School context

Rutherford Technology High School draws its students from rural, urban and mining communities. It is located within the fastest growing government area in New South Wales. Students at Rutherford Technology High School are provided with a breadth of educational opportunities in a strong supportive environment that values challenging students to achieve their personal best. Students are also offered many opportunities in performing arts, sport, extra curricula activities and leadership.

Principal’s message

Rutherford Technology High has continued to embrace Positive Behaviour for Learning in 2013. Our core values of “Respect, Responsibility and Commitment” underpin all activities in the school.

A major highlight of the year was a visit by the Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli to announce a major upgrade to the school facilities. After 18 months of lobbying and hard work by a small team of school and community representatives the government announced $20 million will be spent on the school over 2014 and 2015. The upgrade will include:

- A new 2 storey block with 19 classrooms, seminar rooms, 2 staff areas, and 4 Special Education classrooms with kitchen and wet areas.
- A full commercial kitchen for Home Economics
- A complete upgrade to all our science labs
- Covered Construction area in Industrial Arts
- Covered area over basketball courts
- New covered area in front of the hall
- Oval fenced and upgraded
- New covered walkways throughout the school
- A lift
- New roofing to several areas.
- Extension to Administration block
- Increased carparking.

The commitment of our students and staff is highlighted in the achievements outlined in this report.

I would like to express my thanks to our local community through our many business partners, parents, and particularly our P&C, for the strong support throughout 2013.

We have an outstanding relationship with our partner primary schools (the Rutherford Learning Community), and are working closely on a Middle School initiative.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Michael Whiting

P & C message

All parents, carers and community members are encouraged to attend meetings and share in discussions. It is an ideal way to get up-to-date information, to hear about the opportunities for your child, to help decide how funds are allocated, to ask questions and to gain a better understanding of school policies, curriculum and activities. Our meetings are casual and friendly.

The funds raised through the canteen contribute to the many ways that the P&C support the school. The P&C’s major area of funding in 2013 was the partial funding of a 12 seater bus.

The P&C thank the current canteen volunteers who give generously of their time, but additional volunteers are always welcome and needed. If you have a spare day, even once a month, your help and support would be greatly appreciated.

Keiran Hall

Student representative’s message

2013 was an exciting and busy time for the RTHS SRC with activities organised within the school and positive partnerships developed in the community. Our captains, Phoebe Ferguson and Mat Nevin should be commended on the leadership roles they undertook, we wish them and all of 2013 year 12 the best in their future endeavours.
SRC students helped to support the strengthening of our community ties through the connection with local primary schools, supporting Legacy by selling badges in the local community, attending regional and state leadership conferences and attending a Rotary dinner where students Hannah Wheeler and Phoebe Ferguson were praised by Rotary for their dedication, leadership and positive actions for the school. Students worked hard in the school community to fundraise to support local, national and international causes. A highlight for all students was 'Onesy Day' where students were asked to wear a onesy or pyjamas to school to raise awareness of diabetes. Students were extremely successful in raising over $500 for a worthy cause.

Students continued to develop their leadership skills throughout 2013 with Ebony O'Hara taking on the daunting task of 'being a principal for a day' and Brooke Sweetman, Daniel Gibson and Hannah Wheeler all attended leadership camps. Students reflected that these experiences provided them with opportunities to bring back positive ideas and developments for our school.

Phoebe Ferguson and Matt Nevin

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

Rutherford Technology High School is committed to ensuring that students attend school more than 85% of the school year. Every day that a student is at school they are gaining valuable knowledge and partaking in important learning experiences. The school attendance team works to recognise students who attend school regularly. Students who achieve above 97% attendance each term are rewarded with a BBQ. Those who achieve 100% each term are formally recognised at a PBL assembly. At the end of the year, students who receive a yearly total of 97% and above are rewarded with an excursion. Those who achieve a total of 100% for the year are entered into a draw to win an iPod.

Management of non-attendance

The school notifies parents via SMS daily if their student is absent from school. Parents can utilize this service to reply and explain the absence. This initiative has increased the number of explained absences. It has also been responsible for reducing the number of whole day truancies. Student attendance is monitored by the Head Teacher of Welfare, Assistant Year Advisers and Deputy Principals. The Head Teacher Welfare meets weekly with the Home School Liaison Officer to develop support plans and educate families and students on the importance of school attendance.

Post-school destinations

In 2013 there were very few students from Year 10 who left Rutherford Technology High School without transferring to another school. Students who did leave were accepted to a private college to complete a Certificate 3 in Childcare; five students were successful in obtaining apprenticeships. A number of Year 11 students exited the school either at the end of the year or on attaining their 17th birthday. Nine students were successful in obtaining apprenticeships. The following table indicates post school destinations of Year 12 students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Entry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE Entry</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Employment</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Forces</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12 Totals</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training**

45% of the Year 12 students were enrolled in vocational or trade training in 2013. Year 12 students were engaged in the following VET Frameworks: Business Services, Hospitality, Retail Services, Construction and Metals and Engineering. Students were enrolled in Vocational Education courses at TAFE campuses in Singleton, Maitland, Kurri Kurri, and Newcastle.

**Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent Vocational educational qualification**

![Retention to Year 12 (SC to HSC)](image)

80 students completed all of their Year 12 studies at Rutherford Technology High School in 2013. 78 students or 97.5% of the cohort were awarded a Higher School Certificate. Two students were awarded a Record of Achievement and have transitioned into supported employment programs.

**Staff**

**Workforce information**

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

**Workforce composition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher(s)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2013 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. In 2013 the school employed an Aboriginal In Class Tutor through Norta Norta Funding, an Aboriginal SASS worker and two teaching staff.

