

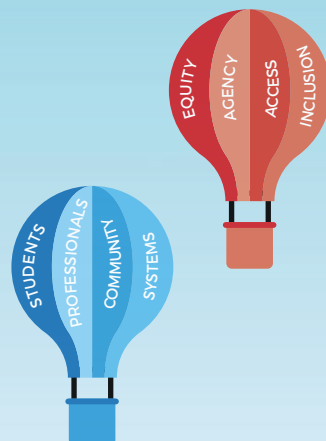
THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

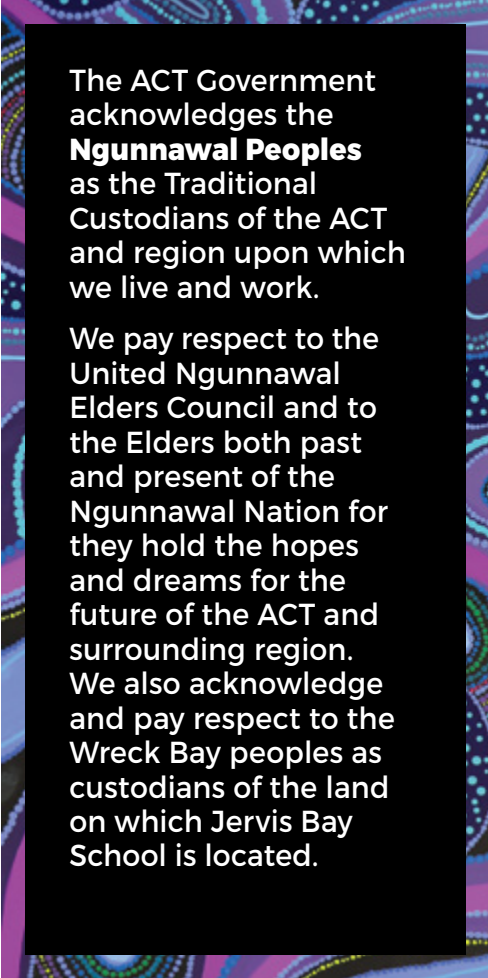
An ACT education strategy for the next ten years



ACT
Government
Education

FUTURE OF EDUCATION CONSULTATION REPORT





The ACT Government acknowledges the **Ngannawal Peoples** as the Traditional Custodians of the ACT and region upon which we live and work.

We pay respect to the United Ngannawal Elders Council and to the Elders both past and present of the Ngannawal Nation for they hold the hopes and dreams for the future of the ACT and surrounding region. We also acknowledge and pay respect to the Wreck Bay peoples as custodians of the land on which Jervis Bay School is located.



This artwork, *Welcome to Country – Nganna Yerrabi Byangu*, was commissioned by the Directorate in 2017. The artist Lynnice Church (nee Keen) is a Ngannawal, Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi woman. Lynnice describes the meaning of the artwork as:

“The painting represents Ngannawal Country. At the centre of the painting is the symbol of a camp, acknowledging Canberra as a meeting place for many Nations over thousands of generations, for ceremony, marriage and trade. These Nations include the Ngarigo (to the south), Wiradjuri (inland), Gundungurra (to the north) and the Yuin (south coast). The painting shows the mountains surrounding the ACT. Some of the mountains show camps, indicating the neighbouring Nations and pathways connecting these Nations to Ngannawal Country. The painting colours of blues, purples and greens are those seen in our beautiful Ngannawal Country.

The painting symbolises the cultural protocol that when entering another Country you must have the permission and blessing of the Traditional Custodians. This is provided by Elders and often involves a smoking ceremony. This ensures cleansing of any spirits coming from another Country and then protection by the Spirits of the Country being entered.”

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Introduction

In February 2017, the ACT Government committed to having a big conversation across the community to work towards the development of a ten year strategy for the future of education in the ACT. This commitment included engaging a broad range of people in the conversation; hearing the voice of students; and ensuring the conversation placed the education system within a broader context that includes health, community services, early childhood and other human services. The ACT Government's commitment to placing students at the centre of the consultation drove the methods and locations of consultation and is reflected in the students' voice in the final strategy document.

Nearly 5000 people contributed to the conversation, many of them more than once.

