# Defining Educational Success:

## Public Consultation Summary Report

Tasmanian Government



# Acknowledgement of Country

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of Lutruwita, where palawa have always cared for their children and prepared them for life.

Together we live, work, play and learn on the Land, Waterways and Sky that have been part of Aboriginal culture and identity for generations.

We honour and pay respect to Elders, past and present, and acknowledge the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and connection to country as important learning for current and future generations.

The Tasmanian Government commits to ensuring every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person is known, safe, well and learning.

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This document has been developed by the
Department for Education, Children and Young People

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# Background

The Independent Review of Education in Tasmania (Independent Review) was handed to the Tasmanian Government in January 2025.

The Review gave us a clear and honest picture of where we are and an evidence-based roadmap for where we need to get to.

## Recommendation 1

**of the Independent Review of Education In Tasmania**



*More work needs to be done to improve the narrative and reporting underpinning success to increase student and family understanding around the value proposition of education.*

The Independent Review told us that when we define what success at school looks like, it can help Tasmanians better understand why education matters. Because, without a definition of success, people generally focus on things like finishing year 12, getting an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and achieving the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE), which leaves many young Tasmanians out of the conversation.

Through their feedback to the Independent Review, Tasmanian students said that educational success should include things like life skills, personal growth, and contribution to society. They said that a Tasmanian education should help children and young people grow in all aspects of their lives and prepare them for their future.

As part of the response to the Independent Review, the Tasmanian Government committed to develop a definition of educational success in consultation with Tasmanians to create a shared understanding of what it means to do well at school and why education matters.

A definition of educational success will also support further responses to the Independent Review and inform improvement to set Tasmanian learners up for success.

# Reading this report

This report provides detail on the public consultation approach for defining educational success in Tasmania – it does not recommend a definition of educational success. It sets out what Tasmanians told us, which will directly inform a definition. This report is structured with the following information:

- The consultation approach,
- Who we heard from,
- The key themes from the consultation,
- Feedback on the draft definition of educational success,
- What the education system needs to provide to set learners up for success,
- The differences in feedback between some stakeholder groups,
- Summary discussion, and
- Next steps for the work.

# Our consultation approach

Between May and June 2026, the Department for Education, Children and Young People – in partnership with Catholic Education Tasmania and Independent Schools Tasmania – undertook a statewide consultation to understand what it means to do well at school in Tasmania and how schools and the broader system can support every learner to successfully work through their formal schooling and transition into their next step.

The consultation engaged students, families and carers, teachers, school leaders, community organisations, employers, and education stakeholders. Feedback was gathered through surveys, workshops, focus groups, student voice sessions, written submissions, and activities including drawings and picture-based exercises.

The consultation focused on two core questions:

1. *What should it mean to be successful in education?*
2. *What do learners need to be successful?*

To support the consultation a draft definition of success was developed using feedback to the Independent Review, a jurisdictional analysis, and input from a group of education stakeholders. The draft definition was put forward as a conversation starter to help people generate ideas and feedback.

## The draft definition

> *Education helps me grow and gives me hope for my future.*
>
> *I'm connected, capable, and confident – and ready for what's next.*



The feedback received through the consultation has been analysed using a range of methods to identify common themes and build an overall understanding of what success in education means to Tasmanians.

Young people played a critical role in shaping the consultation, providing and collecting valuable perspectives, insights, and ideas. We particularly acknowledge the student Commissioners from the Tasmanian Learning Commission, who helped shape the consultation approach and led student focus groups, along with the Premier's Youth Advisory Council, the Youth Advisory Group and the many other young people who contributed their voices to the process.

# Who we heard from

The consultation was open to every Tasmanian and heard a broad and balanced set of perspectives, including those of children and young people with diverse experiences and needs. Thank you to everyone who took the time to provide feedback and contribute to this work.



**Students, Children and Young People**

**588** Survey responses



**Families, Carers and Staff**

**630** Survey responses



**School Associations**

**22** Survey responses



**Principals**

**147** Survey responses



**Group Feedback**

**34** Survey responses (253 participants)

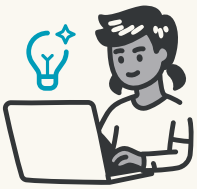


**Focus Group Participants**

**630** Survey responses

**Total** **2,422** participants

# What we heard: key themes



**"Success should mean I am ready for anything."**

STUDENT RESPONSE

The most consistent message from the consultation is that being successful in education should be seen and reported as much broader than academic achievement alone.

Secondary themes supported this message and told us:

- Wellbeing, belonging and positive relationships are critical to students throughout their schooling,
- Life skills need to be considered alongside academic and vocational skills to prepare students for their future, and
- Agency, inclusion and equity should be foundational to education.

## Success is broader than academic achievement

Across all stakeholder groups, the strongest message is that success in education should not be defined only by grades or subject results. No group said academic learning was unimportant. All stakeholder groups agreed that literacy and numeracy are critical for success, but success also means things like wellbeing, confidence, life skills, and preparation for the future.

Families and carers told us that strong reading, writing and maths skills are critical foundations, but need to be developed alongside learning that is meaningful to help students achieve outcomes that matter to them.

Educators told us of the importance of balancing academic outcomes with student wellbeing to build a lifelong connection to learning. Other respondents also referred to the importance of lifelong learning and highlighted a need for students to have practical, transferable skills that can be used in real-world situations.

Students and young people told us that it is important to enjoy learning, and this is helped when they understand what they are learning, why they are learning it, and have things taught in a way that meets their learning needs.



**"It feels like TCE or bust."**

STUDENT RESPONSE

**"Success cannot be a rigid concept and needs to allow for other skills, capabilities and characteristics in our young people."**

FAMILY RESPONSE

**"I feel like I'm letting my school down if I don't go to university."**

STUDENT RESPONSE



**"Our goal should be for every young person to belong and see their place at school."**

CARER RESPONSE

## Wellbeing, belonging and positive relationships

Stakeholders consistently told us that students need to feel safe, supported and that they belong throughout their schooling. Wellbeing, belonging and positive relationships were seen by all stakeholder groups as a pre-requisite for learning.

Younger students focused heavily on friendships and happiness and talked about the importance of:

- Feeling safe at school through tidy environments and calm classrooms,
- Having friends,
- Time to play, connect and work in groups, and
- Being supported by their teachers.

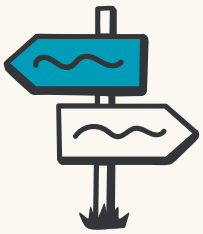
Older students spoke about mental health, trust and having someone to talk to and told us the importance of:

- Feeling safe at school through calm classrooms and behaviour management,
- Having friends and people you can turn to,
- Being supported and known by their teachers, and
- Feeling included and respected.

For students, being known ranged from knowing their learning style, to hearing and supporting their aspirations, to understanding who they are and their context beyond the school gate. Their friendships and relationships were often referred to as their main reason for coming to school. Older students reflected on a need for secondary school to continue supporting peer relationships and building social skills in age-appropriate ways. They also spoke of needing to better integrate student supports into school routines so that more students can access supports without feeling singled out or associated stigma. For example, some students said that schools should have regular check-ins with a member of staff (teaching or Allied Health). They said making this part of every student's schedule would help reduce stigma, encourage people to seek support, and make mental wellbeing a real focus for schools.

Families and carers consistently noted the importance of family engagement and strengthened communication and school-family relationships. Families want to be involved in education, either by learning alongside their child, supporting their learning outside of school, or simply having a better awareness of what is happening at school.

Adults also reflected on supporting student wellbeing and mental health and the need to provide consistent, tailored support for all learners to help students through schooling and into adult life.



**"It feels like my only options are university or a male-dominated trade. What are my other choices?"**

STUDENT RESPONSE

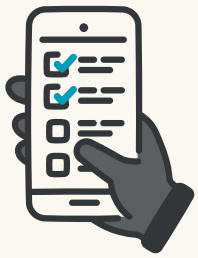
about leaving school with practical life skills, an ability to find employment, and with the relevant social skills to participate in adult life. For younger students, preparing for their future focused more on feeling prepared to transition into secondary schooling. For older students, they consistently spoke of things like how to do taxes, apply for a loan, or look for housing.

Adult respondents also talked about the importance of preparing young people for the future. Families and carers noted the importance of clear and supported transitions into further education, training or employment, while others talked about ensuring young people are work-ready, employable, and have practical and transferable skills that can be used in real-world contexts. Strong foundations in literacy and numeracy were noted consistently amongst stakeholder groups as critical to preparing students for their pathway.

## Preparing students for their future

Feedback across all stakeholder groups talked about the need to help students get ready for life after school. This includes helping young people understand their career options, learn practical life skills, and make confident decisions about their future. There was consistent feedback about making sure students are prepared for their individual pathway, whatever that might be.

