Background

Alongside effective teaching practices, students need a supportive learning environment to succeed. In an education context, advocacy and support for learning refers to the active consideration of, and support for, students’ academic and wellbeing needs.

This Learning Curve presents findings from the 2016 *Tell Them From Me* school surveys completed by primary and secondary students, parents/carers and teachers in NSW government schools. Students provide feedback on how much support they receive from their teachers and their parents/carers, while responses from teachers and parent/carers indicate how much support they provide in school and at home, respectively. The publication draws on all three perspectives to explore the provision of advocacy and support for learning, and how this varies for different groups of students and at different stages of school.

Main findings

- The results show that students and teachers report different levels of advocacy and support in school depending on the stage of schooling. Students’ perceptions of teacher support start to decline in the final years of primary school. Secondary school students perceive teacher support to dip in the middle years of school, before improving in Years 11 and 12. Teachers report that they increase the amount of classroom support they provide to students in key schooling years (Years 5-6 and Years 10-12).
- In NSW, both parents and students report a continual decline in the frequency of supportive interactions at home that relate to school.
- While there are some differences between boys’ and girls’ experiences of advocacy and support in school and at home, there is a large disadvantage gap between low and high-SES students. These findings suggest that more can be done to make sure all students have access to support sources, which they can turn to for advice and encouragement.
- Accompanying this Learning Curve, CESE has used evidence-based practices and local examples to provide practical strategies for fostering advocacy and support in schools and at home. Case studies on Whalan Public School and Sir Joseph Banks High School highlight some of the programs and initiatives these schools have used to achieve high levels of advocacy at school. This qualitative research shows that schools that provide high levels of advocacy at school are also committed to strengthening the home-school partnership for their students.

More information


The NSW Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022 includes the commitment to ensure that every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools. School advocacy and support for learning are necessary components for happy and successful students. Schools can use the department’s *Tell Them From Me* surveys to engage with, clarify and strengthen the important relationship between teachers, parents and schools by providing an evidence-based platform to capture feedback. This knowledge can then help build an accurate and timely picture that schools can use for practical improvements.