or by adopting the full set of features described in this report. Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory are the only jurisdictions to have committed explicitly to developing full-service school models, while others commit to implementing related reforms through different mechanisms.

At this stage we are yet to determine whether any of the policy commitments translate into consistent delivery or system-level progress.

Evidence drawn from the various bilateral agreements provides useful signals about jurisdictional focus, but policy statements do not always tell the full story about what is actually happening in schools and communities.

Another factor shaping educational reforms on the ground is the role of philanthropy. In Queensland, for example, the Family LinQ initiative funded through local philanthropists, have enabled some schools to build the infrastructure and expertise to enable full-service school-like models (Morson, et al., 2024, p.17). The reliance on non-government actors in some jurisdictions, alongside variable jurisdictional investment in others, further compounds the fragmented picture.

Victoria has directed strategic system investment into initiatives such as Community Hubs, which are a broader, place-based concept for local residents to access services, social, and learning opportunities. Community Hubs adopt a 'family-centred' approach to delivering health, education, social, and other support services (National Child & Family Hubs Network, 2025). Together, these examples highlight that while many promising initiatives exist, approaches remain uneven across jurisdictions.

The challenge for the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement* is to anchor reform in a way that supports coherence across systems while respecting jurisdictional leadership. States and territories are best placed to design and deliver their own frameworks for full-service school provision that reflect local contexts and community needs. The Commonwealth's role is to support this work – through shared principles, consistent reporting, and mechanisms for learning across jurisdictions.

A coordinated approach of this kind would retain flexibility while supporting comparability and accountability. It would also help ensure that investments in health, wellbeing, and education services are aligned, scalable, and directed toward reducing inequality where it is most entrenched.

International evidence: Lessons from the U.K., U.S. and beyond

International experience provides a useful reference point for considering how full-service school models might develop greater coherence and impact in Australia.

The U.K.'s *Full-Service Extended Schools* and the U.S.'s *Community Schools* offer two of the most developed case studies.

Key examples demonstrate that integrated school-community models can be scaled and sustained when backed by strong policy with clear purpose and defined roles, dedicated multi-year funding and multi-service agency sector partnerships that bring schools and other service agencies together, and evaluation systems that track impact on learning and wellbeing.

Case Study 1: Full-Service Extended Schools in the U.K. (2003–2010)

In 2003, the U.K. Government launched the Full-Service Extended Schools (FSES) initiative as part of a wider policy shift linking education to social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal, and the Every Child Matters agenda.

The Department for Education and Skills aimed for every local authority to develop at least one school offering integrated services such as 8am–6pm childcare, health and social care access, adult learning, and community activities. By the end of the initiative, 138 schools were participating, with a further 10 supported through the London Challenge. These schools were predominantly located in disadvantaged areas, often in Behaviour Improvement Programme zones (Cummings, et. al, 2007).

The case study findings from an evaluation of the FSES initiative (Cummings, et. al, 2007) reveal a nuanced picture of impact and challenges. First, schools showed considerable diversity in how they implemented FSES provision, but common features included tackling barriers to learning through multi-agency partnerships, additional staffing, and extended services such as childcare and community engagement. Leadership was central, with headteachers and senior staff often driving provision by mobilising funding streams and forging partnerships, underpinned by a shared understanding that pupils' difficulties were linked to family and community circumstances and required holistic responses.

Second, the evaluation found positive outcomes for pupils, particularly those facing the greatest challenges. Case study schools reported gains in attainment, engagement with learning, behaviour, and wider life chances. Statistical analysis confirmed that while FSES schools served more disadvantaged intakes, gaps in achievement between pupils eligible for free school meals or identified with special educational needs and their peers were narrower than in similar schools.

Third, outcomes extended to families and communities. Families gained stability, access to health and social services, and improved parenting support, while some communities benefited from schools acting as hubs for service delivery. Although large-scale community transformation was not yet evident, positive outcomes were evident for specific groups and individuals, dependent on sustained partnerships, local strategy, and schools' openness to community involvement.

Finally, the cost-benefit analysis indicated that while FSES provision required significant investment, benefits balanced or outweighed costs, particularly for those facing the greatest difficulties. The initiative enhanced schools' reputations, strengthened community links, and created a holistic model of provision that non-FSES schools rarely matched. However, sustainability relied on coherent policy frameworks, long-term support, and local coordination; without these, provision risked depending too heavily on the entrepreneurial drive of individual school leaders, limiting its scalability and resilience (Cummings et al., 2007).

Case Study 2: Community Schools in the U.S. (focus on California and New York City)

In the U.S., the Community School model has developed nationally with the aim of positioning schools as hubs for academic, health, and social supports. Two jurisdictions – New York City and California – provide some of the strongest recent evidence of impact.

In New York City, more than 300 community schools were established between 2014 and 2019 (NYC Department of Education, 2020). An independent evaluation found significant improvements: chronic absenteeism was 7-9 percentage points lower in participating schools, suspensions declined by around 17%, and high school graduation rates were 7.2 percentage points higher. Surveys also showed stronger student sense of belonging, safer school climates, and improved relationships between pupils and adults (Johnston et al., 2020).

California is implementing one of the largest state-level initiatives through the California Community Schools Partnership Program, with USD \$4.1 billion (AUD \$6.2 billion) committed to more than 1,400 schools by 2028. Each school receives a planning grant followed by multi-year funding to employ a Community School Coordinator and build partnerships with community agencies (California Department of Education, 2023).

Early evaluation evidence showed significant expansion of services, including increased access to medical, dental, legal, and after-school enrichment programs, with particularly strong effects in schools serving low-income and linguistically diverse populations (California Department of Education, 2023).

Taken together, the U.S. evidence suggests that community schools work best when they combine consistent leadership, a dedicated coordinator, and strong cross-agency partnerships. Evaluations highlight improvements in attendance, progression, graduation, and school climate (Johnston et al., 2020), while California's formative evaluation emphasised the role of system-level investment and planning in scaling provision. Across both contexts, the model's strength lies in its capacity to narrow equity gaps by integrating services directly into schools serving disadvantaged populations (California Department of Education, 2023).

What else is happening internationally?

Other jurisdictions offer promising examples. In Canada, Saskatchewan's *SchoolPLUS* initiative and British Columbia's *CommunityLINK* program have formalised schools as centres for health, cultural and social supports, with a strong emphasis on Indigenous leadership and locally responsive services (Government of British Columbia, 2023; Government of Saskatchewan, 2002).

In New Zealand, the *Learning Support Delivery Model* and regional 'hub schools' coordinate education, disability and health services to reduce duplication and improve access, though implementation has been uneven and quantitative outcome data remain limited (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2019).

Broader integrated service models, such as Chile's *Chile Crece Contigo* and Finland's 'schools as learning and wellbeing communities', reinforce the lesson that aligning education with health and social supports can lift outcomes and reduce inequities (Irrázaval & Santos, 2019; Kelly et al., 2018). These international examples highlight that many systems are developing initiatives that broadly correspond to full-service school models and provide good examples of the main features required for effective delivery.

What features make these models effective?

International experiences consistently show that successful full-service school models share common features that allow schools and teachers to better focus on student, family and community need.

In the table below, we summarise international evidence on what makes full-service school models effective and highlight the features that could support their successful adoption in Australia.

Features of effective full-service school models

Key feature

Lessons from international evidence



Coordination

Dedicated school-based roles (coordinator or social workers) who are part of the school leadership team are essential to broker services efficiently and promote cultural-change.



Protected long-term funding

Multiyear, protected funding is nonnegotiable for sustaining partnerships and avoiding stop-start cycles



Broad impact assessment

Impact must be assessed using a broad set of metrics: attendance, engagement, family participation, wellbeing and school climate – not just academic results.



Co-design and needs assessment

Services need to be selected with practices of co-design, with robust local needs assessments to ensure services meet community priorities rather than generic offerings.



Alignment

Schools cannot do this alone: inter-departmental and cross-service agency sector governance is essential.

First, a **dedicated coordinator role** in a full-time capacity ensures that teachers and principals are not expected to manage the coordination of the additional services and partnerships on top of their core work (Brookings Institute, 2021). The additional staffing resource is in recognition of the acute workforce pressures currently evident across many schools, where once schools traditionally may have relied on the goodwill or extra work of teachers to facilitate and coordinate additional service delivery. The non-negotiable coordination role associated with full-service schools is essential to lead the cultural shift required for schools to adopt a more holistic model of support to improve conditions for learning.