Students said they want the knowledge and skills to make informed choices about pathways and feel less pressure about their next steps – this includes things like understanding employment opportunities, associated costs and their ability to successfully complete a pathway. They spoke



**"I want to feel ready to participate in adult life and need help to do that."**

STUDENT RESPONSE



**"Education should adapt to the learner, not the other way around."**

EDUCATION STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE

## Agency, inclusion and equity

Feedback consistently spoke of success as an education system that empowers every student to develop confidence and independence, provides equitable supports, values individual strengths and aspirations, and gives young people genuine agency in their learning and future.

Students described success as feeling proud of themselves, believing in their abilities, and having the confidence to follow their own path. They said that success should be defined differently for each person and that they want to be recognised and celebrated as individuals.

Inclusion and equity were seen across all groups as essential for student success. Stakeholders said the education system should meet the needs of all learners by providing appropriate support and recognising different learning needs. All stakeholder groups noted that student support – both in the classroom and outside (e.g., Allied Health) – should be normalised and delivered consistently, without causing students to be treated differently because they have a learning plan or need additional assistance.

Families highlighted the importance of learning plans being critical to success, and for there to be a consistent approach to their development and implementation that includes family and student input.

Student agency emerged as a strong theme throughout the feedback. Students consistently said they want a greater voice in their learning and in decisions that affect them. They want meaningful choices about what and how they learn, opportunities to develop decision-making skills, and genuine involvement in designing learning experiences. Young people emphasised the importance of being listened to, taken seriously, and actively involved in shaping their pathways.

# What we heard: draft definition of educational success

The draft definition provided to support the consultation was: *'Education helps me grow and gives me hope for my future. I'm connected, capable and confident – and ready for what's next.'* It is a student–focused statement intended to capture the voice of young people and the broader purpose of education beyond academic results.

**"It's cringe... but true."**

STUDENT RESPONSE

**"This definition isn't the reality for everyone, but it should be what we aspire to."**

STAFF RESPONSE

Feedback showed strong support for a broad and holistic definition of educational success that reflects learning, wellbeing, belonging, confidence, and being prepared for life beyond school. However, some feedback suggested that the opening sentence felt too vague and passive and did not clearly show what success looks like in practice.

The intent of the definition was generally supported, however there were mixed views about some of the language. The word *"hope"* was seen as aspirational by some, and unclear or passive by others. Students and adults both expressed a preference for more active



**"Hope is an interesting word. Are we wanting students prepared rather than hopeful?"**

PRINCIPAL RESPONSE

language such as *"prepared"*, *"capable"* and *"able to shape their future"*.

The word *"education"* was also seen as too limiting or academic-focused. Stakeholders pointed to *"learning"* as a more inclusive word that could speak to growth, wellbeing, and development that happens outside the classroom.

The second line of the draft definition resonated strongly across stakeholder groups, particularly the words *"confident"*, *"capable"* and *"connected"*. Many respondents reflected a need to unpack these words to further define what they mean for learners at different ages and stages of their education journey.

There was strong feedback to ensure a definition of educational success is measurable and can be reported against.

The general sentiment around the draft definition was that while it may not apply to all students currently, it is something the system should aspire to for everyone.

# What we heard: supporting learners for success



**"Let's lift the bar for everyone and give every student something to aspire to."**

FAMILY RESPONSE

Through the consultation, we asked what needs to be in place to set learners up for success. Overall, we heard that learners are most successful when they have the right support, opportunities and resources to help them thrive in ways that work for them.

The consistent messages that came through the consultation were:

- **Recognise that success looks different for every learner**, by celebrating and measuring all pathways equally, including university, vocational education, apprenticeships and employment.
- **Focus on wellbeing as well as learning**, with stronger community support for mental health, belonging and bullying prevention.
- **Meet all students where they are**, using flexible and personalised approaches that respond to individual needs, strengths and goals.
- **Increase the teaching of practical life skills alongside career skills**, including financial literacy, work readiness and independent living.
- **Create more engaging, hands-on and real-world learning experiences** that connect education to students' interests and future opportunities.
- **Listen more to students and give them a voice** in decisions about their learning.
- **Strengthen partnerships between schools, families, communities and industry** to better support learners.
- **Provide more targeted funding and support**, including teachers, support staff, psychologists and other specialists.
- **Support teachers** by reducing administrative workload and providing the resources, professional learning and training they need.
- **Intervene early and maintain high expectations**, ensuring all learners have access to the support needed to succeed.

# Differences across groups

While there was broad agreement across each of the stakeholder groups, there were some differences in their values and focus.

**Students**, especially younger ones, focused on how school feels. They talked about friendships, feeling safe, being happy, and building confidence. Older students also talked about having more choice, becoming independent, and preparing for the future.

