Rewarding Excellence in Teaching What do I need to know?

About the paper

The NSW Government's Rewarding Excellence in Teaching reform, announced by Premier Dominic Perrottet and Minister for Education and Early Learning Sarah Mitchell in August 2022, seeks to create a stronger teaching career pathway by creating new, higher-paid roles for highly effective classroom teachers in NSW public schools.

Following on from The Case for Change: A briefing on rewarding excellence in teaching, the Options Paper sets out what a career path for classroom teachers could look like.

The Options Paper will inform the next phase of consultation, which will include in-person engagement with every school network across the state during November 2022.

About the reform

The Rewarding Excellence in Teaching reform has two aims:

1) To leverage the skills of highly effective teachers to strengthen teaching practice across our system, for the benefit of every student; and

2) To create a more attractive career path for classroom teachers, while raising the status of the profession. We want to attract more people into teaching, and we want our students to have continued access to quality teaching from great teachers who might otherwise leave the classroom.

The Case for Change was developed based on academic research and lessons from previous initiatives, as well as the experience of other jurisdictions. It prompted robust discussions with stakeholders across the sector, including teachers, school leaders, professional associations, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students, academics and education departments from other jurisdictions.

We undertook an initial internal survey with over 1350 responses from teachers, school leaders and other school staff in NSW public schools. 79% agreed that there is a need to provide additional career pathways for excellent teachers who wish to spend the majority of their time in the classroom.

The data from these initial discussions and feedback – as well as academic evidence and input from a wide range of experts, including expert advisor Professor John Hattie – was used to develop the Options Paper.

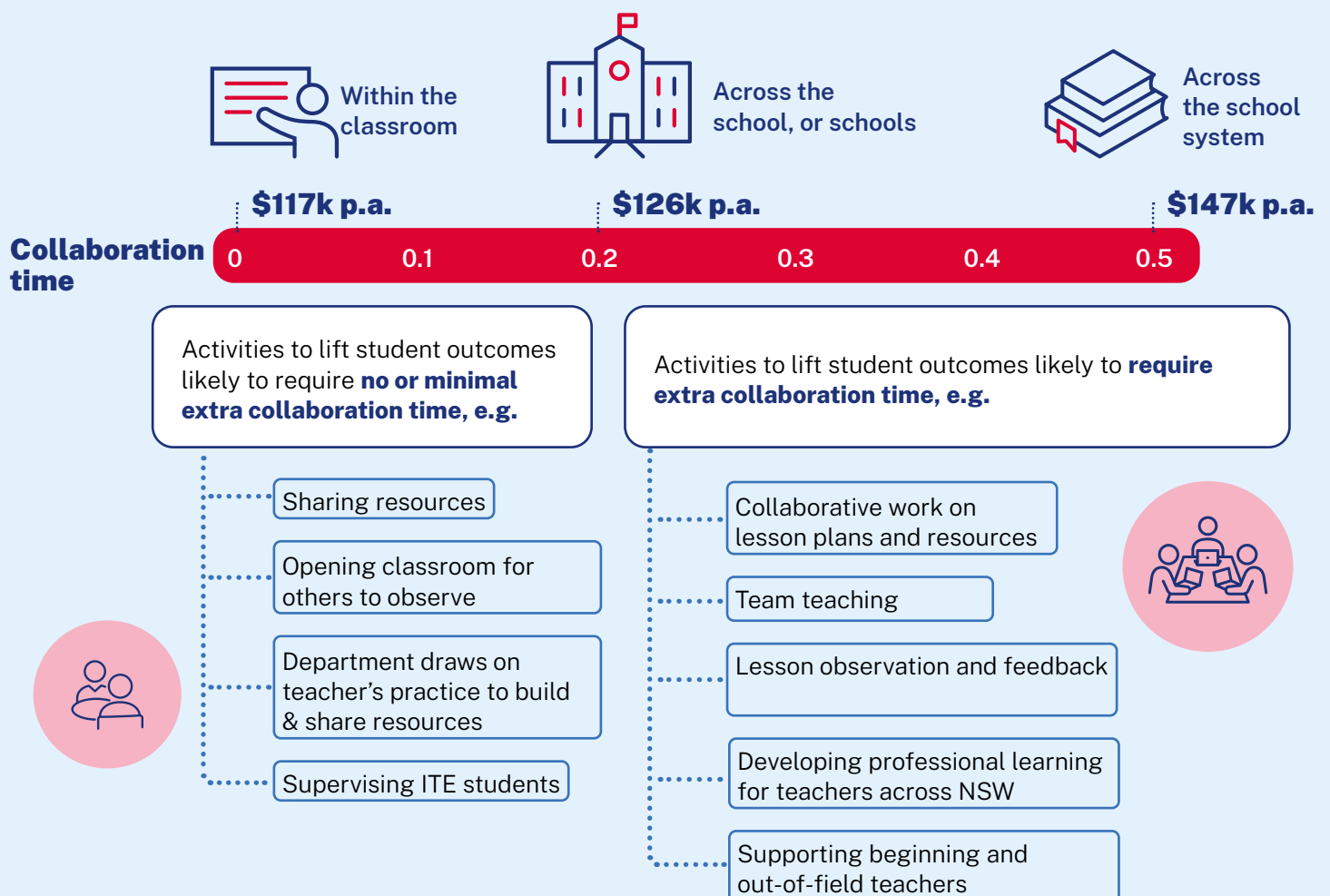## The proposed model and key considerations

Roles and functions

The Options Paper proposes the creation of new roles in schools for highly effective teachers. We recognise there's no one size fits all design that suits the breadth of diverse schooling across NSW. Roles and functions may vary, with:

- Some teachers continuing with a full classroom load, and with recognition for responsibilities that do not require dedicated collaboration time: e.g., supervision of ITE students, or the department drawing on the teacher's practice to develop resources

- Some teachers taking on additional responsibilities that would require some of their classroom teaching time be reallocated to collaboration time, including mentoring beginner teachers, supporting collaborative practice, and sharing expertise with others – including across the NSW public school system.

In all cases, these teachers would be paid more than classroom teachers, from approx. $117,000 p.a. to approx. $147,000 p.a. (2022 figures), depending on their responsibilities.

Positions focused on strengthening practice:

Within the classroom

Across the school, or schools

Across the school system

$117k p.a.   **$126k p.a.**   **$147k p.a.**

Collaboration time   0   0.1   0.2   0.3   0.4   0.5

Activities to lift student outcomes likely to require **no or minimal extra collaboration time, e.g.**

- Sharing resources
- Opening classroom for others to observe
- Department draws on teacher's practice to build & share resources
- Supervising ITE students

Activities to lift student outcomes likely to **require extra collaboration time, e.g.**

- Collaborative work on lesson plans and resources
- Team teaching
- Lesson observation and feedback
- Developing professional learning for teachers across NSW
- Supporting beginning and out-of-field teachers

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Allocation of roles

The paper proposes that, ultimately, all schools should benefit from the skills of teachers employed in these roles. Roles could be allocated based on teacher numbers, and in some cases, an allowance for need. Roles would be based on a central role description which could be tailored to the school's specific needs (as per the school's Strategic Improvement Plan).

Selection processes

Teachers could either nominate themselves to apply or be nominated by their principal. Recruitment to roles would require the teacher to demonstrate their suitability against the role description, to a selection panel with a balance of local and central input: two centrally provided external panel members, and the principal and/or the director, educational leadership.

Relationship to Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher accreditation

The proposed approach supports the NSW Government's commitment to accrediting 2,500 Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALTs) by 2025. In Phase 1, it would be a condition of accepting these roles that the teacher complete Module 1 of the 3 HALT accreditation modules within 12 months. Completing Module 1 of HALT might also allow teachers to enter a recognised 'pool' of highly effective teachers from which these roles could later be recruited. In later phases, consideration will be given as to whether full HALT accreditation would be required.

Implementation and continuous improvement

The reform will be implemented in phases. In Phase 1 from 2023, positions will be created in a limited number of schools to test how these roles can best support great outcomes for students.

Defining and demonstrating excellence

Excellence would be defined using the widely accepted Highly Accomplished Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, with an option for principals to tailor a role description flexibly based on school needs balanced with central priorities. There are many kinds of 'excellence', and teachers could rely on evidence relevant to their specific context.

What's next

We are building this reform through rich and inclusive consultation opportunities with teachers and others in school communities across NSW. In addition to internal surveys and roundtables with school staff during November, feedback can also be provided through the publicly available Have Your Say survey (link) by 25 November 2022, or by contacting us at rewardingexcellenceteam@det. nsw.edu.au.

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