



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Geraldton Senior High School

Public School Review

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 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 Public School Review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal and the regional Director of Education.

Expectations of schools

The Statement of Expectation (the Statement) makes clear and public the expectations and responsibilities of schools and the Department of Education (the Department) in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department, represented by the Director General; the school, represented by the Principal; and is noted by the school council/board, represented by the Chair.

The Statement sets out the expectations of Principals in relation to the delivery of the 2020-2024 strategic directions *Every student, every classroom, every day*, and *Building on Strength*.

The Statement will underpin each school's strategic planning and self-assessment and will form part of the school's Public School Review, as well as the Professional Performance Review of the Principal.

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.

For further information or resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au

Context

Geraldton Senior High School is located in the Midwest Education Region.

It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage Rating of 901 (9).

The school currently enrolls 918 students from Year 7 to Year 12. It became an Independent Public School in 2017.

The school offers several specialised programs including literacy and numeracy support and engagement programs. A Special Education Needs Program provides a range of enrichment activities that provide opportunities for students who need additional support.

There are optional language and cultural programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the School Board and the Parent and Citizens' Association (P&C).

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 Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a wide-ranging account of the school context, performance and planning in relation to future business plan priorities.
- Evidence provided in the ESAT submission assisted reviewers to gain an understanding of program implementation and their subsequent impact. The inclusion of 2023 planning intentions was a feature.
- Staff demonstrated an understanding of the importance of adhering to whole-school planning and targeted interventions.
- A cross-section of school leaders, teachers, allied professionals, parents and community representatives elaborated on the evidence that was described in the submission during the validation visit.
- Staff discussions were characterised by their enthusiastic engagement, both in form and substance. The meetings added value to the ESAT submission.
- The School Board, along with parents, gave a strong account of the school's commitment to its students and the building of authentic partnerships with community agencies, local business, further education options and wider industry groups.

The following recommendations are made:

- Build annotations into the presentations of evidence to strengthen the alignment between judgements and the evidence to indicate meeting the Standard.
- Continue the process of embedding a school-wide reflective culture making data the key arbitrator on school performance.

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Relationships and partnerships

Building trusting relationships is at the core of successful leadership. People value most being listened to, appreciated and being supported. In successful organisations, these attributes are two-way.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The School Board members are strong advocates for the school and embraced the opportunity to accept portfolio responsibilities as a way of strengthening its role in the school's planning and budget management.
- There is a clear indication from staff that they value the opportunity to be consulted and that through collaboration, contribute to the transparency of decision making. This is evident in the progress made towards establishing a school-wide teaching pedagogy.
- Students indicated significant levels of relational trust and confidence in working with staff. They identified pathways for support and guidance in problem solving with respect to their health and wellbeing.
- The decision to increase the number of Aboriginal and Islander education officers has provided confidence in the way the school will address the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students.
- The school has worked to successfully build a strong network of school industry/business partnerships to enable students to explore pathways to employment. There was strong endorsement from the School Board in the way in which the school has pursued avenues for student traineeships and apprenticeships.
- There is a strong focus on working with the partner primary schools in transitioning students successfully from Year 6. The school has targeted work with the teachers and students of Years 5 and 6.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Engage in a thorough review of existing staff and parent communication strategies.

Learning environment

A respectful professional team ethos will deliver consistency in terms of mutually agreed expectations for achieving a harmonious learning environment.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has an identified priority in planning to address attendance issues. This includes staff taking 'ownership' of student attendance, enabling it to target cohorts and individuals using attendance plans.
- Students' behaviour management is a priority for the school. Planning to revisit classroom management strategies to achieve the expected standard of consistency, in combination with a reward system that has student support, is an important step towards improving student behaviour.
- The student services team continue to explore and examine strategies that will strengthen its capacity to support staff, students and advise parents. The School Board parent representatives commented, where staff have set up communication regarding student behaviour, parents have responded positively.
- Efforts to create harmony across the school are authentic and well-intended. Students acknowledge that staff have their health and wellbeing interests at heart on both personal and professional levels.
- There is evidence of increasing levels of student voice emerging, notably in regard to the adoption of a house system in 2023. Students spoke with passion about their sense of belonging to their school

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Complete planning in the key areas of attendance, behaviour management and Aboriginal education. Take steps to ensure genuine 'buy-in' from staff, students and parents.

Leadership

The Principal recognises that harnessing the unique talents and skills of staff provides opportunities for future leaders to shine and the school to more likely achieve its shared goals. Further, when school leaders are connected with a common purpose, the 'whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts'.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is an explicit intention to develop a school-wide leadership culture that enables staff to see possible opportunities to undertake responsibilities that assist with their aspirations for future leadership roles.
- Supporting aspirants with mentoring, professional learning and structured feedback is evident. In embarking upon structural reform, a leadership development strategy has been initiated through building a greater understanding of the importance of staff seeing school leadership as a possibility for teachers and allied professionals at any level.
- The Principal has worked hard to provide staff with the confidence and trust that they can contribute to the future direction of the school. Engagement in the Public School Review process was intended to promote the understanding that successful school planning starts with authentic staff engagement.
- The Fogarty EDvance framework discussions on leadership has given rise to the importance that successful organisational structural reform both in policy and process starts with a unified leadership team characterised by mutual professional trust and respect.
- There is evidence of forward thinking in building capacity by engaging in the Western Australian Future Leaders Framework.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Initiate a deep and frank conversation on the need for a school-wide review of leadership roles and responsibilities. Give consideration to such a review being facilitated by an external consultant.

Use of resources

Careful tracking of student enrolment numbers, monitoring cash flow and seeking new funding streams are part of the school's overall budget management strategy.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal and manager corporate services (MCS) have developed a strong partnership sharing their respective strategic and operational responsibilities. Their respect and regard for each other's role is clearly evident.
- The Principal is addressing key areas of budget reform which includes building greater transparency in budget processes, management of reserve accounts with business plan and work force plan alignment.
- The MCS has initiated the development of a training program to ensure Finance Committee members and cost centre managers understand and accept the scope and scale of their responsibilities. This includes being familiar with the Funding Agreement and the understanding in the governance of public funds.
- The School Board expressed a deep appreciation and acknowledgment for the improved level of information provided on budget management of school priorities. In particular they noted the efforts of the Principal and MCS to explain the priority importance of delivering on student needs.
- A Strategic plan is in development for significant improvements to the physical school environment. The work of the grounds and maintenance team is to be acknowledged in the presentation of the building and surrounding areas of this significant historical ground.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to implement structural reforms both in financial and workforce management. Ensure staff are fully cognisant of the school's obligations to manage resources with the appropriate standard of governance.

Teaching quality

Staff have progressively worked towards building an informed approach to the development of the school-wide pedagogy. There is an increasingly shared understanding that this will have a positive impact on teaching quality across the school.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- In commencing pedagogical reform 2 years ago, progress towards whole-school low variance pedagogy is clearly evident. The impact of instructional coaches has ensured staff have a clear understanding of the importance of consistently delivered lesson design.
- The SEEK lesson design has improved the level of teaching consistency across learning areas. Program coordinators support and guide staff towards delivering whole-school connected teaching practice.
- As evidence of greater levels of consistent teaching practice, students often remind staff if a step in the lesson design is overlooked. This is a clear indication that students appreciate the structure and predictability of the lesson design as a feature of their daily classroom engagement.
- The progression toward school-wide data informed differentiation teaching practice strengthens the school's approach to implementing intervention strategies focussing to specific student needs. This has been augmented by the support of the literacy specialist.
- Graduates have been given quality support with targeted coaching and mentoring to use the school-wide lesson design.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Having achieved a positive level of staff engagement in mathematics, English, science, humanities, and social sciences (MESH) subjects with the SEEK lesson design, provide the necessary support and guidance for non-MESH staff to use SEEK in their lesson design.

Student achievement and progress

Successful schools set class targets to align with school targets, build efficacy in classroom practice to assist teachers in determining their impact on student achievement and progress.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Following the progressive reintroduction of Years 7 to 9, the school has taken appropriate steps to ensure staff familiarise themselves with the scope of data required to be added to make informed decisions on student progress. Moderation has been available for staff both internally and externally.
- There is an emerging acceptance of the importance of data over opinion when it comes to defining student performance. School leaders are clear with their expectations that staff will use data to make decisions in relation to all aspects when monitoring student progress.
- There is a clear understanding that Student Achievement Information System data is to be reviewed as a step towards planning for student improvement. Parents indicated that they appreciate the opportunity to communicate with staff on the performance of students.
- Based on the student data the school has addressed student requirements and is looking to appoint a learning support coordinator to build staff capacity in the application of differentiated teaching strategies.
- Delivery of the MacqLit program by a skilled practitioner provides access to a critical intervention strategy for students requiring literacy support.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Maintain a robust approach to examining trends in student pathways dataflow, setting challenging improvement targets and applying stringent moderation practices to drive instructional strategies for success in NAPLAN¹, OLNA² and Western Australian Certificate of Education achievement.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Sandii Stankovic
Principal, Narrogin Senior High School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

The timeframe for the next review process focusing on the Leadership and Learning Environment domains only, will be Term 4, 2023.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, is scheduled for Term 4, 2025.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 2 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment