



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Balcatta Senior High School

Public School Review

November 2019

PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed every three years by the Department of Education's Public School Accountability directorate. A review gives assurance to the local community, the Minister for Education and Training and the Director General that a school is operating effectively and delivering high quality education to its students. The review acknowledges the achievements of the school and gives feedback to support the principal and staff with their improvement planning.

The principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence gathered by the principal and staff. Information validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school board/council and the Regional Executive Director.

Expectations of schools

For all Western Australian public schools, expectations are set out in either: the Delivery and Performance Agreement, which is an agreement between the Department (represented by the Director General), school (represented by the principal) and school board (represented by the school board chair); or, the Principals' Statement of Expectations and the Funding Agreement for Schools.

School performance rating

This performance rating is based on information gained from the self-assessment submission and the validation process. It is focused on a review of the following areas of school performance: relationships and partnerships; learning environment; leadership; use of resources; teaching quality; and student achievement and progress.

The school's performance rating is:

	Effective
	The school demonstrates effective practice in creating the conditions required for student success.
✓	Needs Improvement
	The school has aspects of its practice below expectations and needs supported action to improve student success.

Context

Balcatta Senior High School is located approximately 12 kilometres north of Perth, within the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school opened in 1967 and became an Independent Public School in 2017. Student numbers have remained stable over recent years and there are currently 644 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12. It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1005 (decile 5).

Known for its Gifted and Talented (GAT) Visual Arts Program and an Approved Specialist Program (ASP) in Dance, Balcatta Senior High School is currently engaged in a comprehensive building program. The \$50 million expansion and upgrade will provide new facilities including an administration area, performing arts centre, gymnasium, science and general classrooms, staff areas, cafeteria and a design and technology building. The existing buildings will also receive refurbishment.

Both the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) advocate actively for the school.

School self-assessment validation

The principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The principal sought collegiate support in determining a strategy to engage with the School Improvement and Accountability Framework (SIAF) prior to preparing the school self-assessment submission.
- A School Board Public School Review working party was established. Through this group, parents and community members were invited to provide comment and feedback on key areas relevant to relationships and governance.
- The school's executive team uploaded selected information to the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT).
- Staff were made aware of key evidence and observations and invited to contribute to the review process by identifying areas for improvement.
- The school's executive team acknowledged that engaging with the ESAT was a useful exercise as it provided a clear structure through which they could reflect on their school improvement journey to date. It also highlighted the key areas identified for improvement.
- Contributions made by staff and community members during the validation visit added value to the review process.

The following recommendations are made:

- Consider annotating evidence sources so that the reason for their inclusion in the ESAT is transparent.
- Engage all staff in the review process to increase shared ownership of the planned actions for improvement.

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Relationships and partnerships	
The combination of having gained Independent Public School status in 2017 and the recent excitement caused by the building program, is impacting positively upon community engagement in the school. Strategic partnerships that directly benefit student achievement exist.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic composition of the School Board was led by the principal. Members are well-trained, highly committed, possess expertise that meets identified needs and are proving effective in their governance role.• University partnerships, including the Edith Cowan University (ECU) Scholars in Residence program, serve a dual purpose of providing school-based action research and strengthening the capacity of future educators.• Students in the GAT Visual Arts Program and the ASP in Dance gain direct access to university personnel and to on-campus short courses that lead to accreditation upon enrolment at ECU.• Students benefit from a range of school network partnerships, directly through shared senior school Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) offerings, and indirectly through shared teaching practices.• As an 'Act, Belong, Commit' school, health and wellbeing is a priority.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the School Board to seek both formal and informal occasions to showcase the excellent opportunities that the school has to offer.• Formalise the whole-school health and wellbeing plan to embed the 'Act, Belong, Commit' message into the culture of the school.

Learning environment	
Staff are relationship focused and foster a welcoming and safe learning environment. The inclusive nature of the school is recognised as a great strength.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Respect, unite, excel' are embedded values with the '6Cs approach to curriculum'¹ resulting in character and citizenship being newly incorporated into the school's ethos.• An increased focus on restorative justice, classroom management strategies and coping with trauma serve to address the NSOS² data which identifies behaviour management as an area requiring improvement.• The Monroe Board³ offers classroom structure and routine so students know what to 'do now, do next, do later'. Academic and social goals are highlighted for each lesson.• Individual education plans are well-supported by education assistants.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formalise the role of form teachers to support improved attendance, implementing a strategy to address unexplained absences.• Encourage all teaching staff to implement the Monroe Board.

Leadership

The school's executive team make themselves readily available to staff. A distributed leadership model results in enthusiastic teachers expressing that they feel empowered and inspired to lead.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to be a transformed school, the Teacher Leadership Group offers opportunities to aspirants and is driving improvements in teacher quality. • Comprehensive performance development tools have been newly created, including a leader feedback template for use by each Head of Learning Area to reflect upon their practice. • The Innovation Project provides teachers with the opportunity to make cross-curricular links as they explore project-based learning with students. • The draft 2020-2022 business plan aligns to the SIAF and reflects Department of Education initiatives.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rigorous moderation practices and further develop the data literacy of staff so that deep analyses can lead to quality interventions. • Ensure that there is clear alignment at all levels of planning – strategic, operational, classroom and financial. • Articulate shared expectations at senior leadership level so that Heads of Learning Areas are accountable and empowered to drive the school's improvement agenda.

Use of resources

The manager corporate services and principal work closely together to ensure that effective allocation of resources targeted to identified priority areas occurs within budget.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small but dedicated P&C fundraise to support school initiatives, including funds to assist the school-based music program that was reinstated in 2018. • Strategic marketing of the school through a revamped webpage, Facebook, SEQTA Engage⁴ and Instagram is fostering a more positive perception of the school in the community. • A school beautification enterprise undertaken by the building and construction students provides cost-saving real-world projects that foster school pride. • Engaging in the Teach for Australia initiative offers the benefits of reinvigorating the staffing profile and effective funds management.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtly demonstrate the alignment between budgets and planning. • Formalise the workforce plan. • Continue the marketing campaign with a view to increasing enrolments.

Teaching quality

Selected communities of teachers engage actively at whole-school, learning area and teacher-led community levels, focusing on instructional strategies that are evidence-based. Teachers acknowledge that increased engagement in learning will support improved student behaviour.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach for Australia teachers, their mentors, and a range of other staff, engage actively in classroom observation and feedback. The use of triads focused on instructional strategies is encouraged. • The Pivot survey tool offers an avenue for student voice and empowers teachers to engage in action research focused on their own practice. • Performance development documentation aligns to the AITSL⁵ Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the on-line self-reflection tool is accessed to support planning for improvement. • Moderation occurs using the SCSA⁶ Judging Standards.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek authentic uptake of whole-school initiatives, such as the application of the Monroe Board and use of Pivot or similar tools, to ensure consistency of practice across the entire school. • Foster a strong performance development culture that is strategic, explicit and aligned to school priorities such that development planning meets both individual teacher and school-wide identified needs.

Student achievement and progress

Year 12 attainment rates are consistently sound. Data indicate 100 per cent achievement of at least one Certificate II or higher for students engaged in Vocational Education and Training. In combination with an improved median ATAR, this demonstrates appropriate levels of academic achievement in senior schooling.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst NAPLAN⁷ data demonstrates an improvement in overall achievement, progress from Year 7 to Year 9 remains less than desired for several test areas with writing being identified as the area requiring greatest intervention. • The school is aware that students who did not achieve their WACE⁸ were those who did not meet the Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment requirements. A senior school directions team use the WACE Tracker to monitor students at risk and intervene at points of identified need. • Support has been sought through Teacher Development Schools to focus on improved grade alignment in lower school.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinvigorate the Literacy Committee with a view to driving a focus on evidence-based practices to impact positively upon achievement in writing. • Scrutinise task creation and associated assessment practices to further improve grade alignment with both like schools and other Western Australian public schools.

Reviewers

Kath Ward
Director, Public School Review

Digby Mercer
Principal, Como Secondary College
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse your school performance rating of 'Needs Improvement'.
Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Collaboration, Communication, Critical and Creative Thinking, Character and Citizenship
- 2 National School Opinion Survey
- 3 Strategic lesson structure
- 4 Communications platform
- 5 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 6 School Curriculum and Standards Authority
- 7 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 8 Western Australian Certificate of Education