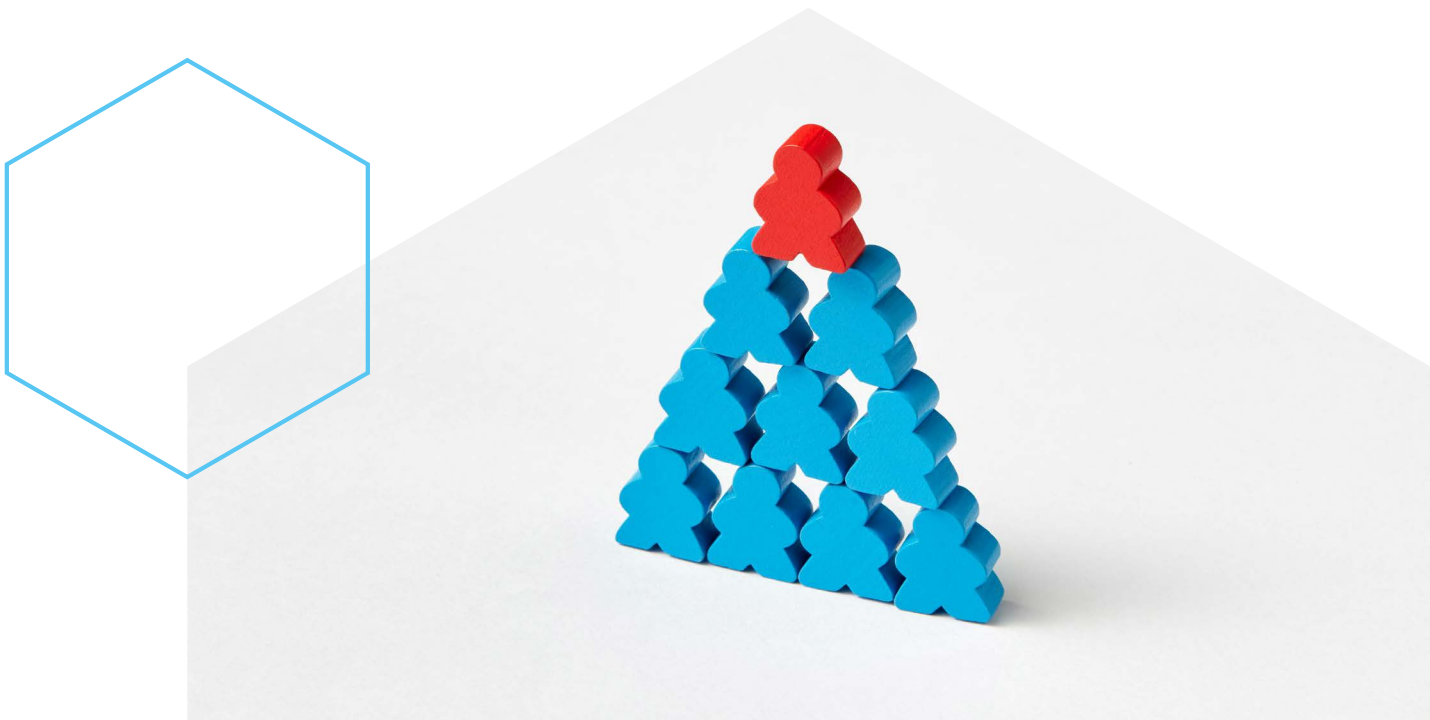
Furthermore, the coordination role needs to sit inside, not apart from, the leadership team. School leaders with an 'educational equity mindset' - a philosophy that motivates actions to increase opportunities for all students - are more likely to successfully implement full-service school models (Nadelson et al., 2020). Equity-minded leaders share decision-making power, embed the role of the full-service school coordinator into their leadership team, and make sure that all staff and partners understand the coordinator's authority and scope. Studies of U.S. schools show that this approach enables collective problem solving and distributed leadership, with school leaders creating structures for dialogue across the school community to examine and address systemic causes of student disparities (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2020).

Second, successful models overseas have **long-term funding**. Internationally, it is common to see federal grants, state funding and philanthropic partnerships combine to allow schools to plan for several years, rather than having to rebuild programs annually and fall victim to stop-start cycles (Cummings et al., 2011). International examples reaffirm that full-service schools require additional resourcing - to initiate and then sustain - the broader model of delivery. This funding needs to be above and in addition to the regular schools funding in place within systems. It may also have greater flexibility.

Thirdly, **broad impact assessment** needs to be considered. Full-service school models must be assessed using a broad set of metrics: attendance, engagement, family participation, wellbeing and school connectedness - not just academic results (Black et al., 2010). Overseas, we know that community schools have the potential to lift engagement in schools, improve academic achievement and non-cognitive outcomes, improve absenteeism, and lift school completion (Boston College, 2025). Having the right measures in place ensures that full-service school models demonstrate achievements along their journey through the right metrics. It is also important that a research program is established as part of any national framework that places a priority on school-practitioner research and studies that emphasise student, family and community perspective.

Fourthly, **co-design practice** is an important feature of successful full-service school models elsewhere. Co-design builds on and strengthens relationships with community, ensuring that the full-service school is responsive to their needs. Co-design practices may be particularly beneficial to communities that have been traditionally marginalised, or without voice (Gillett-Swan et al., 2024). Initially an important step is that schools conduct a needs assessment with students and families, and services are put in place accordingly. Needs assessments also ensure that full-service school models tap into existing strengths or other long-standing service partnerships, to build on what is already working well rather than implementing a top-down provision model.

Finally, **alignment** is the final essential feature that is apparent in successful full-service school models elsewhere. Alignment refers to making it easier for services to operate within a school environment, while also meeting mandatory safety requirements. Alignment also encompasses cross-department and inter-agency collaboration. In some U.S. states, schools are supported by a specific Department-agency to negotiate service agreements or to contract professionals who may not traditionally be employed by school settings (e.g., specialised youth or family community workers) (Maier et al., 2017).



Why are these models rare?

Taken together, the international evidence shows that full-service school models can make a tangible difference for students, families and communities. They do so by reducing the impact of health, social and economic barriers that schools cannot solve alone. The results - better attendance, greater engagement in learning, improved wellbeing and, in some cases, higher completion rates - are particularly marked in disadvantaged communities. The lessons from established international models are that when schools are given the resources, authority and time to work with their communities in this way, change happens. This can only occur with significant commitment at every level.

However, research also makes it clear why such models remain relatively rare internationally (and domestically).

Full-service school models are difficult to establish, and they face many implementation barriers. Once in place, they do not always succeed. This is because full-service schools require a different strategic orientation and investment approach to what is traditionally in place within education systems. It is important to acknowledge the structural constraints in the Australian school system, which may make full-service school models hard to scale.

The table below identifies barriers to the effective implementation of full-service school models internationally, which Australia can learn from as we move forward with this reform.

