



# 2022

Annual report



# Principal's message

We are pleased to present the Annual Report for 2022, which serves as a comprehensive account of the operations and accomplishments of NextSense School – Sign Bilingual Program throughout the year. This report offers a detailed overview of the progress made by the school in providing high-quality educational opportunities for all students. It highlights our commitment to integrating academic, social, and emotional development to foster each student's success.

With a rich history spanning 160 years, NextSense School – Sign Bilingual Program holds a profound significance for us. Our roots trace back to the visionary Thomas Pattison, a Scottish migrant who was deaf, and established Australia's first school for children who were deaf. The legacy of those who paved the way for us is deeply cherished, and their contributions have shaped our commitment to serving individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind, or have low vision. This dedication has not waned over the years, nor has our range of comprehensive services.

Amidst the challenges posed by the global pandemic, we remained steadfast in our commitment to delivering high-quality services. We adapted and innovated to ensure that our students received the support they needed to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our collective efforts, driven by a shared vision of excellence, enabled us to navigate these unprecedented times while staying true to our mission.

Throughout 2022, our commitment to promoting student progress and achievement remained unwavering. We embraced the recommendations of the NSW Curriculum Review final report and the State Government's response, which led to a groundbreaking initiative by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) to enhance the curriculum statewide. As part of this initiative, our school leadership team dedicated themselves to developing a comprehensive K-2 Scope and Sequence for mathematics and English. This involved meticulous planning and collaboration to ensure a cohesive and effective curriculum framework.

To support our teachers in implementing these new syllabuses with confidence and expertise, we provided extensive professional development opportunities. These sessions empowered our educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate the revised curriculum seamlessly into their classrooms. By equipping our teachers with the tools they needed, we aimed to enhance the learning experience and outcomes for our students.

By embracing the changes proposed by NESA and investing in professional development, we ensured that our students received the highest quality education aligned with the latest curriculum standards. We believe that these efforts will contribute to their academic growth, as well as their overall development as lifelong learners.

As we move forward, we will continue to adapt and refine our curriculum to meet the evolving needs of our students. We remain dedicated to fostering a stimulating and enriching learning environment where every child can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Sandi Ambler

Head of Education

## School context

NextSense School - Sign Bilingual Program has established itself as excelling in providing a comprehensive sign bilingual program. Our program caters to Deaf children from Kindergarten to Year 10—addressing their academic, social, and cultural needs. We prioritise the acquisition of Auslan, which forms a foundation for our bilingual approach. Students develop this competency not only through written English but also through spoken language where possible.

Aligned with the NESA Key Learning Areas, our curriculum is delivered by a team of dedicated specialists, including teachers, teacher's aides, and Allied Health therapists. Planning and programming within each learning area embrace a high level of differentiation, ensuring that teaching and learning strategies are tailored to meet the unique strengths and needs of individual students within each class. To further enrich their educational journey, each student has an Individual Plan, informed by parental priorities and assessment information. Additionally, we offer supplementary programs to enhance students' academic, creative, and social skills. Our school is recognised as an inclusive and nurturing environment, where students are actively engaged and experience a strong sense of belonging.

Our school has a clear vision to empower students as lifelong learners, fostering their confidence, self-esteem, and identity. Identity development is nurtured through meaningful interactions with other Deaf children, Deaf staff, and Deaf adult visitors. We prioritise the wellbeing of all our students, enabling them to form connections, achieve success, thrive, and learn. We understand that each student has unique learning needs, and we collaborate closely with parents and caregivers to tailor education to their individual requirements. This collective responsibility ensures that learning takes place under optimal conditions, leading to students' continuous success. Our teachers are committed to challenging each student to reach their full potential within a signing environment that promotes language development and a positive self-concept. We value Auslan and English, while fostering cultural diversity and promoting mutual respect among our students.

## Student population

In 2022, the school had twenty-two students from Kindergarten to Year 10. Sixteen students were enrolled in the primary school and six in the secondary school. There were seven boys and 15 girls across the school. Students travelled from all over the Sydney metropolitan area to attend school. All students use Auslan to communicate, with 47% of students having a language other than spoken English used in the home. Most students have been fitted with and wear assistive hearing technology such as hearing aids and cochlear implants.

## Student attendance

Recognising the significant impact regular attendance has on supporting our students, we emphasise the shared responsibility between parents and schools to ensure this is achieved. We foster a collaborative approach, where teachers and parents work together to promote and monitor consistent attendance. We have implemented effective measures to accurately record attendance and promptly address student absences. We have established structures and policies to ensure

strict compliance with tracking and enhancing student attendance, with all staff well-informed about the attendance policy and their role in monitoring it.

To assist efficient communication and follow-up, we implemented a school-wide SMS system that enables us to promptly address daily non-attendance. Our dedicated class teachers and administrative staff diligently record follow-up information for tracking purposes. Through these measures, we strive to maintain a high level of student attendance.

In 2022, we faced challenges in maintaining regular attendance due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that persisted. Consequently, our overall school attendance rate for 2022 was 84%. While this represents a noticeable decrease compared to previous years, we fully acknowledge the unique circumstances that influenced attendance during this exceptional period.

We remain firmly committed to working closely with parents and implementing strategies to improve attendance rates, ensuring that every student can actively engage in their education. The school continues to prioritise the importance of regular school attendance for the academic and personal development of our students.

Year level	Attendance rate %
Year 1	72.9%
Year 2	
Year 3	68.75%
Year 4	73.61%
Year 5	89.06%
Year 6	
Year 7	100%
Year 8	86.46%
Year 9	88.54%
Year10	
Whole School	84%

## Student retention rates

NextSense School – Sign Bilingual Program provides a K-10 program and, therefore, there is no provision for graduating students from Year 10 to undertake Years 11 and 12 at the school. The retention rate calculation cannot be applied.

# Post school destinations

There were no Year 10 graduates in 2022.

## Teaching and learning

Specialist Teachers of the Deaf provide students with high-quality individualised teaching and learning programs that seamlessly integrate language, literacy, Deaf studies, and social and emotional learning into the curriculum.

Our school employs school-wide practices, such as adhering to assessment timelines and conducting consistent teacher judgment to ensure continuous monitoring of student progress and achievements. Teachers regularly utilise student data and the attainment of their goals to adapt their programs and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The class programs clearly reflect a responsive approach to addressing specific learning needs of Deaf students. In addition to the dedicated full-time teaching staff, our school regularly welcomes NextSense Allied Health professionals who provide targeted support for specific students. This team includes psychologists, occupational therapists, speech-language therapists, and physiotherapists. Our students' overall wellbeing needs are regularly addressed through visits from the school psychologist.

As a result of ongoing formative assessment and differentiated programs, post-assessment data clearly demonstrate significant growth in student outcomes. Formative and summative assessments provide valuable feedback to students and their families regarding their progress and guide adjustments in teaching and learning programs.

## NAPLAN 2022

In the National Assessment Program, the results across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

The school had a 100% participation rate in 2022 utilising the online platform. The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Go to [myschool.edu.au](https://myschool.edu.au) to access the school data.

## Our workforce

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW and the school monitors the accreditation status of all staff. All teaching staff are proficient teachers currently maintaining their registration through NESA. Our teachers are experienced and the teaching staff remained stable throughout 2021. Most teaching staff have specialist teaching qualifications at master's level in addition to their original teacher qualifications. Five of the teaching staff are Deaf.

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Teacher(s)	5.3
School psychologist	.3
School assistants (support staff)	1.2
Librarian	.3
School administration	1

In 2022, we had no Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander staff members. In addition, our school assistants are qualified with teacher qualifications or hold a Teacher's Aide (Special) Certificate 3.

### **Professional learning and teacher standards**

Professional learning meetings are aligned with our school strategic plan and encourage professional discussions to take place. In 2022 we continued to focus on building a schoolwide, effective approach to accelerating progress for all students using more consistent and robust assessment and teaching practices. Significant progress has been made to ensure effective systems, processes and practices are utilised to gather, analyse, report, and use student achievement to monitor and evaluate curriculum effectiveness.

Six complete days were allocated to professional development activities for all school staff. In addition, teachers, teacher's aides, and specialist staff had significant access to additional professional development in weekly staff meeting workshops. Teachers are also actively engaged in planning their own professional development to improve their performance by driving the development of their professional development plan. Staff are guided to professional learning opportunities to fulfil and develop their skills to ensure the very best learning outcomes are available for students.

### **Teacher accreditation**

All casual, temporary and permanent teachers hold a NSW Department of Education approval to teach and are accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority, with a recognised teaching degree.

All teachers must hold a valid NSW Working with Children Check clearance and criminal history clearance.

### **Parent, student and teacher satisfaction**

Evaluation and review are part of our way of working for continued improvement. Ongoing staff review and input through a range of school forums is used to critically evaluate strategic goals and contribute to the setting of future directions. These have provided valuable insights into areas for future growth relating to school culture, accountability, and leadership structures.

Community feedback supports recognition of the school as excellent and responsive and an effective partner in the pursuit of achievement for all students. As a school, we strive to establish effective partnerships in learning with parents and students through using individual Class Dojo. The use of Class Dojos has received positive feedback from parents who have shared the positive

impact it has had on their relationship with their child. Parent comments included 'my child feels proud to share their work', 'enjoys sharing their personal learning goals', 'it's a great way to start conversations at home about my child's day' and 'I love being able to see what he is doing and being able to provide my child with positive, specific feedback on their achievements'. The Class Dojo promotes student wellbeing through regular parent/carer monitoring of their child's activities.

The school has a extremely high staff retention rates indicating a very high level of teacher satisfaction. All staff have access to the Principal and Head of Teaching and Learning and have access to counselling paid for by the school should the need arise.

## **School policies**

NextSense School – Sign Bilingual Program seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment for students and teachers. Clear guidelines outlining expectations of communication and conduct are provided for staff and students which aim at maintaining an environment of mutual respect, openness, and trust. We recognise and respect every individual, helping all to achieve their full potential. The wellbeing of each student is the responsibility of all staff, and we recognise that collaborative and supportive teamwork is necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each student. The policies below address student welfare, discipline and reporting complaints and resolving grievance. Policies are reviewed and/or updated to accommodate changes in legislation.

## **Enrolment policy**

NextSense is committed to providing a high-quality education to children and young people with a sensory disability. While acknowledging and supporting the principle of inclusion for students in keeping with the Disability Discrimination Act and Standards 2005, our mission is to provide specialist education to students with a significant level of sensory impairment, who are expected to require individualised support.

Applications for enrolment may be made at any time by the parent/carer(s) of students to commence at NextSense School.

Students must have a level of sensory disability which is significant including:

- vision acuity levels of 6/48 or less after correction in the better eye; or a visual field of 10 degrees or less; or
- hearing loss of 50 dB or greater; or
- deafblind children.

Each school program offers a specialist school program with additional enrolment criteria:

- Sign Bilingual Program offers a specialist Auslan bilingual program for Deaf students.
- Spoken Language Program offers a specialist spoken language program for Deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Blind and Deafblind Program offers a specialist program for students with vision loss/blindness or who are deafblind with no greater than moderate cognitive disability.

The Principal will base an enrolment decision on whether the student's primary special educational needs are related to their sensory disability through review of:

- specialist reports by a qualified professional that confirm they meet eligibility criteria
- the student's reports from previous schools/preschools or early intervention services
- the order of applications received.

In cases of dual sensory impairment and/or significant language delays, the principal may determine that a lesser level of hearing and/or vision loss satisfies eligibility requirements.

The school will meet with parent/carer(s) and the student before offering a place. Parent choice will be considered for school placement, provided an applicant meets the criteria for admission to the school.

- Parents/carer(s) must disclose all relevant information about their child's disability and additional needs. Offers may be withdrawn if relevant information is not disclosed at the time, or during enrolment.
- Non-Australian citizens can be admitted as full fee-paying students if they meet the general entry criteria and visa requirements.
- NextSense requires an immunisation certificate on enrolment and a record of each child's immunisation status will be recorded. Copies of immunisation certificates will be retained for at least three years after the child has left the school.
- Continued enrolment at the school depends on the student and the parent/carer(s) observing all behavioral codes of conduct and other requirements of the school described in the Parent Handbook.
- In all cases, a duty of care to students is paramount. NextSense reserves the right not to enrol students if a threat to the school's capacity to meet its duty of care to students and staff is considered.

## **Policies for student welfare**

Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote student wellbeing to ensure the best conditions for student learning across the whole school. Our school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment where the risk of harm is minimized, students feel secure, and where the physical, social, academic, and emotional development of students is supported. Our student welfare policies and programs develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development.

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission to meet students' welfare needs, the following policies and procedures were in place during 2021. Policies are reviewed on a two-year cycle by the Nextsense risk and quality team.

**Policy**

**Changes in 2022**

**Access to full text**



<p><b>Child Protection Policy</b> encompassing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• definitions and concepts</li> <li>• legislative requirements</li> <li>• preventative strategies</li> <li>• reporting and investigating “reportable conduct”</li> <li>• investigation processes</li> <li>• documentation</li> </ul>	<p>New policies were developed for:</p> <p>NextSense Safeguarding Policy NextSense Mandatory Reporting Procedures NextSense Reportable Conduct Procedures</p> <p>Saff reviewed all policies and signed off.</p> <p>All staff completed: Safeguarding Children online course by Australia Children Foundation Family-friendly plain English documents produced for families.</p>	<p>Copy available to families on NextSense document library/ school website or from school office.</p> <p>All policies and procedures for staff are in the NextSense Document library.</p>
<p><b>Discipline</b></p> <p>The school expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.</p> <p>All behavior management actions are based on procedural fairness. Parents are involved in the processes of procedural fairness when sanctions result in suspension and expulsion of a student. Disciplinary actions do not include exclusion.</p>	<p>Following a review of the discipline policy and procedures, the policy was revised in 2021.</p>	<p>The full text of the school’s discipline policy can be accessed by request from the Principal, from the school website and NextSense Document library.</p>
<p><b>Student welfare</b></p> <p>The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of students through programs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- meet the personal, social and learning needs of students</li> <li>- provide early intervention programs for students at risk</li> <li>- develop students sense of self-worth and foster personal development</li> </ul>	<p>School attendance policy was revised to include the provision ‘student attendance during remote learning and COVID pandemic’.</p>	<p>The full text of the school’s student welfare policy can be accessed by request from the principal, from the school website and NextSense intranet.</p>
<p><b>Anti-bullying</b></p> <p>The school policy provides processes for responding and managing allegations of bullying, including the contact information for the local police School Liaison Officers.</p>	<p>In 2022, the school’s anti-bullying policy and procedures were reviewed by the school psychologist.</p> <p>Cybersafe workshops were provided to families and</p>	<p>The full text of the school anti-bullying policy can be accessed by request from the Principal and within the parent information book.</p>

	staff to student wellbeing while online.	Available on NextSense Document library.
<b>Complaints and grievances resolution</b> The policy uses, as appropriate, procedural fairness in dealing with complaints and grievances and includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students. These processes incorporate how parents raise complaints and grievances and how the school will resolve these.	Reviewed, updated and signed by staff-on-staff portal.  Family friendly version in plain English developed.	The full text of the school's complaints and grievance resolution policy can be accessed by request from the Principal, from the school website and NextSense intranet.

## Policies for student behaviour and discipline

Our school is committed to a process of Positive Behavior Support for all students. This involves using proactive strategies designed to encourage positive behaviors and minimise the need for students to use inappropriate behaviors. The management of student behavior is incorporated in our teaching and learning processes which create safe and positive learning environments that promote pro-social behavior and positive social interactions amongst staff and students; provide opportunities for students to learn and practice appropriate social behaviors and self-discipline; and encourage appropriate and fair consequences for students who display inappropriate behaviors.

Our school provides a social context which allows students to be supported and taught how to accept responsibility for their own behavior. Students are given opportunities to develop appropriate behaviors, self-control, and resilience through interactions with teachers and other staff and through the curriculum, and they are reinforced consistently to enhance their understanding of responsible social behavior. Students are required to abide by the school's expectations and rules and to follow the directions of teaching staff and other people delegated by the school. When a student's behavior is not acceptable, discussion and systematic problem-solving is used to identify planning strategies and behaviors that encourage future acceptable behavior.

Where disciplinary action is required, consequences reflect the nature of the breach. Corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances by any person in our school community. The full text of the school's positive behavior support policy, which includes discipline and associated procedures, is provided to all members of our school community through the School Policy and Procedure documents.

## School priority areas for improvement

In line with the recommendations of the NSW Curriculum Review final report and the State Government's response, NextSense School embraced the initiative introduced by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) aimed at enhancing the curriculum across the state. As an integral part of this initiative, our school curriculum teams developed a comprehensive K-2 Scope and Sequence for mathematics and English. This involved meticulous planning and close collaboration to create a cohesive and impactful curriculum framework.

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	Fingerspelling program	Intensive staff workshops and training of teaching staff in Phonics fingerspelling program. Resources developed for implementation.
	Foundations literacy program	Workshops for staff Development of resources Assessments and ongoing teacher reflection
	Improving teacher quality	Teacher feedback on programming and evaluations. Coaching and mentoring within classrooms from numeracy consultants.
	Auslan assessments	Teacher attended workshops and undertook Auslan assessments with coaching and feedback provided.
	Literacy and numeracy:  Effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy and numeracy.	Literacy evidence-based assessment and analysis to inform the teaching of students. Assessment scheduled revised. Focus on school-based professional development for teachers in literacy, and finger spelling program. Numeracy consultant working within the school to provide intensive workshops. Implementation of Foundations program in K /Yr 1. Fingerspelling program Auslan language assessment and transcription.
Professional Learning	Child Protection	All staff received initial training or have been involved in a refresher course in Child Protection.
	K -2 Curriculum reform	
	All mandatory training completed by all staff.	Epilepsy, First aid, Asthma, CPR. Emergency and Fire Training All staff participated in emergency evacuation practices.
Student achievement	Improve students' fingerspelling	Workshops for staff on developing fingerspelling program.
	Raise literacy results of students	Implementation of Foundations program in K /Yr 1. Fingerspelling program Auslan language assessment and transcription.
Student welfare	Recognition of student achievement and effort Developing resilience Behaviour management	Students' achievements are acknowledged and celebrated. Staff workshops related to positive behaviour management and social skills program.
Facilities and resources	Playground	Upgrading of sports equipment.
	Resources	Additional library and classroom resources purchased to support literacy/fingerspelling programs. Video production of resources for reading comprehension program Purchase of additional PM w books and resources Additional numeracy resources. Foundations program and resources.

## Professional learning

The restrictions imposed by the spread of COVID19 and staff shortages due to illness had a significant impact on the 2022 professional learning plan. Many professional learning opportunities were moved to an online environment and some courses were cancelled or postponed.

Team meetings promote collaborative practice and consistency in teaching across the classes. Through team meetings and professional learning meetings, teachers collaborate and share feedback to sustain quality teaching practice in their classroom. In addition, these activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2022:

Professional Learning Activity	Number of staff participating
K-2 English New Syllabus (3 workshops)	6
Implementing the New English Syllabus K -2 AISNSW	6
K -2 New English Syllabus AISNSW	6
K -2 New Maths Syllabus Anita Chin (3 workshops.)	6
Implementing the New Mathematics Syllabus K -2 AISNSW	6
Leading Mathematics across the School: 4 days	1
Transforming Classroom Practice: Maths Place Value	6
Visual Models in Language in Maths: Addition/ Subtraction	6
Mathematics: Teaching Place Value with Anita Chin	6
Auslan assessment	5
Fingerspelling program	3
Reading comprehension	1
CPR training	6
First Aid Training (1 day)	6
Staff Wellbeing workshops with Black Dog Institute: (1 day)	6
Maths Scope and Sequence with Anita Chin (3 workshops)	6
Autism: Positive Behaviour management 9 % workshops)	8

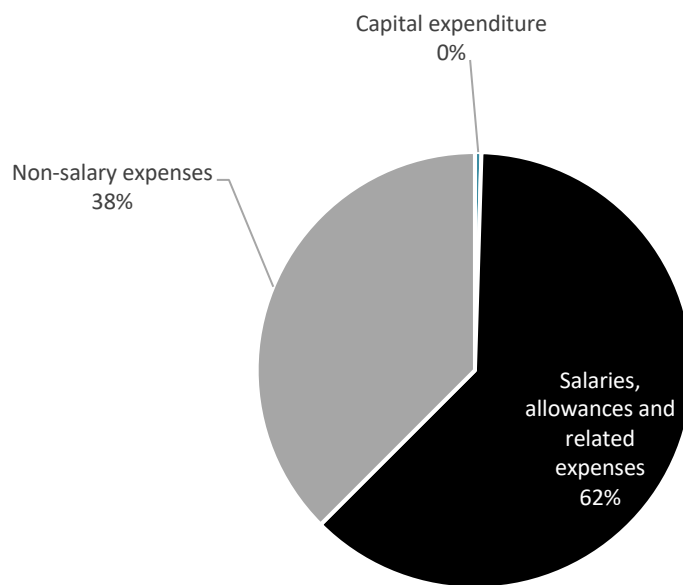
## Financial information

### DEEWR - Schools - financial questionnaire

#### Financial statements - year ended 31 December 2022

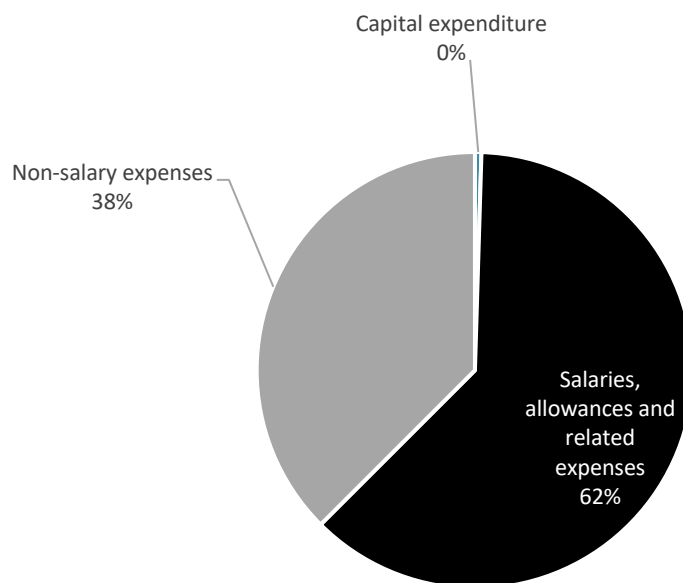
Description	Sign Bilingual School
Fees and private income	68,461
State recurrent grants	207,207
Commonwealth recurrent grants	935,778
Other income	372,800
Government capital grants	-
<b>Recurrent/capital Income</b>	<b>1,584,246</b>
Capital expenditure	7,587
Salaries, allowances and related expenses	982,619
Non-salary expenses	594,041
<b>Recurrent/capital expenditure</b>	<b>1,584,246</b>

#### RECURRENT/CAPITAL INCOME



■ Capital expenditure   ■ Salaries, allowances and related expenses   ■ Non-salary expenses

## RECURRENT/CAPITAL EXPENDITURE



■ Capital expenditure   ■ Salaries, allowances and related expenses   ■ Non-salary expenses

## **The preparation of this report**

NextSense School has procedures in place to maintain the relevant data and will comply with reporting requirements of the NSW Minister for Education and the Australian Government Department of Education. This reporting includes participation in annual reporting to publicly disclose the educational and financial performance measures and policies of the school and requirements related to the provision of data to the Minister that is relevant to the Minister's annual report to Parliament on the effectiveness of schooling in the State or data that may be requested by the Minister from time to time.

Procedures for preparing this report include:

- The School Principal is the person responsible for coordinating the final preparation and distribution of the Annual Report to the Board and other stakeholders as required.
- For the first eight areas of reporting, the Principal is responsible for the collection, analysis, and storage of the relevant data and for inserting the relevant information into the report. The Manager of Corporate Services is responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the financial data and for providing this to the Principal for inclusion in the report.
- The Principal is responsible for determining the specific content to be included in each section of the report and reviewing this annually to ensure ongoing compliance, relevance, and usefulness.
- The Principal is responsible for preparation of the report in an appropriate form to send to the NESA
- The Principal is responsible for setting the annual schedule for:
  - preparation and publication of the report
  - distribution of the report to NESA and other stakeholders

## **Requests for additional data from the NSW Minister for Education**

To ensure that any requests from the Minister for additional data are dealt with appropriately, the Principal is responsible for coordinating the school's response. The Principal is responsible for the collection of relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to the NESA in an appropriate electronic form. From time to time, the Australian Government, through the Minister for Education, and the NSW Government, through the Minister for Education, may request additional information.