

Appendix A:

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with the Department of Education, and we considered its views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report to the department and asked for its submission and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Responses received

Agency	Page
Department of Education	A-2

Response provided by the Secretary, Department of Education



Department of Education

Secretary

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone +61 3 9637 2000

COR24139782

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Dear Mr Greaves

Proposed report on Effectiveness of the Tutor Learning Initiative

Thank you for providing the proposed report on *Effectiveness of the Tutor Learning Initiative*.

The Department of Education is committed to supporting students who need additional support with the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy and welcomes recommendations that might lead to further improvements for the Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI) and student achievement.

I am pleased that the report acknowledges the research in Australia and overseas that shows tutoring can be highly effective in improving literacy and numeracy and I welcome the following findings:

- Nearly all schools delivered timely tutoring in 2023, despite workforce shortages. In this context I note that the department's recruitment support was found to have been effective, particularly for schools facing challenges, such as secondary and rural schools.
- The department has a comprehensive suite of monitoring tools for the initiative, and that the implementation framework is a sound tool for understanding schools' progress in delivering the initiative and identifying those that need more support.
- That the department had adapted its guidance and support after each evaluation, including publication of learnings about 'what works' in TLI implementation, establishment of a Virtual Tutor Program, and enhancing guidance regarding student selection.

I note that the overall mean learning growth of participating students was greater than the mean learning growth of non-tutored students, but also the Report's findings that when a matched cohort analysis is used this does not hold.

I also note that TLI has improved student engagement, and school leaders and tutors have observed students becoming more engaged in their learning because of the initiative.

Further, school leaders, teachers, tutors and students have provided strong positive feedback in relation to the program with students reporting improvement in their learning as a result of the program.

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Response provided by the Secretary, Department of Education – continued

I would note that the department has continued to refine implementation of the initiative in 2024, including revising the funding model to better target funding to student need. The department has also increased its support for schools to identify students assessed as “Needs Additional Support” in 2023 NAPLAN to ensure they are able to readily identify those students requiring TLI support.

Whilst the evidence from principals, students and tutors demonstrates the successful implementation and delivery of TLI during an extremely difficult period for school education, the department accepts that further work can be undertaken to improve the effective delivery of the initiative. In particular, the department will consider ways to gather more detailed data on implementation practices to be able to provide more precise advice to schools on the practices that are proving most effective in different settings.

Please find enclosed the department’s action plan to address the recommendations in the proposed report.

Should you wish to discuss the department’s response, please contact Shamiso Mtenje, Executive Director, Assurance, Knowledge, and Executive Services on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Jenny Atta
Secretary
31 / 05 / 2024

Encl.: Department’s action plan

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Department of Education: Action plan to address recommendations: Tutor Learning Initiative

#	Recommendations: That DE:	Response	#	The Department will:	By:
1	Collect and analyse data on schools' tutoring model and dosage so the department understands and promotes the models and dosage that are effective for different school types and student groups.	Accept	1	Analyse data regarding schools' tutoring model and dosage by different school types and student groups and promote this to schools to inform schools' delivery of TLI in 2025.	31 December 2024
			2	Prepare and publish case studies regarding schools' tutoring models and dosage by different school types and student groups and promote this to schools to inform schools' delivery of TLI in 2025.	31 December 2024
2	Establish measurable goals for schools' performance in the Tutor Learning Initiative with processes to drive sustained improvement.	Accept in principle	1	Require government schools to set a goal to decrease the number of students assessed as "Needs Additional Support" in reading and numeracy in NAPLAN within their 2025 Annual Implementation Plan. The department has a comprehensive framework for schools to establish measurable goals for improving students' literacy and numeracy outcomes, through the development of 4-yearly School Strategic Plans , cascading to Annual Implementation Plans (AIP) , and as such this action will be considered partially implemented.	31 March 2025
3	Establish practices and procedures to pilot state-wide learning interventions so that the department understands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program operation and performance for different school types and student groups • expected benefits of the program and the school support needed to achieve these benefits across the state. 	Accept	1	Develop guidance to inform the establishment of state-wide learning interventions, including the role of pilots in adapting delivery to suit different school types and student groups, as well as defining expected program benefits and the supports required.	30 July 2025