Barriers to effective implementation of full-service school models

BARRIER	IMPACT
Unsustainable funding	Services start but stop as soon as short-term funding ends; trust and partnerships are lost.
Insufficient staffing	Without coordinators or appropriate staff to deliver the extended services, the additional workload overwhelms teachers and principals
Untargeted initiatives	Generic program designs fail to address the unique needs of each school community, reducing effectiveness.
Competing reform priorities	Schools face pressure to meet targets in other reform areas, leaving limited bandwidth. Departmental support is limited and focused on other reform agendas.
Narrow accountability metrics	Attendance, wellbeing, family engagement and other key outcomes are not valued or measured, so these reforms appear 'low priority' within the current system.

Unsustainable funding

Schools are accustomed to operating in an environment of fragmented service delivery that rely on short-term grants that prevent embedded practice or lasting outcomes. Full-service school models are not quick or inexpensive reforms. They require sustained, multiyear funding. When programs are dependent on short-term grants or pilot initiatives, there is little chance to build the long-term partnerships these models need, and services often fall away once the funding stops.

Insufficient staffing

Capacity within schools or ensuring the right 'boots are on the ground' is another limiting factor. Providing a more extended set of services requires additional staffing - in the form of a coordinator - but staffing is also required for community outreach, wellbeing professionals, allied health roles, etc. Without appropriate staffing, the cultural change required for the full-service model of provision may overwhelm schools that are already managing multiple competing demands, particularly those in disadvantaged communities. While many schools already work hard to provide broad services for their students, the evidence shows additional specialised staffing is vital to make these efforts sustainable and to ensure they do not become another burden for already stretched teachers.

Untargeted initiatives

Even where funding and staffing are available, some full-service school models are not always targeted to the community need. Evidence from the U.K. and U.S. highlights that integrated models only work when they are based on a local needs assessment, rather than rolled out as generic packages without flexibility.

International studies emphasise that while full-service school models must follow evidence-based guidelines in their initiation and be accountable throughout their operation, they also need flexibility to respond to and target the unique culture, history and needs of each community (Hine et al., 2024; Simons, 2011). An untargeted 'one size fits all' model rarely works.

Competing reform priorities

Competing reform priorities can lead to systems and departments failing to prioritise full-service schools. School leaders may be obliged to prioritise 'improvement initiatives' linked to test scores (Kimber et al., 2022), which narrows the curriculum (Lingard & Sellar, 2013), downplays engagement and wellbeing outcomes and can exacerbate inequality, as opposed to the more holistic model offered by full-service schools.

Narrow accountability metrics

The outcomes that full-service school models improve - such as wellbeing, family engagement and belonging - can be difficult to measure and typically sit as a second-tier set of metrics compared to other educational outcomes, primarily standardised test results, like NAPLAN. It is important that full-service school models are not tied to narrow accountability metrics that ultimately fail to capture the model's potential.



Possibilities and potential in Australia

Making it happen – nationally and locally

The Commonwealth Government has made positive steps in working towards reaching agreement with each state and territory to recognise the benefit of full-service school models in the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*. Some of the principles of full-service school models, such as focus on student wellbeing, establishment of partnerships, a place-based approach to education, and community engagement, are already reflected in the strategic priorities of states and territories. On the ground, many Australian schools already offer a range of learning, engagement and wellbeing supports to students and families, some through partnerships with community organisations.

Building on this foundation, the following section outlines the **system-level conditions** required to implement and sustain full-service school models effectively across jurisdictions.

Full-service school models have the potential to enhance existing efforts with a centrally-supported, locally-coordinated approach

Implementing full-service school models is not easy. Understanding how they work and their potential to address complex student, family and community need is the first step to making them happen.

The conversation must now turn to how **full-service school models can be effectively established and sustainably embedded** across all state and territory systems.

Conditions for success

While the **principles** and **features** outlined earlier define what full-service schools are and how they work, this section focuses on **three cross-cutting conditions** that will determine whether they can succeed in practice within Australia's federated education systems. These are:

- **Dedicated coordination** within schools
- **Department-level supports** at the system level
- **Locally tailored extended services** reflecting community needs.

We have called out these three for deeper analysis because they represent the core implementation levers identified across the evidence base – the practical mechanisms that enable the full-service school features to take root, operate effectively, and scale sustainably across jurisdictions. Together, they bridge the gap between principle and practice: turning what the evidence says works into what can work systemically across Australia.

Dedicated coordination

Effective full-service school models rely on dedicated coordination to connect education with health, wellbeing, and community services. This function is typically led by a full-time coordinator or small coordinating team, working as part of the school leadership structure. Coordinator/s need to demonstrate specialised training and experience in building and sustaining community partnerships, and strong leadership,

organisational, and communication skills, along with a deep understanding of integrated service delivery across education, health, social services, and community sectors.

The coordination function involves developing and managing a complex network of extended services such as mental health support, family engagement programs, after-school activities, and wraparound care. Additionally, it must lead efforts to systematically identify student needs at school. This includes developing and maintaining referral pathways, coordinating with teachers, counsellors, and external service providers, and using data to inform support strategies. Coordination staff should be skilled in conducting needs assessments, facilitating case management meetings, and ensuring that interventions are timely, culturally appropriate, and aligned with each student's unique needs.

