



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Butler College

Public School Review

October 2020



PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed 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 about the performance of public schools in 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.

Initially conducted on a three-year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, three or five-year timeframe.

The principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence from the school. Information to be validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school council/board 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

together with the Funding Agreement for Schools.

Public School Review – The Standard

A Standard has been developed across the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework to describe essential indicators of performance. The selection of the indicators is based on literature research and historical reviews of school performance in Western Australian public schools.

The purpose is to better ensure that judgements about student performance are standardised and objective. Indicators describe what is evident in schools functioning 'as expected' within each domain.

The Standard defines the expected level of school performance. Judgements are made in relation to the Standard. External validation is also based on evidence presented relating to the Standard.



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Context

Butler College is a large secondary school in the northern suburbs of Perth which opened in 2013. The college grounds are innovative in design and include a purpose-built education support facility equipped with a hydrotherapy pool.

Student enrolment reached 1750 students prior to the opening of neighbouring Alkimos College in 2020. There are currently 1633 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12. The college has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 993 (decile 5).

State-of-the-art learning spaces include amenities that cater for student interests in the areas of dance, drama and music.

The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) meet regularly and raise funds for the college and the College Board offers valued contributions in decision making processes.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

The following aspects of the school's self-assessment process are confirmed:

- The college has used the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) in a deliberate and strategic manner to align with the Department of Education's expectations regarding school improvement and accountability.
- The School Improvement and Accountability Framework domains are reflected in the college's planning and reporting documentation.
- Members of the executive team have responsibility for specific domains and report on them regularly.
- Program coordinators discussed evidence relating to the domains with their staff. Examples provided were uploaded to the ESAT by the Deputy Principal leading the process.

The following recommendation is made:

- Continue using the ESAT as an ongoing repository for evidence relating to the school's self-assessment processes.

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Relationships and partnerships	
<p>The college views relationships and partnerships as an integral part of its day to day operations. There is a belief that respectful interactions between all stakeholders provide greater opportunity for student success and enhance the culture of “A College that Cares”.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful relationships are evident within all layers of the college and there is genuine collaboration in progressing the improvement initiatives. • Communication is appreciated as timely and thoughtful by families and the wider community. This was particularly evident during the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19. • Community partners advocated strongly for the college and articulated the ease in working with the school for mutual benefit in support of student needs. • The College Board plays a strategic role in support of the business plan targets in addition to its school governance responsibilities. • The P&C is committed to the college and actively seeks opportunities to provide support. • The community values the school’s ethos of care. This has resulted in Butler College being a ‘school of choice’ for families outside of the local intake area.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Aboriginal students and families in dialogue around progressing culturally responsive practices across the college.

Learning environment	
<p>Butler College demonstrates an inclusive culture that values and promotes a learning environment that is safe and caring for all.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Care’ is a common theme across the college. It is proactive and responsive to the health and wellbeing of its students. • There is a collective commitment to meet the individual needs of students at educational risk. Case management of students with complex needs is evidence-based and monitored effectively. • The physical environment is impressive. Staff and students demonstrate pride in the manner in which they maintain the surrounds. • Student voice plays an important part in school planning and review.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engender whole-school commitment to progressing the Positive Behaviour Support initiative.

Leadership

The college leadership team embody everything that is “A College that Cares”. Strategic direction is influenced by this mission statement and the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership team is respected highly by staff with a theme of support and opportunity articulated strongly in their interview responses. • Planning is based on evidence and expertise is sought from within and external to the college to progress its work. • The College vision is articulated clearly and embraced genuinely by the college community. • A reflective culture guides staff performance and development processes. An extension of this is a well-received aspirant program promoting action research. • External partners describe a maturity in college operations with credit directed to the leadership.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote the inclusive schooling model within and beyond the college community.

Use of resources

The leadership team regard resources as a strategic enabler for school improvement. This features strongly in discussions around maintaining a quality learning environment for staff and students.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process and practices to manage and monitor school finances are articulated clearly to all staff. Cost centre managers understand the financial needs across the college. • Processes for ‘future proofing’ exist to mitigate the impact of decreasing enrolments following the opening of a neighbouring college. • Allocation of resources is targeted to the specific needs of students. The significant funds for students with a disability are distributed effectively and for the purpose for which they are intended. • Succession planning guides the monitoring and managing of the workforce. • Resource allocation reflects the strategic initiatives of the business and operational plans of the college.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to plan for and strategically target school resources to align to the business plan priorities.

Teaching quality

The quality and consistency of teaching practice across the college features prominently in the business plan. Staff are keen to develop their craft collectively through the use of evidence-based pedagogy.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data are used widely to establish the performance measures across the college as well as the individual achievements of students. • The development of a common pedagogical framework specific to the needs of Butler College students and staff is contributing to consistent practices across the college. • The introduction of Explicit Direct Instruction is being taken up enthusiastically by staff. The college finds itself ahead in its expected implementation timeline. • Staff are committed fully to improving the quality of learning afforded to students through their active participation in the whole-school literacy strategies. • A culture of safety is promoted to experiment and implement new strategies across the college. This is resulting in greater than anticipated staff buy-in ahead of expectation.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain focus on the implementation of agreed whole-school initiatives to promote consistency and reduce variability between classrooms.

Student achievement and progress

The college has a firm understanding of the achievement and progress of its students. Sophisticated data analysis is providing a greater level of understanding of the areas for improvement and is central to strategic planning.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress is evident in senior school data over the last three years. • Effective processes for moderation have been a key focus in ensuring teacher judgement is consistent and reliable. • Progress of students with a disability is mapped using evidence-based student monitoring systems. • The college has backward mapped essential skills for each year to provide rigour in the junior years and better prepare students for senior school courses.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop pathway planning for students and explore ways to gain and communicate reliable destination data.

Reviewers

Vicki McKeown
Director, Public School Review

Brett Hunt
Director, Public School Review

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse the commendations and recommendations made by the review team regarding your school's performance.

Your next school review is scheduled for Term 4, 2023.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools