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# Appendix two – About the audit

## Audit objective

This audit assessed whether student attendance is effectively managed in government schools for students from Kindergarten to Year 10.

## Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective by assessing whether:

- there are effective systems and policies for managing student attendance
- the department effectively supports schools to manage student attendance
- schools are effectively managing student attendance.

## Audit scope and focus

This audit examined attendance rates of students from Kindergarten to Year 10. The timeframe examines activities from 2018 to 2022 as data prior to 2018 is not directly comparable due to changes in data recording practices. The audit focused on the development and monitoring of policies, strategies and targets to improve student attendance.

## Audit exclusions

The audit did not assess:

- student wellbeing initiatives
- student attendance in non-government schools, early childhood education or vocational education settings
- the effectiveness of partner agencies or relevant non-government organisations in relation to their role in supporting students with low attendance
- the merits of government policy objectives.

## Audit approach

Our procedures included:

- interviewing:
  - relevant Department of Education staff
  - a selection of school principals
  - key stakeholder groups
- examining relevant data and documents, including policies, strategies, data reports, plans, guidelines, reviews and evaluations.

We used a judgemental sampling approach to select schools based on the following criteria:

- location (metropolitan Sydney, inner regional and outer regional New South Wales)
- school type (primary, secondary, central, school for specific purpose)
- background characteristics (low socio-economic background, high Aboriginal enrolment).

The audit approach was complemented by quality assurance processes within the Audit Office to ensure compliance with professional standards.

## **Audit methodology**

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standard ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements and other professional standards. The standards require the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with requirements specified in the *Government Sector Audit Act 1983*.

## **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by the Department of Education. In particular, we would like to thank our liaison officers and staff who participated in interviews and provided evidence for the audit.

## **Audit cost**

The estimated cost of this audit is \$370,000.