State and territory department-level supports

The relevant state or territory department of education also needs to provide centralised supports for full-service schools. This may involve establishing a dedicated departmental team to help support the rollout and ongoing implementation of the reform.

This team would be responsible for designing and implementing the necessary supports and infrastructure to enable full-service schools to operate — such working with students, families, and communities in their needs-assessments; establishing clear processes for engaging with external services; and ensuring adequate physical and digital infrastructure. Crucially, departmental support must also be provided to facilitate the formation

of formal agreements and enduring partnerships with a broad network of organisations—across health, social services, community—that contribute to the delivery of integrated wraparound services.

Not all schools and communities are equally poised to adopt and implement full-service school models due to factors outside of their control. These may be schools where the provision of extended services is constrained due to location. Where service collaborations or capacities are limited or absent, additional support structures provided centrally (e.g., at the system or jurisdictional level) are essential.

Locally tailored extended services

Given the wide diversity of Australian schools—including remote and regional areas, disparities in access to resources and varying opportunities for institutional partnerships —flexibility is essential.

Implementing a full-service school model in Australia requires a careful balance between top-down policy direction and a bottom-up approach built from local knowledge and community engagement. Evidence from successful models highlight that the services offered must be tailored to the unique needs of the students, families, and communities each school serves. The set of services cannot be derived from a generic package decided independently from school context.

Full-service school models recognise and leverage local resources, capacities, and existing networks to deliver the right additional supports effectively. Schools already have a range of services in place, so initially it is important that the model capitalises on existing strengths.

The need for a framework to get us there

While local adaptation is key, the successful implementation of full-service school models requires a coherent framework that establishes strategic direction and parameters.

Such a framework ensures that, even as schools and communities tailor services to meet the unique needs of their students and families, they remain anchored in the core principles, key features, and evidence-based practices that define effective full-service school models.

This balance between flexibility and consistency not only promotes equity across diverse contexts, but also increases the likelihood of sustainable, high-impact outcomes nationwide. A framework would help ensure ‘fidelity of implementation’ across sites within each jurisdiction (Brookings Institute, 2021).

In Australia, a developed framework for full-service school delivery could be unique to each state or territory. Placing the onus on jurisdictions to develop their own respective frameworks for full-service school delivery ensures that it reflect context and current strategic thinking.

International jurisdictions that have successfully adopted full-service school models typically rely on comprehensive frameworks to guide implementation and support schools. A notable example is California, where in 2021 the state legislature enacted the California Community Schools Partnership Act. In 2022, the State Board of Education formally approved the California Community Schools Framework, which serves as the cornerstone for both the design and strategic rollout of the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP), ensuring alignment with the state's vision for the initiative.

The Californian Framework provides a useful example that our systems could use as a basis to develop their own full-service school model delivery framework. The framework clearly sets four principles, four commitments, four practices and the key roles that sustain the model. With the key components of the model in place, schools can put into place the services that work best for them, with confidence.

In Australia, comparable frameworks that guide community hub initiatives may also serve as good examples. Community Hubs Australia and its National Community Hubs Program use a well-defined framework—not a rigid blueprint—to embed hubs within primary schools to connect families with young children with each other, their school, and local services. The National Community Hubs framework guides how hubs are created, run, and evolved across communities with a focus on four pillars (engagement, early childhood, English language learning, and vocational pathways).

At this stage, it is notable that only Western Australia has committed to the development of a framework to accompany their design and delivery of full-service school models. In addition, they intend to have a particular focus on ‘ensuring use of partnership and shared design approaches to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families’ (Department of Education, 2024).

Full-service school models need to be supported by a well-defined framework that balances common guidelines with local contexts and priorities to support the instigation and implementation of full-service school models with fidelity.

Aside from the development of a framework for full-service school delivery, there are other important considerations that Australian school systems can learn from international experience.

Phased rollout

Adopting a full-service school model is not a superficial policy. At the school level, the shift to becoming a full-service school is especially demanding. It is not just a new program, but a profound systemic transformation requiring changes at different levels that require strong leadership and sustained efforts.

Implementing full-service school models demand a renewed way of thinking about collaboration between institutions and schools, students and families. It involves building trust, fostering shared ownership, and validating schools as an appropriate place to seek and provide services in areas beyond their traditional role. This transformation is not easy and demands time, dialogue, and a willingness to challenge traditional boundaries between education, health, wellbeing, and community life.

At the federal and state/territory level, embracing full-service school models implies a redefinition of educational policy, one in which governments align education, health, and social services in ways that challenge traditional silos and promote cross-service agency sector collaboration. This requires policy vision, sustained leadership and new governance structures.

Given this complexity, the implementation of a full-service school models in Australia must be approached as a phased and adaptive process, allowing time for the full realisation of the model at the school, community and jurisdiction/national level. Each phase should be informed by ongoing evaluation, taking into account local context and stakeholder feedback, ensuring that the model evolves responsively and sustainably.

Alignment and collaboration across Government, agencies and services

As mentioned before, alignment and collaboration are key features of effective full-service school models. School autonomy to develop community partnerships to deliver a comprehensive range of support to students and families is key. However, it cannot rest solely on the shoulders of schools. Instead, it requires a coordinated approach—where community organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, philanthropic groups, and all tiers of government, from local councils to state and federal bodies, work in collaboration with schools to provide the services needed.