**Teacher qualifications**

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teachers</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>620152.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>709367.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>869265.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>271842.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>27287.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>75201.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>2573116.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**           |            |
| Teaching & learning       |            |
| Key learning areas        | 155879.37  |
| Excursions                | 53566.27   |
| Extracurricular dissections| 100565.58  |
| Library                   | 9420.41    |
| Training & development    | 1753.29    |
| Tied funds                | 539971.22  |
| Casual relief teachers    | 244948.16  |
| Administration & office   | 166833.42  |
| School-operated canteen   | 0.00       |
| Utilities                 | 185465.17  |
| Maintenance               | 52418.31   |
| Trust accounts            | 112917.51  |
| Capital programs          | 70548.24   |
| **Total expenditure**     | 1694286.95 |
| **Balance carried forward**| 878829.57 |

A full copy of the school’s 2013 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2013

Rutherford Technology High school continues to be proactive and creative in designing and offering many opportunities to our students.

Count on Industry

As part of a joint initiative between Rutherford Technology High School and Youth Express, a very successful workshop for Yr 9 students, called “Count on Industry” was conducted in the school’s Multi-Purpose Centre on Tuesday the 12th of November 2013.

The event was designed to expose the students to the numeracy demands and to give them the opportunity to explore the mathematical skills required to work successfully in a wide range of industries/professions, by interacting directly with the people working in these industries.

Representatives from diverse companies such as:

- WesTrac, The Varley Group
- BHP Billiton
- Mt Arthur Coal
- Coal and Allied Hunter V-tec
- Muswellbrook TAFE
- AMP Control, NSW Minerals Council
- SandviK, TAFE Animal Attending
- Ausgrid
- The Mutual
- Xstrata/Glencore
- Hair and Beauty TAFE
- Childcare/Aged care TAFE
- Construction TAFE
- The University of Newcastle - Engineering
- Surveying

worked with small groups of students as they rotated around the “hands on” displays and workshops during the day.

At the completion of the day, evaluations were completed by the students, presenters and the Mathematics staff, with an overwhelming amount of positive feedback received, particularly from the students.

Teachers will follow up on this workshop in their classrooms in 2014, using many valuable resources and information, obtained from participating on the day, in order to further emphasize the relevance and significance of mathematics to their students.

Rutherford Technology High School was selected by Youth Express as a trial school for this initiative and as a result of its success, Count on Industry, will be rolled out into other local high schools from 2014.

Creative and Performing Arts

MUSIC

- Mr Avery organised African Drumming expert Mr Eddie Quansah to perform to all of Year 7 students. Those present were entertained by Eddie and taught to
play many of the various African instruments that he brought with him.

- PBL Year assemblies continued each term with an array of music being presented. Students performing included Mason Brett, Josef Pemberton, Ashlee Brown, Ryan Paton, Jack Williams, Luke Hall, Eliza Langham, Breanna Morgan, Kate Butler, Lara Butler, Emma Moore, James Hayes, Sean Haberfield, Eula Pacamalan, Emily Lambourne and Declan Johnson.

- Our budding musicians have again spent many a recess and lunchtime rehearsing their solo and ensemble performances. It is never dull or quiet in our faculty and we love it. Thanks for supplying the beautiful background music to our breaks. We moved one band outside in the quad to entertain the masses – Jack Williams, Mitchell Wood, Liam Faustini and Ryan Paton.

- Year 11 and 12 Music classes attended a HSC day at the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music with Ms Hornery.

- The School Band continued to rehearse throughout the year. Members were Jocelyn Ware, Jack Williams, Ryan Paton, Kate Butler, Lara Butler, Eula Pacamalan, Grace Quilty, Emily Lambourne, Luke Hall, Rachel Swan, Emma Woodhouse and Tim Hackett for their involvement in the band this year.

- The Music faculty was again involved in supplying entertainment at the annual Local Business community links program with the school. This year it returned to the school site and was held from 7am in the hall. Our thanks go to Year 10 students Luke Hall and Eliza Langham for playing piano for all our visitors.

- Education week rolled around in Term three with lots on the plate of the CAPA department. We assisted in the running the L.M.G. Education Week awards ceremony hosted by our school. Year 9 student Ryan Paton represented our school and performed a breathtaking and highly musical classical rendition of “Cavatina”.

- MADD (Music Art Drama and Music) Showcase which was again a day/night event due to the sheer number of performances on offer. The hall was beautifully decorated by the Art Faculty whilst the Music students took over the stage. Years 8 to 12 were represented in the showcase – from solos to large ensembles to duets, trios and quartets, rock bands, instrumentalists, vocalists and on it went. Ms Clunies-Ross had four days of auditions and we selected our artists and the program was set. Greta and Lochinvar Public schools come along to our matinee performance.

- Ms Hornery started a new initiative in CAPA in Term three with a community links project with two local Nursing Homes. Students from years 8 to 11 volunteered to go to the Maitland Nursing Home at Rutherford and the Benevolent Nursing Home in Maitland to visit with residents, share art works, sing, play piano and guitar and even a dance. The students were supported by the CAPA staff over the three visits and we hope to continue this into Term four and on into 2014.

- Maitland Council Library in support of a community project with Rosie’s School of Rock came and played a lunchtime concert in the quad to the entire school. This is another of our support of community activities and we have numerous Year 9 Music students who have taken up the call to be involved in these workshops at Maitland Library.

- We have had G.A.T.S. (Gifted and Talented Students) CAPA students from years 5 and 6 from our feeder Primary Schools attend lessons over four weeks in Term three. Ms Marshall, Miss Clunies-Ross and Mr Avery have raved over the enthusiasm and willingness to learn by the visiting C.A.P.A. students. We look forward to their arrival to our High School over the next couple of years.

- 2013 has seen the continuation of the mini elective program in stage 4. Year 7 for the first time began an entire performance program based on learning techniques in voice, keyboard and guitar. Year 8 continued with their Be A Performer elective.

- The Year 12 class of 2013 have had a busy year of preparation leading into their HSC. Their practical and three elective choices were presented to markers on
September 10th: The class was assisted by other musicians both past and present to get through this day - Ryan Paton, Mason Brett, Josef Pemberton, Ryan Peters, Lane Southern and Terrence Mutare and Ethan Meers.

- A group of Year 9 and 11 students performing at the Branxton Public School 150th Birthday Fair on October 12th - Liam Faustini, Ryan Paton, Jack Williams, Grace Quilty, Kate Butler, Lara Butler, Emily Lambourne, Eula Pacamalan, Ryan Peters, Ashlee Brown, Josef Pemberton and Mason Brett.

- During Term Four students from Years 9 and 11 did a mini music tour to Branxton, Greta and Lochinvar Public schools - Liam Faustini, Ryan Paton, Jack Williams, Grace Quilty, Kate Butler, Lara Butler, Emily Lambourne, Eula Pacamalan, Ryan Peters, Ashlee Brown, Josef Pemberton, Mason Brett, Rachel Swan, Gabby Ewing, Natalie Mutare, Takara Daniel-Wilkinson, Lily Crockett, Jocelyn Ware, and Lane Southern.

- The annual Presentation Day assembly featured a performance by the Year 11 Music class playing Evanescence “Bring Me to Life” and the School Band playing a rendition of the Austen Powers theme.

DRAMA

- At the start of Term One Mr O’Callaghan called for auditions for The Drama Ensemble and many gathered to the stage from across years 8 – 12. Successful students who won the part of being in this highly talented group were: Year 11 – Ryan Hall, Brittany Lucas, Mason Brett and Ashlee Brown; Year 10 – Hannah O’Brien, Jacob Golding, Kellie Taylor, Nikita Carter & Ebony Thomas; Year 9 – Emily Watt, Caitlin Bailey and Bradley Blank.

- The Drama Ensemble had a busy yet highly successful 2013. They participated in the world’s largest short play festival, “Fast and Fresh Short Play Festival” in Sydney. The ensemble presented a play titled “Straight” written by students Ebony Thomas and Hannah O’Brien. This outstanding student work took the group to the finals for the seventh consecutive year and on the night won best play and the people’s choice awards. Over sixty students went to Parramatta to support the ensemble.

- After their highly successful win in Sydney, the Drama Ensemble qualified to perform their winning play “Straight” at the Hunter Region Drama Showcase.

- Sixteen talented students: Ashlee Brown, Bronwyn Barbie (Year 11); Chelsea Crittenden, Annabelle Mulligan, Ebony Thomas, Hannah O’Brien (year 10); Mel Travis, Jasmin Anderson, Emily Watt, Belle Tilley, Lachlan Dallen, Joshua Witek (year 9); Isabella Moy, Declan Johnson, Caitlin McGuiness, Shaylie Egar (year 8) were all accepted into Hunter Drama Works.

- Bronwyn Barbie, Lachlan Dallen, Jasmin Anderson, Emily Watt and Melissa Travis were all successful in making it to The Hunter Region Drama Showcase Evening.

- Students from years 7 – 11 and The Drama Ensemble performed in the MADD showcase.

- In Term three, the HSC class had an evening showcase of their individual and group performance. A large crowd of parents and senior Drama students gathered to watch this most entertaining event.

- The large year 9 Drama class held their own performance evening in Term Four to showcase the small group plays that they had written. An appreciative group of parents, students and teachers made up the audience for this twilight performance.

- The Year 8 Drama mini elective class put on their annual Christmas pantomime to K-2 students at Rutherford Primary School.

- The Year 9 Drama class performed their excellent clown show to over 300 Telarah Public School students.

- Mr O’Callaghan was again selected to work for the Board of Studies and was a senior marker for HSC Drama.

VISUAL ARTS

- The Art Department in 2013 was a hive of activity with a large number of staff working in the department.
• Work across the various years ranged from 3D sculptures, painting, drawing, photography. All mediums of art work were attempted.
• The Term Three MADD showcase was a culmination of all years and all works being on display. Mr Fean supervised the design of a digital video work which was projected on the ceiling of the school hall. This unique art work was influenced by the digital video works that were showcased on buildings around Newcastle CBD in Term two.
• Student artworks were again displayed at The Maitland Art Gallery’s student exhibition in Term Two.
• Stages 5 and 6 experienced numerous excursions both locally and interstate to be inspired by the works of artistic greats and newcomers. These included visits to the MCA to see Anish Kapoor’s blockbuster exhibition, The NSW Art Gallery to see the Archibald prize and Kaldor Project exhibits plus visits to Maitland Art Gallery for The Art Express and gallery experience.
• Year 12 student Layla Beech’s HSC artwork was selected by the P&C to be purchased for the School. Her series of paintings on canvas showing the Dr Who tardis in famous artworks of history was an inventive and highly creative work.
• Rhiannon Gore was awarded first prize in the upcycling textiles competition at the Maitland Gallery. Also acknowledged in this event was Liam Smith.
• Mrs Wolff was selected to go and spend 11 days working for the Board of Studies and be an itinerant marker for HSC Visual Arts.

Sport
• This year has been another year filled with fun, excitement and positive performances across a variety of sport for students of RTHS. Our school teams have represented with pride in many sporting ventures including Cricket, Netball, Touch, Rugby League, Basketball, Tennis, Soccer, Ten Pin Bowling and Futsal.
• The highlight of our sporting year was without doubt our Lawn Bowls team; these boys reached the state final and were runners up at the NSW Championships after winning the Hunter Region section of the draw. The team consisted of Kallan Egar, Alex Hannah and Sean Parsons and with all boys being in Year 9 or 10 there is a chance for them to build on this success in the next two years.
• Our swimming, athletics and cross country athletes again proved successful at school, zone, regional and state level. It is pleasing to see the number of students attending carnivals at a Coalfields Zone level and this has seen us achieve great results at all these carnivals in 2013. This year saw us send 45 students to Zone Swimming, 76 students to Zone Athletics (22 regional representatives) and 29 to Zone Cross Country (14 Regional representatives). A special mention should go to Marissa Morey who was named 17 Years Girls Age Champion at the Hunter Region Athletics carnival in July. Marissa also went on to be awarded an acclaimed Pierre de Coubertin award at a ceremony in Homebush for her excellence in a variety of sporting pursuits over her school years at RTHS.
• Thursday school sport has seen the continuation of many popular sports from previous years such as Laser Tag, Aqua Golf, Go Karts, Ten Pin Bowling, Archery, Lawn Bowls, Boot Camp Training and Genesis Gym. We have also seen a revival of sports like Tennis, Indoor Sports and the introduction of Mixed Martial Arts. Each week we have close to 700 students participating in up to 25 selected sports both within school, the local Rutherford community as well as some more distant venues in Cessnock and Thornton.
• Our Year 7 students have been involved in a variety of sports as a part of their integrated program. This has seen them
participate in a variety of Indigenous and modified games during Term 1, a professionally coached Tennis program during Term 2, Lawn Bowls and Ten Pin Bowling during Term 3 as well as Golf and Walk Aerobics during Term 4.

Career and Transition

- 2013 has been a year of significant change for the Career and Transition team at RTHS. The Careers staffroom has welcomed the addition of Mr Christopher Olsson as Head Teacher Vocational Education and Training from Oxley High School and Mr Toby Butler from HSIE at RTHS. Overall, the CAT team has worked to provide a high quality career education program to our students and adopt new and innovative ways of catering for the needs of RTHS students.

- Careers Advisor Mrs Debby Elliott has supported Year 10 students through their fortnightly Careers lessons and work experience program and Years 9-12 have benefitted from opportunities to attend a variety of excursions such as Skills on Show, Indigenous Career Quest, Hunter Valley Career Expo and Try a skill this year. Furthermore, RTHS has also organised short courses such as WHS White Card, RSA, RCG and First Aid to produce more employable individuals. Students have enthusiastically involved themselves in these areas and gained crucial knowledge about future employment and study opportunities.

- Involvement in the Beacon Foundation’s ‘Foundations for the Future’ program has also been a feature of Careers education at RTHS for Year 10. Thirteen students from this year were selected as Beacon Student Ambassadors and these students participated in and led Year 10 in a range of events and programs. Activities that were undertaken as part of our Beacon program included the ‘Hands up not out’ Charter Signing, the Beacon Business Breakfast, Komatsu and Cummins site tours, Polish workshop and Impressions 10 mock interviews. These events gave the Beacon Student Ambassadors opportunities to display exceptional leadership and develop excellent employment related skills, but from a wider perspective gave the entire year future direction and insight into the world of work. Special mention needs to go to Hannah Wheeler and Declan Payne who were 2 of 5 students selected from NSW to attend the Beacon Outward-Bound camp to further develop their outstanding leadership qualities.

- An aspect of vocational education that has been offered at RTHS has been the Transition Advisor program led by Mr Toby Butler. Disengaged or at risk students from Years 10-12 have been offered a number of tailored programs through the Maitland Alternative Learning Group and Youth Express to participate in and explore their future employment options. Students have had access to one-on-one case management, involvement in the Maitland PCYC’s Blue Star Development course (Certificate II in Community Activities) and the Participation Partnerships That Work program in conjunction with Hunter TAFE studying Automotive Paint and Panel, Plumbing, Electrotechnology, Business Services and Aged Care. These programs have retained and reengaged the vast majority of students who have been involved, led directly to employment for a number of students (1 apprenticeship and 2 school-based traineeships), and assisted students to gain qualifications and workplace literacy to improve their future work prospects.

- The number of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships has been an area of growth for RTHS in 2013. Our students have been successful in gaining and completing SBATs in the
following areas; Retail Services, Business Services, Animal Care (Equine Focus) and Aged Care. In 2014, RTHS has 7 students undertaking SBATs and this number is likely to increase. Many thanks to our local business partners who enable students to continue their senior education whilst being engaged in meaningful employment.

- 2014 represents an exciting innovation for senior trade and vocational education at RTHS through the newly established Fastrack program. Year 11 students have been invited to take part in a more flexible study pattern that includes TAFE study, weekly work experience and an individualised range of school subjects. The aim of this program is for RTHS students to study career relevant subject matter and acquire a comparative advantage in comparison to other students they are competing with for employment. Mr Christopher Olsson will be facilitating this course in 2014 and providing the assistance and support needed by students to ensure they are successful in achieving their future goals.

**Academic achievements**

**NAPLAN**

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

- Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
- Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

In 2013, 178 Year 7 students and 169 Year 9 students participated in the Literacy and Numeracy components for the NAPLAN tests, the nation-wide Literacy and Numeracy assessment.

Highlights included Year 9 Aboriginal students (14 students) have improved by 20 scale scores from the 2012 data in the test aspect of writing. 15 Aboriginal students were 9 scale scores above the state average growth in the test aspect of spelling.

In Year 7, 43 students (24.1%) achieved Band 7 or above with 4 students scoring Band 9 (Band 9 being the highest).

In Year 9, 43 students (25.5%) achieved Band 8 or above (Band 10 being the highest), which is a significant improvement from 2012 results (26 students achieving Band 8 or above, an increase of 65%). Five students achieved Band 10 with one of these students achieving a perfect score in Numeracy (an improvement of over 250 scale points from his Yr7 results).

Whilst significant improvement was made by many individuals, the average growth score of students from Yr7 (2011) to Yr9 (2013) was lower than expected. Only 45% of the cohort met greater or equal to expected growth benchmarks with the average growth for the school, recorded at 29.1 scale points (-14.6 compared to all students-state and -5.3 compared to our SEG schools).

In 2014, taking a whole school approach, led by the Numeracy team, RTHS will endeavour to make improvements in Numeracy levels by implementing a number of strategies including:

- Detailed analysis of data (SMART) to identify areas of weakness; explicit teaching of numeracy skills (using Teaching Strategies 2012 website) and preparation for NAPLAN tests; Last intervention for identified students at risk; embedding numeracy tasks into all KLA Teaching and Learning programs- Maths staff to take responsibility of exposing students more
frequently to NAPLAN type questions in their lessons and homework tasks; practice NAPLAN tests for all Yr7 and 9 students.

The *My School* website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) and enter the school name in the *Find a school* and select *GO* to access the school data.

**NAPLAN Year 7 - Literacy**
NAPLAN Year 7 – Numeracy

NAPLAN Year 9 - Literacy
Higher School Certificate (HSC)

In the Higher School Certificate, the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

PDHPE results were the highlight of this year’s HSC with Hayley Osmond gaining a Band 6 in Community and Family Studies and three students gaining Band 5.

The TAS faculty also achieved 5 Band 5 results – Hospitality, Industrial Technology, Food Technology and Design and Technology.

The CAPA faculty performed well again in 2013. This was particularly true of the Visual Arts course.

The HSIE faculty saw three students gaining Band 5 in Retail. Results in Ancient History, Modern History, Business Studies and Society and Culture showed the greatest variation from the state average in the faculty.

While the results in Mathematics and General Mathematics were solid, obtaining one band 5 and a number of band 4, there may need to be more active evaluation to ensure students are electing appropriate courses of study.

The English overall results were disappointing with no representation in the high bands. A review of programs and a focus on extended response answers is occurring.
Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Significant programs and initiatives

Gifted and Talented Programs

Students at Rutherford Technology High have many opportunities to participate in a wide range of programmes and activities which cater for Gifted and Talented students. Funding is allocated from the school budget to support these initiatives and in some cases to subsidise costs for students. All KLA areas have Gifted and Talented policies which means all students can achieve their potential in academic, sporting, social and cultural pursuits.

The Enrichment Team was developed two years ago and plays an integral role in providing opportunities for students across the school. KLAs may also apply to this committee for funding and to support Gifted and Talented initiatives.

Many students have participated in the various state wide KLA academic competitions with results in the English competition particularly impressive. Students in the Science and Engineering competition were also highly successful this year. Several individual students were recognised at a local level for their contributions to a variety of community initiatives.

Students from Year 10 once again took part in the Newcastle Morning Herald’s School Newspaper competition. They produced a highly acclaimed edition with one student winning recognition for artistic design.

This year groups of students were able to take part in a fitness program sponsored by Genesis which allowed them to achieve personal fitness goals. Numerous school teams won competitions in a variety of sports at local and regional levels. In particular the Lawn Bowls team were extremely successful, being runners up at state level.

The musical talents of many students were showcased on several occasions throughout the year at school and public performances – most notably at the School’s successful MADD evening.

Students once again acted as mentors/tutors at the Maitland Baptist Pre School. Groups of students from Years 5 and 6 and from our feeder school again attended during terms 2 and 3. They were offered extension activities in areas such as Writing, Computing and Forensic Science.
After reviewing a disappointing response the previous year, Year 12 students participated in the Band 6 strategy again this year. Students from other local high schools were invited to take part in an intensive day of study which was led by expert tutors.

**Student Welfare**

- Continue to implement Social Development programs which have a greater number of students in all stages becoming stronger and smarter adolescents who understand the consequences of choice and action.
- Continue to develop the concept of Wellbeing for students and staff, facilitating a number of opportunities to explore the concept of Wellbeing.
- Further develop the transition program for Year 6 into 7, implementing a number of strategies to engage Primary Partner Schools and the community to strengthen the process.
- Provide the welfare team with opportunities to upskill by undertaking online learning opportunities.
- Conduct training in Restorative Justice Practices for the welfare team to utilise when dealing with conflict.

Our achievements in this area include:

- A variety of student support programs and presentations including the Motivational Media / Risk presentation, Shine programs for Year 7 and 8 girls, Butterfly Foundation presentation, body image program for Year 8 girls, Cyberbullying Presentation for Years 7-12, Boys Program for Year 7 and 8 targeted boys, Genesis Gym program and the Aspirations program for Year 11. These courses raised the self-esteem of many of the participants. The Breakfast Club began in Term 2, offering a free, nutritious breakfast to students. It operates twice a week and is staffed by a teacher and funded by generous donations from Woolworths and Telarah Newsagency.

- PBL lessons were conducted by Year Advisors once a fortnight for all students in Years 7-10 using Mindmatters and Sensability frameworks. These lessons continued to develop student skills and understanding in the area of mental, social and emotional wellbeing, with a particular focus on bullying, resolving conflict and building resilience.
- The Learning Support Team continued to operate with great effectiveness throughout 2013. Meetings were held each Tuesday and were attended by Head Teacher’s Welfare, Deputy Principals, Head Teacher Support, School Counsellor, LaSTS and SLSO. Tasks undertaken by the team included; reviewing teacher referrals, School Counsellor and Health Professional reports and creating individual plans for students, support for those with significant behavioural issues and programmes to support students.
- Plan It Youth Mentoring program operated for Year 10 students who are contemplating leaving school and do not have a clear pathway to employment, training or other education. This one-on-one program was successfully completed by 17 students in 2013. The re-engagement of students in their learning and a stronger commitment to themselves is a positive outcome for the program.
- The comprehensive 2013 transition program enabled the smooth entry process for our Year 7 (2014) students. This included school visits by the Year Advisor and Assistant Year Advisor at the partner primary schools, Term 3 Transition lessons via the Connected Classroom and the Term 4 Orientation Day, where students participated in a range of taster lessons and peer support activities. The Head Teacher Welfare along with the Year Advisor and LaST ran the supported transition program for the more vulnerable students in Year 6. As a result a comprehensive plan of support was created for students to be best supported in the classroom.
- Increasing numbers of the welfare staff have been trained in Mental Health First Aid, Restorative Justice and Mind Matters Level One and Level Two. The Head Teacher’s Welfare participated in HCC / Maitland District Head Teacher Welfare Network Days as well as completing the Online learning Managing students with Challenging Behaviours module.
Building student resilience has been a major focus as part of the HSHF initiative. RTHS continued to strengthen its partnerships with community agencies to support all young people. The HSHF Community Forum building young people’s resilience, was well supported and the celebration of RUOK? Day was a highlight for staff, students and community agencies.

Immunisation programs were held for Year 7 (Chickenpox, Hepatitis B and Gardasil for Year 7 girls). Immunisation programs were held for Year 10 (Gardasil for Year 10 girls).

The LOVE BiTES program was delivered to all Year 10 students in Term 1. This program examines healthy relationships and explores the negative impact of unhealthy relationships including domestic violence. LOVE BiTES is a one-day workshop which is delivered in collaboration with school staff and trained service providers.