A list of participants can be found on the final pages of the Strategy document.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this consultation report is threefold:

- > capture the innovative and diverse range of consultation methods that were used throughout the conversation
- > honour the commitment of the ACT community to the conversation by showing how input was included in and shaped the final strategy
- > outline the project methodology, explaining how the feedback was collated, considered and included.





ABOUT THE CONVERSATION

Project methodology

The Future of Education conversation had three phases.

Phase One was designed to engage a broad range of people in the conversation through the development of a range of engagement methods that captured diverse views. This phase included identifying key themes as they emerged.

The purpose of Phase Two was to synthesise and refine those themes and test them with the community.

Phase Three familiarised stakeholders with the content and intent of the final strategy and, in partnership, defined and refined actions to deliver on the aims of the strategy.

The project methodology, designed in partnership with Design Managers Australia (DMA) consulting, can be found under the 'Resources' tab at www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education.

Data analysis

The project analysed all information and submissions received using an inductive grounded theory approach¹, consistent with the open and broad nature of the conversation. The analysis of the data therefore did not start with a hypothesis or question to be tested. Rather, within each individual submission the main themes or concepts raised were tagged by concept (for example 'collaboration' or 'personalised learning' or 'teacher support') and through this analysis common ideas and concepts emerged.

The project team collated and analysed the tagged concepts within each identified input group². The project team analysed data across all input groups. The collation and analysis resulted in 10 themes. A document outlining these themes was published in October 2017.

The Future of Education - Themes document can be found under the 'Resources' tab at www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education.

Research

A literature review was undertaken (including research that was recommended via submissions). Cross referencing of consultation input occurred against current literature relating to educational reform.

The Future of Education Research Report can be found under the 'Resources' tab at www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education.

Governance

The project had a two-tiered governance structure, with five key educational and community members operating as an expert governance group and a panel of community, business and government providers as a partnership group. Both groups provided feedback at key points of the conversation. This feedback was incorporated into the project methodology and products.

¹ Web Center for Social Research Methods
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualapp.php>

² There were 5 input groups: 'students', 'parents/carers', 'teachers', 'schools', 'community' and 'other'.

PHASE ONE

Consultation methods

Phase One consultation was deliberately open and broad, calling for all ideas, experiences and insights about education from anyone in the ACT community. This phase opened in February 2017 and closed in December 2017.

A range of consultation methods were used, with a focus on engaging children and young people. Particular focus was placed on providing a broad range of opportunities for those who might not normally participate in a consultation on education.

When calling for submissions, individuals were advised they may provide anonymous or pseudonymous submissions if they wish. A privacy notification was established as an automatic reply from the Future of Education mailbox which outlined information provided would be de-identified of personal information and synthesised into themes, with those themes used both to continue the conversation and inform the Future of Education strategy. In the synthesis and analysis of material no specific reference was made to individuals who provided submissions, or to their personal information.

Consultation methods were:

Yoursay

The Future of Education project was outlined on the ACT government consultation platform 'Your Say'. Community members provided comments, answered weekly posted questions and accessed documents and information as the project progressed.

Future of Education inbox

An inbox was established and advertised through Yoursay and through correspondence from the Education Directorate. Details were provided on all Future of Education materials. Submissions through the inbox were analysed and included as input. Contributors were provided regular progress updates about the project.

School participation

All schools were encouraged to participate in the conversation and to engage within their community. Schools could request the use of a video booth, provide written student, staff and board feedback and/or provide drawings from students. All submissions were captured and transcribed by the project team.

ACT Public School Board Chairs played an important role in leading the conversation in their communities. The Director-General of the Education Directorate met three times with School Board Chairs and provided material for them to work in partnership with Principals to lead a conversation in their school communities.



Video Booth

The video booth was an inflatable 2.4 x 2.4 x 2.5 metre plastic cube with a video camera facing into the booth and a curtained entrance door to provide privacy. The booth was set up at primary schools, high schools, school fetes, youth centres, and within Government buildings. All comments through the booth were transcribed and provided as input.

Ministerial classroom conversations

ACT Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry, MLA held five classroom conversations in colleges and high schools from July 2017 to September 2017, to hear directly from students. Classroom conversations were transcribed by the project team and comments from the young people were provided as input.

Targeted consultations

To encourage people and groups who may not traditionally participate in conversations about education, targeted consultations were held with 11 community organisations which were then transcribed and included in the conversation.

Workshops and video booths were also undertaken within the Education Directorate to ensure the expertise within the Directorate was included as input.

Previous community consultations and reports

Recent and relevant documents, including community organisation budget submissions, projects (such as the collaborative Student Voice project), recent reports (such as the Youth Coalition and ACTCOSS joint paper *Educational Inequity in the ACT*) and significant education consultations such as that undertaken for the Schools for All and Student Resource Allocation projects were also analysed and included in the feedback.



Postcards

Postcards (produced in several languages) contained a short descriptor of the conversation and asked for ‘thoughts and wishes’ for education. The postcards were distributed at schools upon request and provided at consultations and school fetes. Future of Education suggestion boxes were placed in ACT Public Libraries and the Child and Family Centres, within Government buildings and in the foyers of a number of schools. All comments through the postcards were transcribed and provided as input.

Discussion Paper One and Two

Two discussion papers were released in Phase One to encourage engagement in the conversation.

The first paper ‘Future of Education - Discussion Paper 1’, released in June 2017, provided a snapshot of current educational outcomes in the ACT and posed some questions such as “Which connections between schools and other community services could be strengthened?”, “On what basis should success in year on year growth be measured?”, “What blend of academic skills and emotional resilience should ACT school leavers have?”

The second discussion paper titled “Early Childhood Strategy”, released in November 2017, outlined the importance of early childhood education and care on a person’s lifelong learning journey. The paper posed some questions such as “How can the ACT increase children’s access to affordable quality early childhood education and care, particularly prior to preschool?”, “How can the non-government sector be better supported in recruiting, retaining and valuing quality staff”, and “How can consistency of quality and effective transitions for our children be ensured?”

These papers were widely distributed and invited comments and submissions through Yoursay and/or the Future of Education inbox.

Data

Over 4,600 people participated in Phase One (2,200 of them students), contributing their experiences about the current ACT education system, as well as ideas about what the future of education should look like.

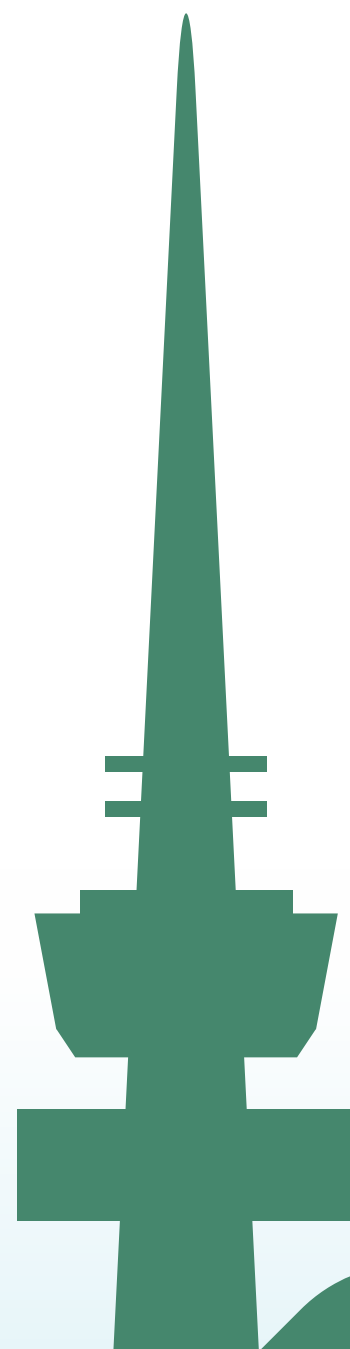
Phase one: Individual and group submissions

Sector	Submissions	Approximate number of people ¹
Schools	68	1788
Students and young people	53	2039
Parents, families and carers	62	517
Community sector	11	38
Early childhood education and care	2	Unspecified
ACT government staff	19	204
Other ²	56	87
Total	271	4673

1 All people numbers are approximate as some submissions did not provide exact figures.

2 Submissions did not identify whether they came from a particular group.

An infographic outlining the key information from Phase One can be found under the 'What We Heard' tab at www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education.



PHASE TWO

A second round of consultation provided participants with an opportunity to engage with the rich data received in Phase One. All contributors to Phase One were extended an invitation to participate. Phase Two engaged participants in a three hour workshop.

Consultation methods

The second round of consultation was called “Moving from hearing to doing” and allowed participants to immerse themselves in material from the first phase through visual, auditory and interactive displays. The immersion experience was established in a wing of Charles Weston School in Coombs for a two week period in March 2018.

Consultation methods were:

Phase One data

The data collated from Phase One was developed into full size posters and placed in the entry to the immersion space. This provided participants with a board overview of input prior to engaging with examples of input in greater detail.

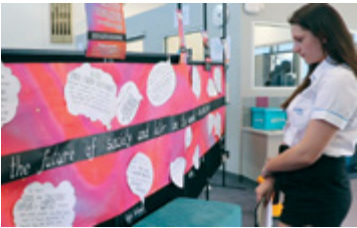
Magazine of suggestions

Every suggestion provided through Phase One was collated into a magazine. A number of copies were situated in a small reading area.

Video booth

Direct comments received through the video booth during Phase One were recorded by volunteers. The recording was played in the video booth in order that participants could listen to the ideas of young people, school staff and community members that were captured through the booth in Phase One.

Student pathway



A series of posters outlined the key ideas expressed by young people. Posters and a selection of direct student quotes were placed along a continuum from early childhood to post school, with the background being a commissioned artwork developed by a 2017 ACT school graduate. This piece was placed at the entry to the larger immersion space to indicate the importance the project placed on hearing student voices.

Stained glass drawings

Drawings received from primary school students during Phase One which outlined the ‘perfect school’ and the ‘school of the future’ were printed on transparent plastic sheets, placed on full height windows at the entrance to the immersion space and acted as ‘stained glass’.



Collaboration pathway

An artwork commissioned from an ACT school graduate formed the background to a 'consultation map'. The map displayed short quotes and research findings on collaboration.

A corkboard invited participants to connect sectors (students, family, community, government) with coloured wool, where colours of wool reflected how well collaboration was currently working.



Ten themes display

The ten themes captured in the first phase were placed on boxes and suspended from the ceiling. Different perspectives were displayed on the faces of the boxes for participants to view. The ten themes were also placed on posters around this room and participants were provided pens and paper and a blackboard to note ideas or comments.

Videos

Phase One submissions recommended various links and videos that proposed the education system will need to change to meet the needs of the future. Appropriate links were identified and played on loop.

Wellbeing rocks

Wellbeing was a strong theme that emerged in Phase One. Comments from some young people indicated that they felt 'burdened' by the things going in their lives.

Direct quotes from young people about wellbeing were written on pieces of coloured paper and wrapped around small rocks which were offered to participants by a group of young people from an ACT high school. Rocks were chosen to represent a sense of 'burden' and participants were encouraged to talk with the young people about the content they had received.



Research wall

Research articles that were recommended or analysed were collated into an annotated bibliography which was printed as an over-sized timeline and placed along a wall for participants to view.

Quotes wall

A collage wall was developed using coloured squares of paper that had some of the many appealing quotes received from primary school participants, such as "we need all our schools on wheels so we are on excursion all the time" and "the best thing about school is my teacher".



Flipping Assumptions

During the immersion experience participants were gathered together and asked to think of an assumption that might block them from accessing broad and open ideas. Participants 'flipped' their assumption and wrote that down on a card before participating in the solutions workshop.

Testing four foundations

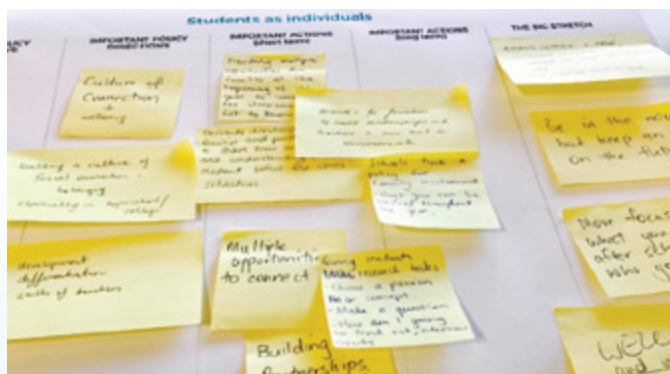
Participants were provided with definitions of each foundation and a facilitated approach was used to elicit detailed comment on the foundation that spoke most strongly to them. Where time permitted, participants were encouraged to provide feedback on each of the initial four foundations proposed:

- > students at the centre
- > facilitators of learning
- > communities of learning
- > systems supporting learning



Policy and actions

Facilitated groups developed single policy objectives, important policy directions and short to long term actions under each of the four foundations. All comments were recorded, collated and analysed to inform the final strategy.



Quality Assurance

The engagement experience within “Moving from hearing to doing” was quality assured by an independent expert who observed several consultations. The independent observer gave feedback about how the process went, particularly to what extent stakeholder voices were heard and responded. Advice was also provided to assist in maintaining the quality of the overall process.

The independent report was highly positive about the consultation process used and encouraged the next phase of the project to be as rich, inclusive and transparent as the other stages. This included feeding back to the community how their input influenced the strategy, as well as evaluating and reviewing the engagement process.

Discussion Paper Three

A third discussion paper was released in May 2018 seeking the views of teachers working across public, Catholic and Independent schools. The paper outlined a range of feedback received in Future of Education Phase One, about the value of teachers and asked educators how the ACT can build on its strengths to cater for the diverse range of learning needs in ACT classrooms. An anonymous survey accompanied the paper and provided the opportunity for teachers to share their views.

Data

One hundred and forty-eight stakeholders participated in the workshops held at Charles Weston School. Seven hundred and ten teachers provided feedback by responding to the workforce survey.

Phase Two: Workshops

Sector	No of people
ACT Government	6
Community Organisations	22
Education Support Office-based staff	37
Parents, families and carers	11
Schools and School-based staff	40
School Board Chairs	18
Students	12
Other	2
Total	148

Phase Two: Workforce Survey

Sector	No of people
ACT Government	472
Catholic Education	109
Independent Schools	129
Total	710

An infographic outlining Phase Two can be found under the ‘What We Heard’ tab at www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education.

The three discussion papers can be found under the 'Resources' tab at www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education.

PHASE THREE

The third and final phase of the project will consult about the final Future of Education Strategy and collaboratively develop actions to form an implementation plan. The strategy was drafted between April and June 2018 and approved by Cabinet in August 2018. Consultation during Phase Three will include disseminating the endorsed strategy to stakeholders and continuing the conversation, with a particular focus on developing an ACT wide implementation plan.

PROJECT FINDINGS

Phase one

Nine themes were evident from the phase one community consultation. A tenth theme (inclusion) was heard both through the Future of Education conversation as well as previous education consultations.

Ten themes

- > Learning for the future
- > Transitions
- > Individualised learning
- > (In)consistency between schools
- > Real life skills
- > Opportunities and pathways for all
- > What we should be measuring and evaluating
- > Collaboration and support to meet student need
- > Valuing educators
- > Inclusion

The advice from the Future of Education Governance group and from educational research was for the strategy to have no more than three or four foundations. Analysis and synthesis of the ten themes resulted in the development of four initial foundations, against which the ten themes could be grouped for testing in the second round of consultation. The initial four foundations were:

- > Students at the centre
- > Facilitators of learning
- > Communities of learning and wellbeing
- > Systems supporting learning

Phase Two

Equity, access and inclusion

Equity underpinned the ten themes in Phase One and was a topic raised consistently in Phase Two consultations.

Equity was expressed as:

- > Inclusion - particularly relating to a young person's sense of belonging at school
- > Access - to the range of supports a learner might need, including access to diverse learning pathways, quality teachers and experiences that promote wellbeing
- > Growth in learning outcomes - for all young people including those who are disadvantaged and/or high achieving.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing was an issue raised across input groups in Phase One and was presented as a component in the 'real life skills' and 'collaboration to meet student need' themes. Analysis across both Phase One and Two data showed wellbeing to be one of the most mentioned issues across all input groups, with a focus on wellbeing being seen as a cornerstone of education for the future.³

Support and wellbeing must be embedded in the school, built in to its culture.

The evidence base suggests that embedding wellbeing as part of school culture has a lasting impact.

[In the future] Wellbeing and progress takes our teachers focus.

This emphasis in the Future of Education feedback on wellbeing is supported by and echoed in a recent OECD report.

In the 21st century [broad educational goals] have been increasingly defined in terms of wellbeing, (OECD 2018).

³ All comments in italics are direct quotes from Future of Education conversation participants.

Personalised and flexible learning

Individualised learning was one of the initial ten themes and was affirmed in the second phase of consultation as being of critical importance for the future of education. Personalised and flexible learning was the most identified issue that participants wanted to see as a future policy focus.

[We need to build] flexible, student directed and individualised learning.

Schools will start with how to make learning good for every child- rather than every child fitting in to 'the school'.

The structure of 'school' will individualise learning.

Student voice

Student voice and agency within what is learnt, and how the learning environment operates arose in Phase One consultations, particularly for students. Analysis of the data across both Phase One and Two showed this to be a key theme.

Real choice via different sorts of schools, e.g. a) no structure, ages, project based, b) small classes, teachers style, c) all collaborative.

Systematised opportunity for student voice (and it is valued/respected) e.g. SRCs, Student Parliament (Students)

Professional learning

The importance of teachers and the need to support their capacity to teach and to know their students was a strong theme in both Phase One and Two.

Quality teachers sooner: support, mentoring, PL, learning culture, right people to start with, system wide evidenced based approach/ practices and training, teachers know [students] learning and wellbeing.

Eighty-three percent of respondents through the workforce survey indicated they were actively engaged in professional development. Interest areas for professional learning included Information Communication Technology (ICT), pedagogy, data collection and analysis and 21st century capabilities.



Collaboration

When considering how best to meet student need, improvement in collaboration between students and teachers; teachers and teachers; parents and schools; schools and schools; and, schools with community agencies was a strong theme throughout all consultation phases.

Each student at a school is everyone's student (staff and community). Everyone shares the common goal of supporting and developing children and young people.

Respondents through the workforce survey were strongly supportive of collaboration with other agencies to create a school hub or school as community type model and stressed that prioritising time to collaborate and build successful partnerships was important.

High expectations

High expectations was raised across phase one and all input groups in phase two noted and stressed the importance of high expectations. Students in both Phase One and Two noted that 'high expectations and care should underpin all interactions' and the community sector noted the research that supports the impact of having high expectations particularly for addressing equity.

High expectations of all students by teachers is important. Research finds the expectations of teachers has a considerable impact on student achievement and their willingness to engage in classroom and school practices in a purposeful way.

What helps me learn is being surrounded by people who encourage you but also push you to improve and be the best you can be.

Teachers set high standards for students within a culturally appropriate and responsive learning context where students can bring their prior cultural knowledge and experiences to classroom interactions. Students have a sense of belonging in a supportive, positive environment. (SRA report)

The four foundations

The four foundations were endorsed during the second round of consultation. Participants provided a range of feedback on the titles and written descriptors of the foundations, with most feedback relating to using plain language and using more student focussed descriptions. The final four foundations to the Future of Education strategy are:

- > Students at the centre
- > Empowered learning professionals
- > Strong communities for learning
- > Systems supporting learning

CONNECTING FINDINGS TO THE STRATEGY

A table that outlines how the findings have influenced and been incorporated in the final strategy can be found under the 'Strategy' tab at www.education.act.gov.au/the-future-of-education.

This consultation report is designed to communicate 'what we heard' and how that has formed the Future of Education strategy. This report will be sent to all participants and will be available as an attachment to the strategy. It is hoped that this consultation report will help people see how their ideas and views have shaped the final product.

In keeping with the commitment to consultation that has underpinned the conversation so far, the high level of feedback and review will be continued beyond the launch of the strategy. Engagement through the third and final phase will focus on the development of an ACT wide implementation plan.

Using the data

The information received in the Future of Education conversation is a rich source of data for the Education Directorate that reflects a committed engagement from the community. To honour that committed engagement, when other Directorate projects require consultation information and/or when implementation of future of education actions might need more specific information, they will firstly see whether the information they require can be extracted from the Future of Education data.

CONCLUSION

The ACT Government thanks those who took the time to contribute to the Future of Education conversation. The Future of Education strategy could not have been developed without the community's insights, experiences and hopes for the future.