Breaking down silos and fostering alignment between government departments, inter-sectoral agencies, and community organisations is a challenging undertaking. It demands a shared commitment and unified vision across all stakeholders to ensure meaningful collaboration and sustained impact. Achieving this requires deliberate structures that bring together key actors—not only education departments but also those responsible for health, child and family services, mental health, housing, youth, and community development—to co-design and coordinate delivery of services. Initial strategic thinking about how this could occur is essential and underpins the development of a framework for full-service school delivery.

Sustained investment strategy

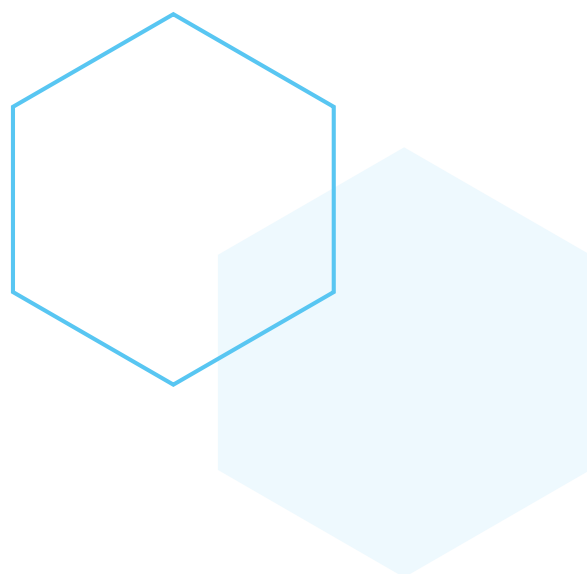
A key condition for the success of full-service school models is the provision of sustained, multiyear funding.

To be effective, the investment approach must be strategic—moving beyond fragmented, short-term allocations for infrastructure or isolated services. Instead, a long-term funding commitment is critical to building stability, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that services are responsive to the evolving needs of children, families, and communities. Funding full-service schools as fully integrated service delivery hubs includes resourcing the essential personnel, with particular emphasis on staffing within schools to coordinate and deliver wraparound support.

There are several options to fund full-service school models. In some states of the U.S., like New York, ongoing support is provided through school funding formulas, while in other states like California, competitive grant funding is in place to cover both planning and implementation. Funding in other states cover capacity-building and technical assistance supports. A growing number of states investing in community schools are using both discretionary federal funds and state funds (Maier & Rivera-Rodriguez, 2023).

In the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*, the Commonwealth has increased its contribution to 25% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) to put government schools on a pathway to 100% of funding over the next 10 years and support states and territories to meet the common objectives. To implement full-service school models, state and territory systems may not need to draw on additional resources. The Commonwealth Agreement provides the sustained investment that could be used to make this reform happen. Furthermore, the implementation of full-service models which coordinates services in schools may identify efficiencies in existing wellbeing, health and engagement initiatives.

The full-service school model provides a coherence to existing reform efforts, rather than fragmented initiatives that have less impact on their own.



Monitoring and evaluation

The successful implementation of full-service schools in Australia requires more information than exists today about the current provision of school extended services and community partnerships, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the costs and full range of benefits associated with the initiative.

Across all phases of the full-service school implementation cycle, from their initial set up to ongoing implementation, a series of monitoring and evaluation studies need to run in parallel to track the model and ensure its long-term sustainability. A targeted research agenda that captures practices, identifies strengths, and uncovers opportunities for scaling integrated service delivery is essential.

To advance full-service school models, a research agenda is required to capture what is happening on the ground, involving the voices of students, educators, families, and community members. Their lived experiences and reflections are essential for taking a strengths-based approach which considers how best to build capacity in schools and provide the right opportunities for implementing full-service school models.

A rigorous monitoring and evaluation program will provide critical insights into how well the model is being implemented, the quality and reach of integrated services, and the impact on student, family, and community outcomes. Importantly, costs should be monitored to facilitate cost-benefit analysis and grow the evidence needed to inform future policy decisions and guide the expansion of the model to other schools and regions across Australia.

Part of this reporting and evaluation could contribute to the **Annual Implementation Reports** that states and territories are required to submit as part of the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*, which outline progress on national reform directions and improvement measures where the Commonwealth does not already hold the relevant data. These reporting provisions form an important accountability mechanism within the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*.

Where to from here?

Making full-service school models a priority

The premise of full-service school models is that they create optimal conditions for learning, as they provide appropriate supports to respond to complex student learning, wellbeing and health needs. Students are the central focus for all services offered by full-service school models, but where needed they are accessible to families and members of the community as well.

By expanding the adoption of the full-service school model, Australia can join other world-leading systems that support their schools and teachers with additional resources to provide comprehensive, connected and coordinated wraparound supports for students at their point of need, to nurture ongoing connectedness and engagement, and address barriers to learning and inequality. Full-service schools represent a bold reform that can help Australia deliver on the ambitions of the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement*.

With a centrally-supported, locally-coordinated approach, these models can build on and extend existing initiatives already operating across jurisdictions. This means moving beyond pilots or fragmented programs toward a consistent, system-wide approach that treats wellbeing and learning as inseparable.