Peer mediation training was undertaken by a group of Year 9 students who self-nominated for the program. Peer Mediation is both a program and a process where trained student mediators conduct a structured mediation between small groups of students who are in conflict. This process has proven effective in schools, changing the way students understand and resolve conflict in their lives. As well as developing student leadership skills, positive outcomes of the program include improved self-esteem, development of listening and critical thinking skills, positive learning environment in the classroom and improved playground climate. The program has resulted in reduced need for teacher intervention in student conflict, less disciplinary actions and fewer fights. These are important life skills which are transferable to the wider community. The trained mediators will be utilised in resolving conflict between students in 2014.

Peer Support was introduced in 2013 in order to improve and strengthen Year 6 into Year 7 transition, develop leadership skills in senior students and foster the development of social networks across the school. During Term 4 2013, 53 Year 10 students participated in a 2 day training program which developed skills in leadership, teamwork, problem solving and communication. After completing training, 46 Year 10 students went on to assist with the Year 6 Vulnerable Students transition program. Peer Support leaders also contributed significantly to Orientation Day where they co-lead small groups of Year 6 students and delivered 2 Peer Support sessions. The aim of these sessions was to familiarise Year 6 students with the high school environment, its routines and procedures. It is intended that Peer Support will run during Term 1 2014 to further support Year 7 students.

RAGE is a program which encourages young people to consider how they might choose to respond to feelings of anger. Targeted Year 7 and 8 boys participated in this 6 week program which was jointly delivered by school staff and community agencies. The program covered a range of topics including recognising and exploring anger, considering healthy expressions of anger, as well as identifying self-protection strategies.

Looking forward to 2014 our focus will be:

- The Sensability Resilience-based program will be taught explicitly to Year 7 – 10 PBL classes and will be enhanced through KLA initiatives in other academic years. Welfare days will be held in each semester for each year group with a continued focus on student well-being.
- To build knowledge, skills and understanding of all members of the Welfare Team and additionally to build leadership capacity and density through peer mentoring and ongoing professional development.
- To continue to review and strengthen LST processes and procedures to support learning and well-being of all students.

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)

The acknowledgement of school achievement continued to be a major focus of the PBL team throughout 2013. There has been a 5.4% increase in positive commendations compared to 2012 and a corresponding 5.4% reduction in suspensions in the same time, 14.8% since 2011. Positive commendations took the form of merit commendations, good news phone calls, good news letters and faculty postcards. These translated into major awards given at Celebration assemblies held each term and also included
faculty awards, school service awards, awards for 100% attendance and sports awards. Each award can be connected back to students displaying the values of Respect, Responsibility and Commitment.

The team did trial a “gotcha” focus on playground litter, from which valuable information was obtained.

A parallel focus was the revisiting of Tier 1 interventions to ensure core values are represented across all areas of school operation. The team is working towards developing a core values matrix that sets out desired behaviours in these areas of school operation: classroom, playground, movement between classes, sport, bus lines & bus travel, and toilets. These desired behaviours would then be explicitly taught through timetabled PBL lessons for years 7 to 10.

A visit to Callaghan College Waratah Campus provided valuable insight into a best practice school, and provided many good ideas for consideration in 2014.

Senior Study

The Senior Study has been in operation at RTHS for 6 years and continues to support the academic, social and emotional needs of Year 12 students. Because students at RTHS have such a diverse range of needs, and considering each student has very individual goals with regard to the HSC, the Senior Study endeavours to implement a range of strategies in order to assist all students.

During 2013 the Senior Study has facilitated a collaborative approach where classroom teachers, study period teachers, Deputy Principals, Learning and Support teachers, Norta Norta tutors and the relevant Welfare team members have worked closely to support Year 12 students.

Strategies and initiatives for 2013 include: intensive Year 11 into Year 12 transition procedures, conducting a Year 12 Student Review process at regular intervals, weekly monitoring of N Awards and attendance, conducting an extensive Year 12 survey to gain up-to-date feedback on student needs and the use of survey data to modify programs, a formal weekly study skills program run during sport time, study skills sessions run by Elevate Education and a motivation session delivered by past Year 12 students.

Looking forward to 2014 a review of the N Award monitoring process will be conducted in order to strengthen procedures and better support students who are struggling to meet HSC requirements.

New Scheme Teachers

Rutherford Technology High School has a growing number of New Scheme Teachers. In New Scheme Teachers, supervisors were provided with a number of professional development activities.

Induction program is a structured learning program that supports the professional growth of new teachers from the level of competence attained at the completion of a teacher education program to that required for ongoing employment as a teacher in NSW government schools.

The Induction program is also provided to all casual and temporary teachers employed under the principal’s discretion. Induction includes:

- orientation to the NSW Department of Education and Communities
- orientation to the school
- a school-based induction program involving:
  - structured supervision,
  - collegial support,
  - mentoring and professional networking.
  - the legal requirements with which they must comply
  - the professional expectations of their role
  - professional support
  - personal support and
professional services for employees.

A session was conducted with supervising teachers to enable them to best mentor the New Scheme Teacher they were supervising. The session included looking at professional development opportunities for New Scheme Teachers, how to annotate evidence and how to write a final report.

A handbook will be developed for use in 2014 which includes documentation and examples for both New Scheme Teachers and their supervisors to utilise. It is hoped a more structured professional development program be developed to best meet the needs of New Scheme Teachers and their supervisors.

Maitland Tutorial Centre

Maitland Tutorial Centre continues to offer a specialised program designed to assist students with challenging behaviours to learn the skills that will enable them to re-enter the mainstream education system or work toward alternative pathways to continue their education.

The Tutorial Centre consists of three classes that can cater for up to twenty one students. Placement of students is for one semester up to one year, depending on individual need. Lessons are taught in core subjects of Mathematics, English, HSIE and Science, as well as basic Woodwork, Art and Home Economics. Units of work continue to be developed in line with Board of Studies outcomes to assist students on their return to mainstream schooling. Sport and social activities are also an important part of the program offered.

