



The Y NSW Youth Parliament

New Voice, New Curriculum Youth Bill 2026

Bill Proposed By: 2026 Education Portfolio

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Summary of Debate:

On Thursday the 16th of July 2026 the *New Voice, New Curriculum Youth Bill 2026* was debated on the floor of the NSW Legislative Assembly; presided over by Ms Charishma Kaliyana MP, Member for Liverpool.

Results of the Vote:

The results of the vote on the passage of amendments were 22 Ayes, 24 Noes, 8 Abstentions. As such, the amendments were resolved in the negative.

The results of the vote on the passage of the bill were 33 Ayes, 11 Noes, 0 Abstentions. As such, the bill was passed.

The *New Voice, New Curriculum Youth Bill 2026* was passed in its original form.

I certify that this Bill has been duly passed by the Y Youth Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, has received assent, and is now a Youth Act.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JD'.

Jamison Dustin, 24th Youth Governor of the Y NSW Youth Parliament

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The Y NSW Youth Parliament

New Voice, New Curriculum Youth Act 2026

Act no. 10, 2026

An Act to

Increase the inclusion of student voice within curriculum reform and policy regarding wellbeing, Indigenous integration, the use of AI and related purposes.

I have examined this bill and find it to correspond in all respects with the bill as finally passed by the Youth Legislative Assembly.



Alyssa Pinchbeck, Youth Premier of the Y NSW Youth Parliament – Leader of the Government in the Legislative Assembly

Explanatory Note

Summary

The object of this bill is to increase the prevalence of youth and student voice within curriculum reform in the NSW education system.

This bill comes at a time where student voice has been stated to be extremely important without any actionable steps taken by the current government to further implement student voice, allowing for issues that truly affect students' daily life and futures to remain disregarded and unaddressed. There is a clear issue in the inclusion of student voice in regards to their wellbeing, learning, and use of technology; and the utilisation of student opinion must be used to create more inclusive and relevant curriculums.

This bill aims to increase sources for student opinion to be given, the creation of different committees to consider issues raised by students, introduction of learning review programs, implementation of mandatory hours, campaigns for further inclusion and opportunities, further reform, regulation and legislation.

Overview of Provisions:

Part 1 of the act outlines the name of the act, commencement, objects of the act, and definitions for key words and phrases.

Part 2 outlines changes in wellbeing guides for schools across schools in NSW. This includes the establishment of the Education Wellbeing Committee; made up of professionals such as teachers and counsellors, the creation of a Student Education Wellbeing Committee — a direct inclusion of student voice; composed of 15 students from across the state who will speak on behalf of their community during wellbeing guide reform. This selection and information will take place through the Education Wellbeing Survey; a survey specifically aimed at data collection for student and teacher wellbeing. This data will directly impact changes within the wellbeing guide, as well as the creation of the teacher training program into approaching certain situations from a more student-friendly perspective. Furthermore, this part of the bill will bring changes to the assessment processes; especially leading to the HSC to prioritise student engagement and positive learning outcomes over a competitive, high-stakes exam culture. Examples will include the tiered learning program, utilising trained professionals to ensure that all students are able to reach their full potential. Exam styles will also shift from pressurised test-taking to more cumulative tasks as well as oral presentation and depth study; honing practical skills as well as promoting student engagement and further overall wellbeing.

Part 3 has a strong focus on Indigenous Integration. In collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, there will be the creation of a course for teachers to undergo which involves the knowledge, culture and traditions of Indigenous Peoples with extensive contributions from community members. This will ensure that teachers across NSW in metropolitan, regional, and rural areas are educated in Indigenous education. To further strengthen this teaching, there will be an implementation of 1 mandatory hour of RFF classes to replace non-scripture hours within the school week. Students who do not attend scripture, will use this hour to learn local Indigenous culture such as language, history, practices and other subjects of cultural importance. Instructors will have teacher autonomy and personal inclusions will be encouraged. This will be further enhanced by workshops offered to Indigenous students run during scripture hours. This will allow for pathways into universities

for education courses as well as financial scholarships to promote a pathway into teaching. Furthermore, there will be reform to the Aboriginal Studies course for HSC. There will be extensive curriculum reform in collaboration with Indigenous communities, especially young Indigenous people. This will allow for them to be heard during curriculum reform which will occur every 5 years.

Part 4 further regulates AI in the classroom for both teachers and students. There will be the creation and implementation of a new policy called the 'Marked by Me' policy, accompanied by a NESA online portal to enforce this policy. Strict exceptions to the policy are NESA directive 'identify' and 'describe' questions. Furthermore, AI supplements for learning must be significantly and continuously reviewed, edited and endorsed by members of staff in the department of education. There will also be a course in AI literacy for staff that is to be completed every three years, this will ensure that marking is not fully done by AI. This is further enforced with the "All My Own Work" policy where senior students and teachers must sign off that no AI was used in assessment tasks. Failure to comply will result in appropriate action from the department such as indefinite oversight. If a task is found to have been marked by AI, students will then have the entitlement to verbal feedback within 4 days. This will ensure that AI is further regulated for both students and teachers, and allow students to get appropriate feedback to achieve their personal best.

Rationale

In 2022, the Student Voice in Schools survey reported that 69% of NSW pupils from government schools, and 48% from non-government schools did not believe that their teachers or staff made appropriate changes to their school based on student feedback (NSW Youth Advisory Council, 2022). Despite 82% of students surveyed acknowledging the opportunity to share their views with educators at school, this gap highlights the fundamental detachment between student voice and educational reform within schools. It is fair that students who are taught under the NSW education system should have an equal say in how it is managed. Though there are traditional approaches to student voice in NSW, such as Student Representative Councils (SRC) or leadership teams, these methods can be largely tokenistic and participate minimally in decision-making processes that directly affect student wellbeing. An inherent bias towards traditional and “one-size-fits-all” approaches in NSW schools ignores the diverse perspective of students in contributing to the improvement of contemporary learning systems. Without first-hand insights from students, pre-existing and newly emerging problems within the classroom and curriculum are rarely addressed, specifically in areas surrounding student wellbeing, the use of AI tools, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Consequently, the lack of an equally recognised student voice in schools fails to respond to these areas of concern, and thus a more inclusive approach to educational change is required.

Student Voice in the Curriculum

The Australian education system currently has an extreme lack of student opinion in curriculum reform, with only a total of 184 student responses during the 2021 ACARA review. This merely encompasses around 0.00004% of Australian students. Furthermore, a UNSW study (DeCarvalho, 2026) found that there are only 35 Australian publications over the past 20 years that mention student involvement in curriculum reform, in which they are only consulted after curriculum changes are made. The report states that the student role is often as an evaluator rather than informants, and treated more like recipients of the curriculum rather than co-creators (DeCarvalho, 2026). Without student involvement in educational reform, it is clear that the curriculum fails to evolve holistically, in a way that amplifies students’ concerns about ongoing issues within the NSW schooling system. Ensuring student recommendations are prioritised during curriculum improvement requires thorough examination of its implementation, to prevent future issues in efforts to include student opinion.

The current policies in education that involve Aboriginal education, AI usage and student engagement fail to include practical solutions to the lack of Aboriginal cultural education in the curriculum. The Department of Education’s policy on Aboriginal education states that teachers and Department of Education employees must complete mandatory training of Aboriginal education but fail to state what this training involves and who is training the department of education employees. The lack of transparency included in this statement allows opportunity for miscommunication across the state, leading to different levels of training in regards to Aboriginal education statewide. The Department of Education’s AI policy has six key principles: teaching and learning, Human and social wellbeing, transparency, fairness, accountability, privacy, security and safety. These six key principles prioritise students and teachers safety and wellbeing.

Through implementing more student input into curriculum reform, overall student success would be more attainable, as they would have more of an understanding of the course and what they were actually learning about. The inclusion of student’s opinions on curriculum

reform, allow for achievable goals to be set across subjects that keeps students engaged and therefore motivated and determined to learn. This positively benefits not only academic results, but also student intention and wellbeing; fostering a good and student-focused learning environment. Students are placed in the front lines with increased decision making opportunities to further student engagement and motivation. Student voice values student perspectives and experiences as a way to contribute ideas and feedback that influences the learning process. Effectively boosting students' motivation, contribution and control over the broad prospects of learning. The purpose of student advice is to give decision makers the ability to identify learning gaps within the current curriculum and for the inclusion of student perspective on the effectiveness of obtaining knowledge and learnings for life outside of school. Independent schools NSW state that "school improvement is about developing and enacting an appropriate strategy for achieving school effectiveness. It usually involves a school community aligning to a shared vision, conducting rigorous self-evaluation, building the capacity of staff, and using data to inform change." The shared vision of NSW students is that they succeed in their own right and have their future aspirations supported by the curriculum they study. Success may not necessarily mean the same for all students, but according to currently outdated curriculum outcomes, there must be an equal target for students to meet in order to be deemed as 'flourishing' in a school environment.

Overall, it is in the best interest of the students of New South Wales to have a say in their education, which will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Learning must adequately prepare and nurture students for their pathway beyond school. The curriculum pupils study at school must reflect this by encouraging the integration of a proper student voice.

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The Y Youth Legislature of New South Wales enacts—

Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Act

This Act is the New Voice, New Curriculum Youth Act 2026.

2 Commencement

This Act commences a year after Assent.

3 Objects

The objects of this Act are to—

- (a) Increase student voice initiatives within the NSW Education system,
- (b) Design student-led mental health and wellbeing frameworks within schools,
- (c) Enhance open communication between students, staff and councilors through intentional surveying procedures,
- (d) Integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, practice and customs within the NSW education curriculum in a purposeful and frequent manner,
- (e) Provide stricter guidelines surrounding educators' use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in classrooms and provide students with further opportunities to raise concerns about AI usage.

4 Definitions

In this Act—

Assessment means an examination under which student learning is quizzed and information is used to form feedback on student understanding of content.

Primary School means the first seven years of mandatory education across NSW (Kindergarten to Year 6)

Secondary School means the last six years of education as part of the NSW curriculum (Year 7 to Year 12)

Committee means a delegated group of experts in a certain area, in this case student wellbeing and experience, who gather to discuss changes and amendments to the current student experience.

Framework means a guideline of elements that allows professionals to provide the most quality education and care to students.

Wellbeing means a positive state of function within a social and student environment.

Course means a subject within a student's pattern of study and or a mandatory educational certification for educators in a certain area.

Educator means the person who is responsible for teaching the NESA content to school children and is actively in the classroom.

ICT means information and communication technology, which encompasses everyday technology and software.

AI means Artificial Intelligence; Autonomous online platforms such as ‘ChatGPT’, ‘Copilot’, ‘Gemini’ which generate content using learnings from human inputs.

‘Marked By Me’ is a new NSW Education policy which outlines the requirements for monitoring and the enforcement of precautions about AI in creating teacher feedback and is enforced amongst all NSW education schools.

Literacy means being knowledgeable in a certain topic to a satisfactory standard or to fulfil a certain criteria for certification.

Survey means a tool for collecting student feedback regarding educational experience dispersed with the intent to inform improvements.

‘Tell Them From Me’ is a NSW statewide survey that provides data on a range of aspects of school life, practices and procedures from the perspectives of students, parents and teachers. This data provides valuable insights that can inform school planning and decision-making.

AECG refers to the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, an Aboriginal community lead education program

Instructional leaders As instructional leaders, school leaders have a pivotal role to play in providing the enabling conditions for teachers to work in teams, to learn from and support each other, and to have a significant impact on the learning of the students in their care.

HSC stands for Higher School Certificate and is the credential awarded to secondary school students who successfully complete their senior year studies in NSW.

Support Officer is the title given to a member of the school community whose role is to enhance the learning and wellbeing outcomes of students, in partnership with the wellbeing team and the School Counselling Service.

RFF or relief from face-to-face teaching and refers to the mandated time teachers are given away from their classroom duties for lesson preparation and planning. During this time substitute teachers are supplemented for students.

Scripture or special religious education is education in the beliefs and practices of an approved religious persuasion by authorised representatives of that persuasion.

Note— The *Interpretation Act 1987* also contains definitions and other provisions that affect the interpretation of this Bill.

Part 2 Encouragement of Student Engagement and Regulation of a Statewide Approach to Student Wellbeing

5 Establishment of the Education Wellbeing Committee (EWC) and Student Wellbeing Committee (SEWC)

(1) The EWC will be a committee including:

- a. Three licensed psychologists,
 - b. Two student support officers,
 - c. One principal, and;
 - d. Four teachers, two across primary education and two across secondary education.
- (2) They will be selected based on both student and teacher nomination in the EWS, nominations will begin in December of the year of assent and will take place every 2 years.
- (3) Each member of the EWC will be able to continue to serve beyond the 2-year term if renominated by their school community.
- (4) The EWC will be responsible for the implementation of youth voice and opinion in future wellbeing frameworks and are obligated to consult the SEWC when presenting future contributions.

6 Student Education Wellbeing Committee (SEWC)

- (1) The SEWC functions at a secondary school level, where the EWS will contain an optional application for students to become part of the SEWC.
- (2) 15 students across the state will be selected based on their ability to address and strategise against a key issue in school wellbeing. Examples of questions that may be asked are:
 - a. "What is one issue in the school environment that affects student wellbeing?", and;
 - b. "Propose a strategy that would alleviate or mend this issue"
- (3) This will allow students a say in how wellbeing is handled in a common way, in a more organised manner. Including their school's address on preferences of student contact, a system that is in line with the severity of the issue, and proper regulations on how concerns of student wellbeing are considered by school services and administration.
- (4) The SEWC will meet once a term on a selected day by the SEWC and members will be nominated or renominated by the EWC.

7 Methods of Mandatory Student Survey

- (1) The introduction of the Education Wellbeing Survey (EWS) to be conducted every two years in the first two weeks of term 3 across all year levels and schools.
- (2) The EWS will follow a similar format of the 'Tell Them From Me' survey consisting of multiple-choice questions, with a free response area at the end, where a student will detail the category of concern, the concern and additional details they see fit.
- (3) All responses will be anonymous and free responses will be reviewed based on data indicating the most critical category for young people in schools.
- (4) This will be extensively reviewed after these periods of surveying by the newly established EWC.
- (5) Submissions will be open all year to be reviewed once a term and the link will be made accessible on webpages of child welfare services as well as wellbeing services

such as headspace, Beyond Blue, and Kids Helpline. School websites must also have the link accessible.

- (6) Data from these surveys will be used to write and update the Education Wellbeing Policy (EWP) every two years, including student opinion in the reallocation of resources as well as critical areas and school zones of concern.

8 NSW Student Health and Wellbeing Policy

- (1) Creation of an enforceable piece of state legislation that ensures universal standards across NSW on handling wellbeing and student mental health called the Education Wellbeing Policy (EWP).
- (2) It will be open to and include the student opinion of a population of at least 10% of students within the NSW schooling system.
- (3) Legislation is to cover an appropriate reporting system from teacher to year advisor to counsellor to head teacher to principal and so on, including external counselling services if seen as necessary based on student circumstance.
- (4) This legislation will then allow for better funding allocation towards critical areas such as hiring counselling or increase of mental health resources.
- (5) The state legislation will be updated every two years and will be based on the feedback of the EWC and the SEWC from the newly introduced EWS.

9 Implementation of Youth Voice for the NSW Wellbeing Guide

- (1) The pre-existing NSW Wellbeing guide is not properly taught, without continuous teacher training or review.

10 Teacher Training Program

- (1) A teacher's training program is to be done every 3 years for teachers through an online portal containing classes in 10-minute sections. The NSW wellbeing guide will be updated every 2 years in accordance with the new implementation of state legislation as mentioned in clause (9.1).
- (2) A more inclusive and student-oriented approach to wellbeing, properly training teachers, and updated statistics. The teacher's training program will fall under the EWP, areas of concern will be indicated in the EWS as well at school yearly reviews, the training program will be altered accordingly based on areas of key concern.
- (3) Each teacher will be able to log in onto an online portal with their DET email. The portal will have online courses fit with video tutorial, interactive scenarios and questions to strengthen their understanding of appropriate responses to wellbeing and mental health issues.
- (4) Courses will cover:
 - a. Talking to struggling students,
 - b. Providing support without reliance,
 - c. How and when to spread the risk and seek external support,
 - d. How to identify the severity of a situation as well as coordinate an appropriate response, and;

- e. Cater to students who may require additional support such as disability or mental health support or severe disengagement.

11 Tiered Student Learning Assessment and Support Program

- (1) Implementation of a state-funded psychological review program.
- (2) The program will allow registered psychologists to review all NSW public schools students' learning capabilities and categorise them into 3 tiers:
 - a. Foundation Learners - students requiring significant additional support, such as those with learning disabilities, mental health/trauma backgrounds, or severe disengagement.
 - b. Developmental learners - students who benefit from modified pacing or targeted support but can mostly cope with mainstream curriculum.
 - c. Independent learners - students who can perform relatively well in mainstream curriculum with minimal support needed.
- (3) From this, students receive adapted learning arrangements (Timetables, E-study periods, study materials) within classrooms by teachers who have been specifically trained through the process outlined in point A to help cater to each tier.
- (4) Funding to be allocated through the DOE and the Ministry of Health, with reviews conducted at key transition points (Years 3, 7 and 10).

12 NSW Assessment Model Reform Toward Cumulative Evaluation

- (1) A restructuring of the NSW assessment model to replace exams with more cumulative tasks that track student understanding in stages over the course of study which accurately reflect students' capabilities, such as:
 - (a) Project based tasks,
 - (b) Portfolios,
 - (c) Oral presentations, and;
 - (d) Staged assignments.
- (2) This reform pairs well with the tier-based review mentioned in clause (11).

13 HSC NESA Program Review

- (1) The HSC program should be reviewed as part of the reform, with NESA consulted to ensure changes maintain academic integrity while prioritising student wellbeing and long-term engagement.
- (2) Subjects that require heavy essay writing, may be performed in a presentation style with a long-term project that is presented as an oral presentation, similar to PhD study.
- (3) Depth studies will be required to form at least one third of HSC assessments for chemistry and biology.

Part 3 Further Integration of Indigenous Education in Secondary Courses

14 Implementation of Indigenous Educators Instructional Leaders

- (1) The Department of Education must establish a course on Indigenous teaching with Elders, with the goal on educating teachers in Indigenous education.
 - a. Course must be created in collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) with guidance of Aboriginal Elders, Indigenous educators and members of community.
 - b. The Department of Education must ensure that the course is made accessible to all schools in NSW across metropolitan, rural and remote schools and can be achieved through online and in person courses.
 - c. Each school, primary and secondary must have an Indigenous educator Instruction leader by 2035.

15 Reformed Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Strategy

- (1) The Department of Education must implement mandatory 1 hour of RFF to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander teaching every week.
 - a. This one hour will be taken out of time for scripture, where students who do not do scripture will instead be expected to proceed to an RFF class for the period.
 - b. This hour of education will be guidelineed to cover topics such as local languages, Indigenous history, Indigenous practices, and subjects of cultural importance.
 - c. This hour of education will allow for teacher autonomy and will allow for personal inclusions from the educator.

16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students to Educators Campaign

- (1) Workshops run by Indigenous education programs run by Indigenous Educator Instructional leader offered to Indigenous students run during scripture hours.
 - a. The School's Liaison officer is responsible for organising and programming workshops for each school in partnership with Indigenous education programs such as NASCA, Koori Curriculum and Narragunnawali.
 - b. Financial scholarships offered to Indigenous students in education courses including primary and secondary education.
 - c. Gateway opportunities into universities for Indigenous students in primary and secondary education courses.

17 Curriculum Reform of Aboriginal Studies HSC course

- (1) With a lack of teachers, a vague curriculum, and difficulties teaching Aboriginal studies at a high school level. There must be a curriculum reform in collaboration with the AECG and NESA to specifically outline what is expected for teachers to teach within years 7-10. The curriculum will be reviewed by NESA and AECG every 5 years starting in 2030.
- (2) New curriculum reform will allow integration of Indigenous communities, specifically Indigenous youth within the local community to speak on issues that they see affect their community.

- (3) This opportunity will be given by school community nomination and at least 30% of stated issues must have an attempt to address as see fit. Attempt to address will be determined based on student response within the EWS every two years.
- (4) The Aboriginal studies course will be an optional ATAR subject as of 2030.

Part 4 Regulation and Education of Artificial Intelligence Usage for Educators

18 Enforcement on AI Regulations in Classrooms and Assessments

- (1) The 'Australian Professional Standards for Teachers' outlines proficiency in ICT skills as a requirement in order to receive sound qualifications under section 3.4 'Select and use resources'. However there is no specific restriction on the usage of Artificial Intelligence in assessments aimed at providing feedback for student development. This constantly modernising classroom habit can negatively impact any personalised feedback received by students. Therefore:
 - a. The usage of AI in classroom activities and assessments are to be strictly monitored and utilised with approval from heads of department under the 'Marked By Me' policy.
 - b. The policy would be further implemented through a NESA accessible online teacher platform of the same name, where schools would register their markers for each assessment and digitally mark uploaded papers through the platform. This aims to observe and reduce the usage of AI in feedback creation.
 - c. Failure to comply with this policy and process will result in a NESA mandated audit for the marking process of that school department's next assessment task.
 - d. Under this policy, multiple choice, formula application questions, and 1-2 mark NESA directive "identify" or "describe" questions would be under strict exceptions to be marked by or have feedback generated by Artificial Intelligence. This will ensure educators are providing students with adequate, personalised and marker-based feedback, rather than the generation of broad, and unspecialised feedback, for example extended responses.
- (2) All educators are mandated to attend an AI literacy course run by NESA specifically for Educators that is updated every six years to remain relevant and accurately reflect usage of AI in education.
- (3) Educators must complete said AI literacy course every three years. The course involves recognising student and AI work, protocol on student usage of AI and when AI is beneficial and detrimental in the classroom.
- (4) As an amended part of the 'All My Own Work' programme for senior students, assignment tasks will require both student and teacher signatures acknowledging that no AI material has been used in the assignment or has been marked with AI upon the task's return to students.

19 AI Generated Learning Material Regulation

- (1) For the generation of AI materials to supplement learning, it must be reviewed, edited where necessary and endorsed by a minimum of 70% of NSW educators.

- (2) Furthermore, it must be assessed in alignment with the NESA syllabus prior to release.
 - a. All AI generated material must be disclosed to students and where relevant to parents and carers ensuring transparency and educational integrity.
- (3) If any educator usage of unregulated AI is sighted and used in the process of marking and providing feedback for formal tasks and assessments, the corresponding school head of department is mandated to allocate another educator to re-review the final marks.
 - a. Failure to impose these internal guidelines will result in an observation of all assessments of that department for three months following.
 - b. Students will also be entitled to receive verbal feedback within four days of the task being returned if AI is detected in task feedback.



Produced for The Y NSW Youth Parliament