Students reflected concerns about the role of Artificial Intelligence in society and specifically in education. They expressed concern about using AI to develop learning resources, worrying about how it will impact individual learning and their ability to know what is real.

**Adults**, including parents, carers, community members and employers, focused more on results and outcomes. They talked about this in the context of learning, attendance, wellbeing, resilience, confidence, and being ready for further study or work.

**Teachers and school leaders** sat in the middle. They agreed that both wellbeing and learning are important but also pointed out the challenge of balancing everything in practice and not placing unrealistic expectations onto educators and schools.

## Differences across student age groups

While there was a lot of agreement, students at different ages described success in different ways:

- **Primary students** described success in terms of happiness, friendships and enjoying school. Their drawings focused on relationships, play and feeling safe.
- **Secondary students** placed more emphasis on identity, confidence and future pathways. They spoke about stress, expectations and the need for clearer direction and support.
- **Young people in care or with additional needs** highlighted the importance of safety, inclusion and being understood. They emphasised that the system does not always work for them and needs to be more flexible and responsive.

# Discussion

The feedback through this consultation shows strong agreement across Tasmania about what success in education should look like.

People are asking for a system that:

- Values the whole child, not just results,
- Focuses on belonging and wellbeing,
- Builds confidence, identity and personal growth,
- Prepares young people for life and different futures,
- Supports all students and meets their needs, and
- Listens to students and families and works with them collaboratively to achieve outcomes.

Tasmanians want an education system that values both academic success and support for wellbeing, recognising that every learner's needs and success will look different. They called for a system that is inclusive, flexible, targeted with resourcing and focuses on both achievement and support for wellbeing, so every learner can succeed in their own way.

Across the community, there is strong agreement that success means preparing young people to be confident, capable, connected and ready for life.

A consistent message from this consultation is that belonging and wellbeing are foundational to student success. Students told us very clearly that they cannot learn unless they feel safe, supported and that they belong. For some young people, particularly those in care, school is the most stable and supportive environment in their lives.

At the same time, there is a strong expectation that education prepares young people for the real world. Students talked about prioritising life skills – things like managing money, navigating work and being independent—often ahead of, or equal to, traditional academic measures. They also talked about a need to exist in an AI world with confidence and safety.

Every stakeholder group noted the importance of literacy and numeracy. These remain essential foundations. But stakeholders were equally clear that they are not enough on their own.

There were strong messages about inclusion and equity in education. While policies provide a strong foundation, students and carers highlighted opportunities to strengthen the implementation of supports outside the classroom so they consistently promote inclusion, reduce barriers and support positive outcomes for all learners.

The draft definition's use of the word *"hope"* was seen as too passive. Stakeholders, particularly young people, want a system that prepares them for the future and gives them the confidence and capability to shape it.

It is clear from this consultation that Tasmanians care about educational outcomes and ensuring our learners have the best possible start in life through a quality education. Close to 2,500 Tasmanians have taken the time to think about what success in education means and made a submission. What they are asking for is not major change, but adequate and targeted resourcing, with the right focus and approaches to meet learners where they are at and help them achieve their individual ambitions.

They are also asking that we see children and young people as a whole person when they come to school – that we know them, we support them, and we help them build the skills they need for the future they want.



**"I'm very worried that we'll stop at the nice statement and not follow through with any meaningful change."**

PRINCIPAL RESPONSE

The challenge now is to take on what we have heard and act, building a system that can measure and talk about success in a broader way, while maintaining strong academic standards, and ensuring that every learner is supported to achieve their own personal pathway.

One respondent closed their submission asking for the work to go forward and reflect on the words of John Dewey, who said "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."

# Where to next?

This consultation shows that success is not just about what students achieve, but who they become and their preparedness for life beyond school.

This feedback will support the Tasmanian Government to finalise a definition of educational success that will be implemented across the system over time. The definition will be a guidepost to drive reform across the system, which will need to look beyond traditional measures and take a broader approach to supporting and assessing outcomes.

The Tasmanian Government has committed to release the final definition of educational success and implementation approach by the end of 2026. Updates will be available at www.decyp.tas.gov.au/definingsuccess.

**"We don't stop learning when we finish school, so it's important that we like to learn."**

STUDENT RESPONSE

# Appendix 1: Who we heard from

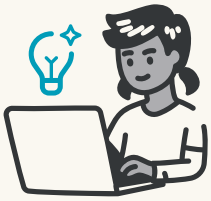
The consultation attracted feedback from a broad mix of students, families, staff, principals, school associations and group-based submissions. Responses were strongest from government school communities, particularly in the Hobart and Launceston areas. Student responses were concentrated in Years 8, 9, 11 and 12, while family and staff responses represented children across early years, primary and secondary schooling. Some feedback channels, particularly the Principal Forum and School Association submissions, provided rich qualitative insights but did not collect structured demographic data. For this reason, demographic comparisons should be interpreted with care.

▶ *Appendix 1 data continued on next page.*



## Defining Success Responses

| Responding group | Number of responses |
|---|---|
| Staff, family and community survey | 630 |
| Student survey | 588 |
| School Association feedback | 22 groups |
| Student group feedback | 34 groups (253 participants) |
| Face-to-face feedback | 630 participants |
| **TOTAL** | **2,422** |



## Response by survey count

| Survey | Number of responses |
|---|---|
| Students, Children and Young People | 588 |
| Families and Staff | 630 |
| School Association / Families / Carers | 22 groups |
| Principal forum feedback | 147 |
| Group feedback | 34 groups (253 participants) |
| **TOTAL submissions** | **1,792** |

## Students, Children and Young People Survey (n = 588)

### SCHOOL TYPE

| School type | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Government school | 545 | 92.7% |
| Catholic school | 5 | 0.9% |
| Independent school | 3 | 0.5% |
| More than one type | 3 | 0.5% |
| Online / eSchool | 2 | 0.3% |
| Home school | 1 | 0.2% |
| College | 1 | 0.2% |
| Not sure / prefer not to say | 16 | 2.7% |
| Other / free text | 4 | 0.7% |
| No response | 8 | 1.4% |

### SCHOOL LOCATION

| Location | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Hobart area | 269 | 45.7% |
| Launceston area | 227 | 38.6% |
| Regional town outside major cities | 45 | 7.7% |
| North West Coast (Burnie / Devonport area) | 20 | 3.4% |
| Other / multiple / online | 9 | 1.5% |
| Not sure / prefer not to say | 5 | 0.9% |
| No response | 13 | 2.2% |



## Students, Children and Young People Survey (n = 588)

YEAR LEVEL

| Year level | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Kindergarten | 1 | 0.2% |
| Prep | 2 | 0.3% |
| Year 1 | 3 | 0.5% |
| Year 2 | 8 | 1.4% |
| Year 3 | 14 | 2.4% |
| Year 4 | 23 | 3.9% |
| Year 5 | 36 | 6.1% |
| Year 6 | 52 | 8.8% |
| Year 7 | 13 | 2.2% |
| Year 8 | 100 | 17.0% |
| Year 9 | 89 | 15.1% |
| Year 10 | 12 | 2.0% |
| Year 11 | 134 | 22.8% |
| Year 12 | 94 | 16.0% |
| Other / unclear | 2 | 0.3% |
| No response | 5 | 0.9% |



## Families and Staff survey (n = 630)

### RESPONDENT TYPE

| Respondent type | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Parent / Carer / Guardian | 311 | 49.4% |
| Staff member | 299 | 47.5% |
| Other respondent type | 20 | 3.2% |

### SCHOOL TYPE

| School type | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Government school | 425 | 67.5% |
| Catholic school | 30 | 4.8% |
| Independent school | 15 | 2.4% |
| More than one type | 10 | 1.6% |
| Child and Family Learning Centre (CFLC) | 2 | 0.3% |
| Home Education / mixed | 1 | 0.2% |
| Other school type | 1 | 0.2% |
| Not applicable | 135 | 21.4% |
| Not sure / prefer not to say | 5 | 0.8% |
| No response | 6 | 1.0% |



## Families and Staff survey (n = 630)

### CHILD YEAR LEVEL(S) REPRESENTED*

| Year level group | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0–5 years | 1 | 0.2% |
| Kindergarten – Year 2 | 168 | 26.7% |
| Year 3 – 6 | 180 | 28.6% |
| Year 7 – 8 | 94 | 14.9% |
| Year 9 – 12 | 183 | 29.0% |
| College | 1 | 0.2% |
| Not applicable | 156 | 24.8% |
| Other / unclear | 13 | 2.1% |
| No response | 5 | 0.8% |

***Note:** respondents could select more than one year level, so percentages **do not add to 100%.**



## Group feedback (n = 34 group submissions)

### RESPONSES RECORDED ON BEHALF OF:

| Respondent type | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Learner / group of learners | 25 | 73.5% |
| Team / Business unit | 9 | 26.5% |

| Survey | Number of responses |
|---|---|
| Group submissions | 34 |
| Participants represented through group submissions | 253 |

www.decyp.tas.gov.au/definingsuccess