In this report, we have identified the **four guiding principles** that distinguish full-service schools from traditional models and **five key features** that evidence shows make them effective in practice.

Building on these, we have examined how these features can be applied within Australian jurisdictions to enable effective and sustainable implementation — highlighting the **conditions for success** – dedicated coordination, department-level supports, and locally tailored extended services.

Together, these elements form a coherent toolkit for reform — one that provides states and territories with a roadmap for implementation, accountability, and continuous improvement.

To realise the aspirations set out in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, all education stakeholders - governments, systems, schools, and communities - must commit to prioritising the full-service school model, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Each jurisdiction should develop its own framework for full-service school delivery, aligning these principles and features with local needs.

Done right, full-service schools can play a vital role in achieving Australia's objective for greater equity and excellence in education.

References

- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2025a). *NAPLAN 2025. National Results Commentaries*. <https://dataandreporting.blob.core.windows.net/anrdataportal/ANR-Documents/NAP2025/2025%20NAPLAN%20National%20Results%20Commentary.pdf>
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2025b). *NAPLAN National results*. <https://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results>
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2024.) *Student attendance*. <https://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/student-attendance>
- Australian Government Department of Education (2025). *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034*. <https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/resources/heads-agreement-better-and-fairer-schools-agreement-full-and-fair-funding-20252034>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020). *Australia's children*. Cat. no. CWS 69. Canberra: AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/6af928d6-692e-4449-b915-cf2ca946982f/aihw-cws-69-print-report.pdf.aspx?inline=true>
- Black Dog Institute (2016). *Prevention of depression and anxiety in Australian schools*. <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/prevention-of-depression-and-anxiety-in-australian-schools.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- Black, R., Lemon, B., & Walsh, L. (2010). *Literature review and background research for the National Collaboration Project: Extended Service School Model*. The Foundation for Young Australians.
- Boston College. (2025). *The Impact of City Connects. Progress Report 2024*. <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/centers/city-connects/Publications/City%20Connects%20Progress%20Report%202024.pdf>
- Brookings Institution. (2021). *Addressing Education Inequality with a Next Generation of Community Schools*. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Next-generation-community-schools-task-force-report-FINAL.pdf>
- Burns, D., Griffith, M., & Maier, A. (2023). *Funding community schools in California*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/funding-community-schools-california-brief>
- California Department of Education. (2023). *Report to the Governor and Legislature: 2023 Formative Evaluation of the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP)*. Sacramento, CA: CDE. <https://abgt.assembly.ca.gov/system/files/2024-03/attachment-a.pdf>
- City Connects (2020). *City Connects Intervention and impact. Progress report 2020*. Chestnut Hill, MA: Center for Thriving Children, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

- Cummings, C., Dyson, A., & Todd, L. (2011). *Beyond the School Gates: Can Full Service and Extended Schools Overcome Disadvantage?* Routledge.
- Cummings, C., Dyson, A., Muijs, D., Papps, I., Pearson, D., Gaffo, C., Tiplady, L., Todd, L. & Crowther, D. (2007). *Evaluation of the Full Service Extended School Initiative: Final report*. https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/file_store/production/55844/F53CDFAE-5B7B-414A-8455-B12F68AA5D0B.pdf
- De Bortoli, L., Underwood, C., Friedman, T., & Gebhardt, E. (2024). *PISA 2022. Reporting Australia's results. Volume II: Student and school characteristics*. Australian Council for Educational Research. <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-726-7>
- De Bortoli, L., Underwood, C., & Thomson, S. (2023). *PISA 2022. Reporting Australia's results. Volume I: Student performance and equity in education*. Australian Council for Educational Research. <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-725-0>
- Department of Education. (2024). *Western Australia Bilateral Agreement (Better and Fairer Schools Agreement)*.
- Education Council. (2019). *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) education declaration*. <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/alice-springs-mparntwe-educationdeclaration>
- Emerson, L., Fear, J., Fox, S., & Sanders, E. (2012). *Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research*. A report by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau: Canberra. https://www.aracy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Parental_engagement_in_learning_and_schooling_Lessons_from_research_BUREAU_ARACY_August_2012.pdf
- Expert Panel. (2023). *Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System. Consultation Paper*. <https://www.education.gov.au/review-inform-better-and-fairer-education-system/resources/better-and-fairer-education-system-consultation-paper>
- Galloway, M., & Ishimaru, A. (2020). Leading Equity Teams: The Role of Formal Leaders in Building Organisational Capacity for Equity. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. 25(2), 107-125.
- Gillett-Swan, J., Kerr, J., Winter, A., & Callard, N. (2024). *Co-designing place-based co-located health and wellbeing infrastructure and services with high school students, educators, and health service providers*. Children and Youth Services Review, 166, Article 107971. DOI: [10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107971](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107971)
- Gonski, D., Arcus, T., Boston, K., Gould, V., Johnson, W., O'Brien, L., Perry, L. & Roberts, M. (2018). *Through Growth to Achievement: The Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*. Australian Government. <https://www.education.gov.au/download/4175/through-growth-achievement-report-review-achieve-educational-excellence-australian-schools/18692/document/pdf>
- Goodsell, B., Lawrence, D., Ainley, J., Sawyer, M., Zubrick, S.R. & Maratos, J. (2017). *Child and adolescent mental health and educational outcomes. An analysis of educational outcomes from Young Minds Matter: the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*. Perth: University of Western Australia. <https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/publications/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-and-educational-outcomes-an-an>

- Government of Saskatchewan. (2002). *SchoolPLUS: A vision for children and youth*. Regina: Government of Saskatchewan. Retrieved from <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2002/february/21/government-endorses-school-plus-model>
- Government of British Columbia. (2023). CommunityLINK: Supporting vulnerable students. Victoria: Ministry of Education and Child Care. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/communitylink>
- Hillman, K., O'Grady, E., Rodrigues, S., Schmid, M., & Thomson, S. (2023). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study: Australia's results from PIRLS 2021*. Australian Council for Educational Research. <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-693-2>
- Hine, M. G., Sheldon, S. B., & Abel, Y. (2024). "Getting things done" in community schools: The institutional work of community school managers. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 35(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2023.2293722>
- Irarrázaval, I., & Santos, H. (2019). *Chile Crece Contigo: An intersectoral system to support early child development*. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1419(1), 36–52. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.14109>
- Johnston, W. R., Engberg, J., Oppen, I. M., Sontag-Padilla, L., & Xenakis, L. (2020). *Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: An Assessment of the Impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative*. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3245.html
- Kelly, K., Merry, J., & Gonzalez, M. (2018). Trust, collaboration and well-being: Lessons learned from Finland. *SRATE journal*, 27(2), 34–39.
- Kimber, M., Spina, N., Spooner-Lane, R., & Carrington, S. (2022). Navigating school improvement: School leaders balancing system accountability and responsibility for equity and inclusion. *Leading and Managing*, 28(2), 51–58.
- Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Wade, A., Maire, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J. & Endekov, Z. (2020). *Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out*. Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, for the Mitchell Institute: Melbourne. <https://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/educational-opportunity-in-australia-2020.pdf>
- Lawrence, D., Johnson, S., Hafekost, J., Boterhoven de Haan, K., Sawyer, M., Ainley, J. & Zubrick, S. (2015). *The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents. Report on the second Australian child and adolescent survey of mental health and wellbeing*. Australian Government Department of Health, Canberra.
- Lingard, B., & Sellar, S. (2013). Globalisation, edu-business and network governance: The policy sociology of Stephen J. Ball and rethinking education policy analysis. *London Review of Education*, 11(3), 265–280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14748460.2013.840986>
- Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, L. (2017). *Community schools as an effective school improvement strategy: A review of the evidence*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/137/download?file=Community_Schools_Effective_REPORT.pdf&inline
- Maier, A., & Rivera-Rodriguez, A. (2023). *State strategies for investing in community schools*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/612.402>

- Ministry of Education New Zealand. (2019). *Learning Support Delivery Model*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Retrieved from <https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/collaborative-planning-for-learning/understanding-the-learning-support-delivery-model/>
- Molina, A. (2023). School Segregation and Effects on Social Cohesion: The Case of Chile. *The Sage Handbook of Sociology of Education*, 407.
- Morson, S., Davidson, M. & Meany, R. (2024). *Child and Family Hubs Framework*. Thriving Queensland Kids Partnerships, Brisbane. <https://ccch.org.au/media/kcunfrac/final-child-and-family-hubs-framework-document-1-background-purposes-underpinning-and-principles.pdf>
- Nadelson, L. S., Albritton, S., Couture, V. G., Green, C., Loyless, S. D., & Shaw, E. O. (2020). Principals' perceptions of education equity: A mindset for practice. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 9(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v9n1p1>
- National Child & Family Hubs Network. (2025). *2025 Pre-budget Submission*. The 'glue' needed to unlock the potential of Child and Family Hubs.
- New York City Department of Education. (2020). *NYC Community Schools: Our Results*. New York: NYC DOE. <https://infohub.nyced.org/in-our-schools/working-with-nycps/community-schools/nyc-community-schools-our-results>
- OECD (2012). *Equity and quality in education: supporting disadvantaged students and schools*, OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2012/02/equity-and-quality-in-education_g1g16956/9789264130852-en.pdf
- OECD (2018). *Equity in education: breaking down barriers to social mobility*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2019). *Future of Education and Skills 2030: OECD Learning Compass 2030*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2022). PISA 2022 dataset. Programme for International Student Assessment. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/>
- Sheridan, S. M., Smith, T. E., Moorman Kim, E., Beretvas, S. N., & Park, S. (2019), "A Meta-Analysis of Family-School Interventions and Children's Social-Emotional Functioning: Moderators and Components of Efficacy", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 89/2, pp. 296-332, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318825437>.
- Simons, R. (2011). *Schools in their communities*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Wernert, N., Schmid, M., & Rodrigues, S. (2024). *TIMSS 2023 Australia. Volume I: Student performance*. Australian Council for Educational Research. <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-755-7>

Contact

The Mitchell Institute, Victoria University
300 Queen Street, Melbourne
Victoria, 3000, Australia
info@mitchellinstitute.org.au
mitchellinstitute.org.au