The Tutorial Centre is staffed by one Head Teacher, three full time Classroom Teachers, an extra Classroom Teacher two days per week and three School Learning Support Officers. This provides an excellent opportunity for students to receive instruction in small groups with learning programs tailored to individual needs. A School Counsellor is also available to support students and parents three days per fortnight.

The past year has been a successful one for many students. Attendance was good and many students benefited from the meaningful programs developed for them. Staff strived to ensure the learning environment was supportive, calm and welcoming and this was reflected in the positive attitude the majority of students developed toward attending the Centre.

Many students successfully transitioned back to their home High Schools and a significant number also chose to continue their education at Margaret Jurd College, a similar smaller setting to the Tutorial Centre.

The Tutorial Centre also ran a trial program this year for a satellite class. The program ran for 10 weeks and allowed a small group of Rutherford High students who were in danger of disengaging from their education a chance to catch up on missed work and develop positive learning habits. Students and parents found it very successful and it is hoped that later in 2014 it may run again.

Aboriginal education

2013 was very much a transitional year for Aboriginal education in the school with a restructuring of the Aboriginal education team.

The year started with “Dare To Lead” invited to do an external audit of Aboriginal education in the school. The findings of this review are included in a later section of the report. It has led to a rethink of how we are doing things.

Positive outcomes for 2013 include:

- The school yarning circle is nearly completed. We must thank Masters, Bunnings, State Forests and Sweetmans Sawmill, Maitland City Bowling Club, and Maitland City Council for their sponsorship support with this project.
- Maitland AECG worked closely in providing support for the school.
- The RTHS Junior AECG was re-established.
- NAIDOC week celebrated Aboriginal culture in the school.
- We continued our affiliation as a Stronger Smarter Learning hub.
• It was pleasing to see that many of our senior students took advantage of the Norta Norta Individual Sponsorship program for tutorial assistance throughout the year. Many of our younger students were involved in Norta Norta tutoring, mentoring and leadership programs that provided support for Aboriginal students in the middle years.

• Brospeak and Sistaspeak continued, but will run with a revamped format in 2014.

Multicultural education
Rutherford hosted another very successful visit from Maizuru Gakuen from Fukuoka. We again thank our students and parents for their generosity in hosting his event. We are planning to visit Japan in 2015.

Transitional Equity Funding
The school received transitional equity funding to the tune of $130,000 and a staffing supplement of 3.3 in 2013.

This was used to increase curriculum opportunities for students, as well as initiate or supplement many programs in the school. These included:

• Senior study program
• Community Liaison Officer
• Literacy and numeracy programs
• Gifted and enrichment programs
• Careers and transition programs
• Aboriginal education
• Middle school initiatives with our learning community.

National partnerships and significant Commonwealth initiatives
The National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy is a joint initiative between the Australian and NSW Governments. It is a state-wide program managed by individual NSW education sectors. Participation in this National Partnership has given teachers and school executive opportunities to embed improvement practices that will further develop their teaching of reading.

The Partnership focuses on three areas:
• High quality teaching
• Strong leadership
• Effective use of student performance information

To achieve sustained improvement individual students who are experiencing difficulty in reading access specific intervention programs. Teachers access professional learning focused on accelerating whole class improvement through the Focus on Reading Program.

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes
NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

• NAPLAN analysis
• SMART and RAP analysis
• Staff, and parent and student surveys and conferences

School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

School priority 1
Leadership and Management
Outcomes from 2012–2014
• “Quality Systems – a Guide for Schools” matrix is met at each level of school administration.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

• Cycle of mandatory staff development established
• Facilities upgrade plan established
• Peer coaching and classroom observation process established
• Processes for monitoring New scheme teachers developed
• Technology infrastructure strengthened with data projectors in every classroom and the establishment of 6 laptop trolleys.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

• Establishment of clear role statements for all staff
• Embed the school improvement vision
• Reinforce the importance of staff professional learning plans
• Classroom observation and peer coaching becomes the main tool for professional development in the school.
• Review staff orientation procedures
• Review teacher assessment procedures.

School priority 2

Wellbeing and Engagement

Outcomes from 2012–2014
• Increase overall attendance rate from 86.6% in 2012 to 88% by 2013
• Increase Year 11 attendance rate from 85.3% in 2012 to 88% in 2013
• Decrease overall number of student suspensions from 400 in 2012 to less than 360 in 2013
• Increase the number of positive student referrals each year by 20%

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:
• Overall attendance increased to 87.3% in 2013
• Year 11 attendance increased from 85.3% to 86% in 2013
• Suspensions decreased by 22 in 2013 from 2012. There has been a total decrease in suspensions by 15% from 2011 to 2013.
• 6471 positive referrals were given to students in 2013.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
• Reinforce positive attendance program in conjunction with classroom engagement model.
• Resilience training for students through the Healthy Schools Program and the utilisation of data from the “Tell Them From Me” survey.
• Refocus of Positive Behaviour For Learning as a major initiative in 2013.
• Review of Welfare and Discipline policy in the school.

School priority 3

Literacy and Numeracy

Outcomes from 2012–2014
• Increase average NAPLAN numeracy growth (Year 7 to 9) from 30 in 2012 to 37 by 2013
• Increase average NAPLAN reading growth (Year 7 to 9) from 30 in 2012 to 37 by 2013
• Decrease the number of students below the National Minimum Standard in NAPLAN writing (Year 9) from 46% in 2012 to 25% in 2013.
• Decrease the number of students below the National Minimum Standard in NAPLAN reading (Year 9) from 21% in 2012 to 10% in 2013.
• Decrease the number of students below the National Minimum Standard in NAPLAN numeracy (Year 9) from 16% in 2012 to 10% in 2013.
• Increase the number of students at the proficient level in NAPLAN writing (Year 9) from 3% in 2012 to 10% in 2013
• Increase the number of students at the proficient level in NAPLAN reading (Year 9) from 8% in 2012 to 11% in 2013
• Increase the number of students at the proficient level in NAPLAN numeracy (Year 9) from 5% in 2012 to 10% in 2013

