EDUCATION STANDARDS BOARD

EECS Act Review

Simple Survey to gather views of SA school community members

June 2026

About this survey

The South Australian Government has commissioned an independent review of the law that governs the Education Standards Board (ESB) — the body that registers and oversees schools in SA.

The review is looking at whether the ESB has the right tools to ensure schools operate to high standards. This review is about how the ESB regulates schools, not its role with other sectors, such as childcare or OSHC, or the National Law or the National Quality Framework.

This survey has been designed to support parents and school communities to have their say.

You don't need to answer every question — just focus on what matters most to you.

Before completing this survey, we encourage you to read the Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act Review: Consultation Paper. The context and consideration of each of the questions in this survey are discussed more fully in the Consultation Paper. The questions in this survey are simplified versions of the questions or propositions in the Consultation Paper.

You can respond anonymously. However, responses may be made publicly available or quoted in the final report.

PEG CONSULTING

About You

Please tell us a little about yourself. This helps us understand who is responding. (Optional)

QA	I am responding mainly as:
	A parent or carer of a student or a student at a South Australian ☐ government school ☐ non-government/independent school ☐ Catholic school
	A governing council member or member of a parent association for a ☐ government school ☐ non-government/independent school ☐ Catholic school
	A school staff member in a ☐ government school ☐ non-government/independent school ☐ Catholic school
☐	Other _____

Any comment (optional)

QB	Optional: My name is _____ and I can be contacted via email: _____
☐	You can quote my comments and use my name
☐	You can quote my comments but please make them anonymous
☐	My responses cannot be directly quoted

PART 1 OF 6 — REGISTRATION

How schools are registered

All schools in SA must be registered with the ESB before they can operate. Registration is reviewed every five years. South Australia's school sector is, by any measure, highly professionalised. Schools operate within a dense web of funding conditions, reporting obligations, teacher registration requirements, and accountability to their school communities.

At the moment the law is mainly focused on whether schools meet minimum requirements — it does not explicitly ask whether schools are striving to improve.

The law also requires schools to physically display their registration certificate at school, but anyone checking would likely just search online instead.

Q1	**Should the law require the ESB to actively encourage schools to improve or have any additional objects?**
☐	Yes — the ESB should have a clear role in promoting ongoing improvement in school quality
☐	No — improvement is better handled through other channels (e.g. Department for Education, school systems)
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

Q2	**The requirement for schools to display a physical registration certificate on their wall is outdated. Should this be replaced by an online list published by the regulator?**
☐	Yes — an online register is more useful and accessible for parents and the community
☐	No — the physical certificate should remain (or both options should be available)
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

PART 2 OF 6 — SETTING RULES AND STANDARDS

Who decides what standards schools must meet?

The ESB sets the rules (standards and codes) that schools must follow to become or stay registered.

But the Association of Independent Schools SA and the SA Commission for Catholic Schools can veto any new code. These bodies have not used this power, but it is unusual: most regulators can set their own standards without potentially being blocked by organisations they oversee.

There is also no legal requirement for the ESB to regularly update its standards. The current standards were last updated in 2019.

Q3	Should the ESB be required to set and update standards for schools?
☐	Yes — the ESB should have the ability to set and review standards, with input from school sectors through consultation
☐	No — peak bodies should retain veto power to protect school sectors' interests
☐	Partially — the ESB should be able to set standards, but peak bodies should have a formal say (without a veto)
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

PART 3 OF 6 — OVERSIGHT AND INFORMATION GATHERING

Can the ESB monitor what is actually happening in schools?

Currently, the ESB can only ask schools for information about 'courses of instruction' (i.e. teaching). It cannot ask about student safety incidents, complaints, wellbeing, or financial matters.
The ESB requires a school to have the right policies to be registered— but it has very limited ability to find out whether those policies are actually being followed.
It also means the ESB cannot spot patterns — for example, if one school is receiving repeated complaints or has multiple incidents involving students with disability.
By comparison, childcare services (regulated under a national law) must report certain incidents and can be inspected at any time.

Q4	**Should the ESB be able to ask schools for information about anything relevant to student safety and wellbeing — not just teaching and instruction?**
☐	Yes — the ESB needs a fuller picture to properly oversee schools
☐	No — information requests should stay limited to teaching and instruction
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

Q5	**Should the ESB have the ability to require reporting of certain types of data to the ESB — for example, the number of incidents involving student harm or the number of complaints received?**
☐	Yes — regular reporting would help the ESB identify problems early
☐	No — this would create too much administrative burden for schools
☐	Only for serious incidents (e.g. injury or harm to a student)
☐	Not sure

Comments (Please share your experience of incidents or reporting in your school community if relevant):

Q6	**Should ESB inspectors be able to visit a school to check compliance — without first needing evidence that something has already gone wrong?**
☐	Yes — proactive inspection is important to prevent problems, not just respond to them
☐	No — schools should only be inspected when there is a specific issue that has been reported to the ESB
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

PART 4 OF 6 — COMPLAINTS AND ENFORCEMENT

What happens if schools do the wrong thing?

At the moment, the ESB's options are very limited when a problem arises. Either the issue is serious enough for a disciplinary hearing (which can result in conditions being imposed or suspension or cancellation of registration), or the ESB has no real power to act at all.
There are no in-between options — such as issuing a formal warning, directing a school to fix a problem, or requiring the school to report back on what they have done.
There is also no emergency power for the ESB to act quickly if a school poses an immediate risk to students.

Q7	**Should the ESB have a range of enforcement options before a disciplinary hearing?**
☐	Yes — there should be steps in between, like formal warnings, improvement notices, or requiring a school to fix a problem within a set time
☐	No — the current system is appropriate
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

Q8	**The Disability Royal Commission found students with disability face barriers with having complaints addressed. Should the law include specific rules about how schools handle complaints from families of students with disability?**
☐	Yes — there should be specific protections and clear complaint processes for students with disability. [Please provide examples in comments]
☐	No — special powers are not needed if the ESB is given the powers contemplated in questions 6 and 7
☐	Not sure

Comments (Please share any personal experience with complaints processes if you are comfortable doing so):

PART 5 OF 6 — THE ESB BOARD AND ITS LEADERSHIP

How the ESB is led and who makes the decisions

The ESB is run by a Board of 13 members. At the moment the Board does almost everything: it sets standards, approves or rejects school registrations, investigates problems, and would also act as the "judge" in disciplinary hearings.

This is unusual. Most modern regulators separate these roles — a Board sets strategy and oversight, while a Chief Executive or Registrar handles day-to-day decisions and enforcement.

When a disciplinary hearing is held about a Catholic or Independent school, the law requires a Board member nominated by Catholic or Independent sector to sit on the hearing. This creates a potential conflict of interest.

Board members are currently chosen as representatives of school sectors (government, Catholic, independent), rather than for their professional skills.

Q9	What should the role of the Board be?
☐	Keep things as they are — the Board should continue to make the full range of registration and disciplinary decisions
☐	The Board should focus on strategy and oversight; a Registrar should handle day-to-day regulatory decisions
☐	The Board should become an advisory body only — the Registrar makes all decisions and consults the Board
☐	Not sure/Other

Reason for your answer (optional)

Q10	Should Board members be chosen for their professional skills (e.g. child safety, law, education) rather than as representatives of school sectors?
☐	Yes — skills and expertise should be the main criteria, but the Minister should consult the sectors on Board nominations
☐	No — the current representative model ensures school sectors have a voice at the table
☐	A mix — some skills-based appointments and some sector representatives
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

Q11	**Currently the law creates three separate Registrar roles — one each for government schools, non-government schools, and early childhood services. In practice, one person has always held all three roles. Should the law be simplified to create a single Registrar position?**
☐	Yes — a single Registrar makes more sense and reflects how it already works
☐	No — keeping separate Registrar roles is important
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

PART6 OF 6 — SHARING INFORMATION & PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY

What information can the ESB share — and with whom?

If the ESB discovers a concern about a school — say, a pattern of serious incidents — it currently has very limited ability to share that information with other agencies (such as Department for Child Protection or the Teacher Registration Board) or with the public.
This can leave families in the dark about risks, and can prevent early, coordinated action to keep children safe.

Q12	**Should the ESB be able to share information about school safety concerns with other government agencies — such as the Department for Child Protection, SA Police, or the Teacher's Registration Board?**
☐	Yes — agencies responsible for child safety should be able to share information to better protect children
☐	No — information shared with the ESB should stay within the ESB
☐	Yes, but only in serious or urgent situations
☐	Not sure

Reason for your answer (optional)

Q13	**If there is a significant safety or quality concern at a school, should the ESB be able to publicly name the school so that families can make an informed decision?**
☐	Yes — parents have a right to know if there are serious concerns about their child's school
☐	No — naming schools publicly could be unfair and damaging before issues are resolved
☐	Yes, but only in serious situations and after giving the school a chance to respond first
☐	Not sure

Comments (Please explain your reasoning if you have a strong view):

Anything else you'd like to tell us?

Is there anything else about how schools in South Australia are overseen and held accountable that matters to you — and that we haven't covered in this survey? You can also send an email to ESB.EECSActReview@sa.gov.au.

Thank you for taking part

Your response will inform the independent review of the *Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011*. The final report will be presented to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills by end of 2026.

Submissions may be published or quoted in the final report. If you have any questions, email ESB.EECSActReview@sa.gov.au