**Director-General video message – April 2023**

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands, seas and waterways across Queensland, and extend my respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Welcome back! If you had time off, I hope it was a relaxing break and you’ve returned refreshed for the new term.

Over a varied career as an educator and in other sectors, I’ve found there sometimes is a tendency for big organisations to feel a bit disjointed. It’s natural for silos to develop over time as teams, schools, regions and divisions each focus on their own goals and the things they think will yield the best results.

It takes constant introspection and effort to make sure we don’t fall into this trap. Large systems like ours can only support schools and students effectively when we work together, as one united, cohesive system, in pursuit of the same goals.

We are all familiar with those goals – whether it be improving student academic performance, reducing disparity in outcomes between students and locations across the state, or maximising days of learning for every child. We cannot afford to take our eyes off any of these important measures. In particular, when it comes to our Student Disciplinary Absence performance, I encourage all decision makers to carefully consider all possible alternatives to that of having students out of our schools.

It is so important we have a clear plan that guides us. That plan, of course, is *Equity and Excellence*.

This month, I’ll focus on some recent developments in implementing our plan.

One of the ways we can support schools to strengthen their educational performance and provide assurance that our investment and support is being directed to the areas that make the most difference is for every school to undertake a periodic review.

Our revitalised school reviews approach commenced this year following an extensive consultation process with more than 1000 school leaders.

69 reviews have been undertaken so far, with each being tailored to suit the needs and context of every school or centre. And feedback from schools has been very positive about the new approach.

If we think of school reviews as understanding how all the pieces fit together in a school, it’s the school principal who is responsible for these pieces.

And for every school to realise the benefits of our large system, the supervision and support of each principal must foster their continual development, be tailored to the needs of each school, and be carried out by those who know their context best.

To help achieve this, the department is implementing a renewed educational performance and support model.

Recruitment is underway for new senior educational leadership roles that will commence from July. Every principal will now have a dedicated supervisor and access to a wealth of specialised improvement coaches.

These roles will replace the current model, which saw Assistant Regional Directors as both supervisor and coach to Queensland state school principals for more than 10 years.

The new approach reflects feedback school leaders and supervisors shared about the challenges of operating within our current model.

It’s not just our school leaders who are crucial in implementing *Equity and Excellence*. To strengthen educational performance and support we are also undertaking a review of school resourcing.

This will look at the procedures and systems we use to distribute resources across the system, with a view to ensuring this is needs-based while enabling every student to reach their potential.

We have a rare opportunity for staff to help us shape this, from the ground up, and I encourage all schools to have input when co-design opportunities arise in the coming months.

Our workforce, our people – you – are our most important asset when it comes to guiding students. So, we need to support and develop every one of you.

The *Equity and Excellence* strategy elevates our focus as a system to foster a workforce culture of sustained improvement through initiatives like the Education Futures Institute.

The institute will empower educators, staff and leaders to build their professional expertise by engaging in high quality, targeted capability programs at key career stages.

Already we have begun piloting new flagship programs such as *Courageous Principals* for established principals, and we are working towards a new program to prepare newly-appointed principals for the future challenges and opportunities in school leadership.

I look forward to sharing more with you about the official opening of the Education Futures Institute and what we are doing as a system to support you to thrive in your important work of supporting all of our students to reach their potential.

With the new regional boundaries coming into effect in Semester 2, our focus remains on maintaining quality support and service continuity to schools. This may mean that the transition of some services and staffing arrangements will continue until the end of 2023.

The regional realignment provides the opportunity to align regional functions to those of the centre and to the needs of schools and the community.

Thank you to those who have already engaged in the consultation process for the proposed boundaries and creation of an eighth region. Further information about additional consultation opportunities will be communicated as they arise.

Before wrapping up, I’d like to highlight some important milestones and updates.

This year we also celebrate 75 years of guidance officers serving Queensland school communities. Guidance Officer Week is held from 24 April to 5 May so, if you’re at a school, make sure you thank those individuals who support the mental health and wellbeing of our young people.

And finally, by now, all of you should have received the first edition of ConnectEd - the new must-read e-newsletter for all staff. I encourage all of you to read this fortnightly newsletter to ensure you get the essential information you need for your role and responsibilities.

So, there is a great deal happening across our system. I continue to be inspired by the work undertaken by all of you. Keep up the great work.