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:
• Reading growth for Aboriginal students is 38.3%
• Year 9 Aboriginal students are 9 scale scores above the state average growth in spelling.
• Decrease in the number of Year 9 students below the National minimum standard in writing by 5%
• Decrease in the number of Year 9 students below the National minimum standard in reading by 7%
• Increase the number of students at the proficient level in NAPLAN numeracy (Year 9) from 5% in 2012 to 8.3% in 2013

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:
• Greater staff training in the analysis of NAPLAN and HSC RAP data.
• “Focus on Reading” as a whole school initiative
• School numeracy action team working with KLAs to increase whole school focus on numeracy.
• Increased focus on Personalised Learning Plans
• Review of Learning and Support Teacher roles in the school.
• Employment of a Stage 6 coordinator to strengthen HSC practices in the school.
Professional learning

In 2013, the professional learning focused on:

All staff participated in 5 School Development days were with the major focuses, the introduction of the new curriculum, “Focus on Reading” and 21st century learning.

Staff are divided into Professional Learning Teams that met three times per term to support improvement 21st century learning.

There has been a large shift from external focused professional learning to school-based professional learning. In 2014 the major focus will be on teachers working with small teams and buddies in classroom observation and peer coaching.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2013 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school through Newsletter surveys, PBL surveys, parent/teacher evening feedback, the P&C and SRC, the “Healthy Schools Program” surveys, the “Tell Them from Me surveys”, as well as student and staff focus groups.

Their responses are presented below.

- All groups saw students as being the school’s main focus.
- The curriculum was seen as needing some revamping with relevance and more 21st Century learning being incorporated. All KLAS targeted this in writing new Stage 4 programs for 2014.
- There was positive feedback on transition processes and innovative programs, such as the Senior Study and Foundations for the Future.
- There was positive feedback to PBL, but the message that the goals and strategies need to be clarified to all participants.
- There were concerns about the rate of student truancy and the measures taken to address it. Truancy has been made a focus for 2014.
- Student recognition through the positive commendation system. Parents enjoyed the positive contacts.
- Contact home via SMS on attendance
- On-line booking system for parent/teacher evenings
- The positive attempts of staff to deal with bullying were well received

Program evaluations

1. 21st Century Learning

Background

During 2013 it was decided to review where teachers were in their development, in terms of delivering 21st century learning in the classroom at RTHS. The following items were the focus of the review:

What do staff understand by the term “21st century learning”?

1. The strengths of staff.
2. The areas for development.
3. A model for the professional development of staff.

Findings and conclusions

1. It was found that there was a large variation in what staff felt 21st century learning to be. Many saw 21st century learning as just the use of technology, whereas others saw it as much more and were experimenting with things such as “flipped classrooms” and “project-based learning”. The following were seen as some of the keys:
   - Critical thinking and problem solving
   - Collaboration and leadership
   - Agility and adaptability
   - Initiative and entrepreneurialism
   - Effective oral and written communication
   - Accessing and analysing information
   - Curiosity and imagination

2. There were some highly skilled staff with innovative practices and the facilitation of technology as a tool in 21st century learning.

3. There was a large variation in staff skills in confidence in the use of technology, cross-curricular approaches and innovative practices.

4. A model was developed with staff at various skill levels working together. Staff developed a “21st Century Learning Ladder” with 9 steps according to skill and confidence levels. Staff at various skill levels were then grouped together to work collaboratively.
Future directions

This will be expanded in 2014 with buddy teachers working through peer coaching and sharing classroom observations around the focus area of 21st century learning.

The Staff Development Day term 2 2014 will have a focus on 21st century learning.

Program evaluations

2. Aboriginal Education

Background

Dare to Lead were commissioned in 2013 to conduct an external, independent review of Aboriginal education at RTHS.

The team interviewed both ATSI and non-ATSI staff, parents and students. It also evaluated school data on enrolment, attendance, retention and achievement.

Findings and conclusions

Strengths

1. The school tries to provide a culturally supportive environment with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags flown each day,Acknowledgement of Country recited at every gathering,a “Yarning Circle” area planned and several examples of Aboriginal art work displayed around the school.

2. The school has been implementing personalised learning plans for several years.

3. The school has an Aboriginal education team.

4. Bro/Sista speak was providing opportunities for Aboriginal students to connect as a group and share cultural learnings.

5. The Dance group is a source of pride for many in the school community.

6. Junior AECG has operated at the school and provided a voice for Aboriginal student leaders and thus had the potential to connect these students more closely to their school.

7. NAIDOC is considered by many Aboriginal students and families as an important week to celebrate their Aboriginal heritage. Specific initiatives in 2011 received considerable mention.

8. As a part of PBL positive contact strategies are used in the school including positive home phone calls, post cards, a welcome breakfast and increased range of merit awards.

9. In the past several years Aboriginal cultural awareness events including Stronger Smarter training have been included in the professional development program.

10. Although the school is very tight on room an Aboriginal cultural space has been established.

11. Although in its early stages the middle schooling initiative offers considerable scope to develop a stronger connection of all students and especially Aboriginal students to school – especially with earlier exposure to KLAs such as IT, TAS and Science.

12. According to skill and confidence levels, staff at various skill levels were then grouped together to work collaboratively.

Areas for Development

A number of areas for development were recommended:

1. Aboriginal Education Team
2. Enhancing effectiveness of Personalised Learning Plans
3. Cultural awareness/immersion training
4. Enhancing Aboriginal Student Identity
5. Strengthening Aboriginal Student Leadership
6. Supporting Academic Outcomes for Aboriginal Students
7. Aspirations and retention of Aboriginal students
8. Consistency in PBL
9. Aboriginal community involvement.

Future directions

- Restructuring the leadership and membership of the Aboriginal education team.
- New format of Personalised Learning Plans and staff professional development to utilise them.
- Employment of an Aboriginal School Liaison Officer for 2014
- Community utilised in completing the yarning circle
- KLA cultural immersion training
- Development of a 5 year vision for Aboriginal education in the school.
About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at: