2008 Annual School Report
Peel High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
**Messages**

**Principal's message**

Peel High School has provided students with a wide range of learning experiences and extra-curricular activities throughout 2008. Students and staff have been recognised and rewarded for their participation in many areas of the school curriculum during 2008.

One highlight of the year was a visit from Dr Robert Satcher, an American astronaut. This visit was a lead up to the selection of two Year 10 students, Russell Hooper and Thomas Bowden, to attend the American Space School at NASA.

Five Year 8 Geography students and their teacher, Melissa Ellis, participated in the *Enviro Schools Youth Jam* in Rotorua New Zealand.

Language teacher, Rebecca Robson, was one of three Australian teachers awarded a Japanese Foundation Fellowship for travel to Japan to build on her Japanese language and cultural knowledge.

Our Year 9 Commerce class won a State award for *Know the Deal*.

Adam Parker, Year 10, was selected to play the clarinet with the Millenium Marching Band in China during the Olympic Games. Ryan Parker, Year 7, was part of the NSW DET State Schools Junior Wind Band playing first clarinet.

In Agriculture, our poultry exhibits gained success in the highly contested Schools Section of the Royal Easter Show. Jesse Stone and Brooke Kennedy competed in the State Final of the Meat Breeds Sheep Junior Judging Competition.

Year 10 science students were awarded a silver medal in the National Hydrogen Car Challenge.

School Captain, Erin Sutherland was selected as the *Tamworth Trainee of the Year*.

The year marked a milestone in Lifesaving, as the school has now participated in a Lifesaving program for twenty years. Peel High School is the only public high school in Tamworth that gives students the opportunity to participate in a program of this type. Adam Parker was awarded the Derek Emery Memorial trophy for his outstanding contribution to the Royal Life Saving by a person under 21 years of age.

We hosted and billeted staff and students from Okchen Middle School.

These highlights are representative of the many and varied opportunities provided for students by Peel High School in 2008. Many others are outlined in latter sections of this Annual School Report. I commend these reports to you.

The school has developed strong ties with both Cargill Meats and Minter-Ellison, a major Australian law firm. These and other connections to the school community will provide career knowledge and opportunities to students over future years.

*Priority School Funding* will continue over the next three years. *Schools in Partnership* will also continue in 2009.

I am very pleased to say that from 2010, thirty places for academically gifted and talented students will be available for students entering Year 7 at Peel High School.

As principal, I am pleased with what was achieved in 2008 and excited about the future.

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.

**William Campbell**

Principal

**P&C message**

The P&C wishes to acknowledge the excellent learning programs developed and delivered by the principal and staff. The school has set and continues to maintain high standards and expectations of the student body. This has produced the qualities and standards expected by parents and carers for the nurturing and development of our children into educated, respectful young adults. As such they will be capable of becoming valued community members willing to work hard and contribute to Tamworth, the district, the nation and wherever their destiny takes them.

I wish to acknowledge the hard work undertaken by our capable canteen helpers to deliver excellent healthy food options. Thank you to all parents and carers in our school community for the efforts and contributions made to the work of the P&C, your efforts are greatly appreciated by all.

**Ashley Castles**

President
Student representative’s message

It has been another busy year for the Students’ Representative Council and the many students who volunteer to work together for the good of the student body and the community at large.

Students participated in fund raising for Daffodil Day, the Red Shield Appeal and Legacy.

A large contingent of staff and students participated in the Cancer Council’s Relay for Life.

Students participated in ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day commemorations.

School Captain, Erin Sutherland was selected as the Tamworth Trainee of the Year and travelled to Sydney for the State title.

The school’s Indigenous dancers performed at both school and community events.

The school’s connection with the War Widows Guild continued. A large number of students assisted the War Widows to set up for the 2008 Field of Remembrance ceremony and attended the afternoon service.

Brooke Kennedy
President – Student Representative Council

School context

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

There was a slight increase in the total number of students enrolled in 2008. Enrolment patterns have remained fairly consistent over recent years with approximately equal numbers of male and female students.

Student attendance profile

There was a slight improvement in attendance in 2008. However, despite a number of programs introduced to improve attendance, our figures remain well below state and regional averages. Attendance remains a crucial issue for the school and the community. Research clearly demonstrates the close connection between regular attendance and academic success.

While the attendance of senior students has improved over the last three years, averages are still well below both regional and state averages.

Retention to Year 12

Retention from Year 10 to Year 12 has increased over the last three years however our retention is still well below state and like-school averages.
Post-school destinations

Students who left the school during 2008 followed a variety of post-school pathways. Eighty percent of leavers have moved on directly into employment or further studies.

Staff information

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

Staff establishment

As student numbers did not change significantly from 2007, staff numbers were also relatively constant.

<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>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff retention

Only two staff changed positions in 2008.

Staff attendance

Staff has access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was 96.8%.

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>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>20</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>30/11/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>584,095.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>344,715.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>839,214.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>141,044.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>43,922.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>45,223.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>1,998,216.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure

Teaching & learning

- Key learning areas: 63,769.98
- Excursions: 70,336.56
- Extracurricular dissections: 34,793.03
- Library: 4,464.78

Training & development: 51,454.00

Tied funds: 660,784.69

Casual relief teachers: 76,758.99

Administration & office: 108,342.61

School-operated canteen: 0.00

Utilities: 89,495.16

Maintenance: 32,747.71

Trust accounts: 34,594.48

Capital programs: 35,493.75

Total expenditure: 1,263,035.74

Balance carried forward: 735,180.71

The school is in a sound financial position. A significant proportion of the balance carried forward falls within Tied and Trust Funding dissections and must be committed only to items of expenditure as determined by the specific program guidelines.

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School P&C. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
School performance 2008

Peel High School continues to provide all students with opportunities to excel in a broad cross-section of life skills.

Achievements

Arts

A very large number of students participated in the regional CAPERS as musicians, singers and dancers. For many students this is a once in a life time opportunity to experience performing in a big production with a large audience.

Success was achieved at Drama Theatre Sports in Term 2 with Peel being awarded Best School Overall, the Banana Peels were Junior Runners up, Aidan Rayner won the Best Junior Boy and Luke Simpson won the Jim Award, named after ex Peel Drama teacher Jim Laurich.

Two students excelled in Music. Adam Parker, Year 10, was selected to play the clarinet with the Millennium Marching Band which played at venues in China during the Olympic Games. Adam also won the prestigious Peel Valley Lions Club Instrumental Scholarship at the Regional Conservatorium. This is a great honour for Adam and for the school as we develop closer links with the Conservatorium of Music.

Ryan Parker, Year 7, was a member of the NSW DET State Schools Junior Wind Band playing first clarinet and was Concert Master at two performances.

Year 7 students travelled to the Roxy Theatre at Bingara to take part in the 2008 Northwest Film Festival where they benefited from a presentation by award winning short film maker Nash Edgerton.

Their film, These Fools, was screened at the festival and received a Highly Commended Award in the Narrative Film category. Judges were impressed by the style of the film which featured lots of action and an unexpected electric fence.

Sport and PDHPE

Recognition continues for the Coaching in the Community program. Peel students in Years 9 and 10 visited Duri, Somerton, West Tamworth and Westdale Public Schools to present their Playing for Life Games.

In term four, the Year 9 class presented the Active Schools Connexion Program at Duri Public school. The Year 10 students involved in this program completed their AASC Community Coach Certificate and receive national accreditation.

The Year 12 PDHPE class conducted ‘Learn to Skip’ classes for Kindergarten students at Westdale Public School.

Four students were selected to represent the North West Region in various 2008 State CHS Championships:

- Swimming – Ryan Parker and Jye Milgate;
- Touch Football - Monique Cook;
- Basketball – Simon Sinclair.

The Lawn Bowls Team was North West Regional Champions and went on to finish ninth in the State CHS Competition.

Jessica Norris was recognised for her contribution to softball at the Tamworth Regional Sports Awards.

Adam Parker was awarded the Derek Emery Memorial trophy for his outstanding contribution to the Royal Life Saving Society by a person under 21.

Agriculture

The school's Suffolk Stud was strengthened this year by a donation of new bloodlines from The Pinnacle Suffolk Stud at Bordertown South
Australia. This should enhance our reputation as a leading Suffolk breeder in the state.

Our poultry exhibits were successful in the highly contested Schools Section of the Royal Easter Show.

Jesse Stone and Brooke Kennedy competed in the State Final of the Meat Breeds Sheep Junior Judging Competition.

While we did not show our Suffolks at the Royal Easter this year, eight students prepared and exhibited at Gunnedah and Dubbo Shows. Students were rewarded with a large number of trophies and a team of three girls won the ‘Tink Family Shield’ based on the quality of our sheep and the students' husbandry skills and sheep knowledge.

Jesse Stone holds the Champion Novice Ram

Science

Year 10 students were awarded a silver medal in the National Hydrogen Car Challenge after many modifications to the original design.

Thomas Bowden gained admission to the Australian Student Mineral Venture in Brisbane as well as the opportunity to travel to the USA to attend the Space School at NASA with fellow student Russell Hooper.

Students from all years participated in the National Science and Chemistry Quiz.

The Science and Engineering Challenge conducted by Tamworth Rotary First Light and the University of Newcastle again provided a group of students from Years 9 and 10 with a fantastic day of hands-on highly engaging engineering science. The leadership skills of our students were noted by the organisers.

Human Society and Its Environment

Class 8P worked on a project “Designing Sustainability”. They conducted an audit of the school’s energy profile. They analysed the use of water, electricity and surveyed students’ mode of transport to and from school. They examined biodiversity in the school playground and calculated the amount of waste the school produced. As an offset of registering for this project the students applied to present their work at the Enviro Schools Youth Jam in Rotorua New Zealand and were accepted.

Five students and their teachers, Melissa Ellis and Ben Coombes, spent three days at the conference in Rotorua. They also enjoyed whale watching, visited the Auckland aquarium and the unique geothermal pools in Rotorua.

The Designing Sustainability Team

The Year 9 Commerce class won a State award in a Know the Deal film-making competition. Under the direction of teacher, Kyle Bryant, students produced a two minute skit, targeting young people, about workers’ rights.

Other

Students were offered a range of excursions to complement the curriculum.

Year 7 spent three days at Keepit Dam Sport and Recreation camp.

Year 9 visited the Gold Coast.

Year 10 visited Sydney as part of their History and Geography studies.
Year 11 PDHPE students survived the wilderness at Wattagans while other Year 11 students attended the Values Forum in Sydney.

Year 12 visited Sydney to extend their knowledge in Ancient History and Society and Culture studies. While in Sydney the students visited the Malek Fahd Islamic School.

Academic
In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 4 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)
In the School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7
In the 2008 Year 7 cohort, only twenty two percent scored results in the top three bands for Reading compared with a forty percent result for our like-school group. Other results mirrored this trend with Writing (17% vs 36% in the top three bands), Spelling (35% vs 49%) and Grammar and Punctuation (26% vs 42%).

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7
Results for the Year 7 2008 cohort were also disappointing for Numeracy with only 21.7% achieving results in the top three bands. This result is below like school averages and below our three year average.
Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9
The Year 9 cohort for 2008 has scored below like-school averages in all aspects of literacy. As this is the first year of Year 9 NAPLAN testing there is no data for school average 2005 – 2007 for comparison.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9
Twenty seven percent of the Year 9 cohort achieved results in the top three bands compared with 37% of students in similar schools.

School Certificate
The good results from last year have continued into 2008 with an increasing number of students achieving in the higher bands. There is however still much room for further improvement when results are compared with like school group results. Over fifty percent of students are still within the lower three bands of achievement.
There was an increase in the number of students achieving in the top three bands for both Geography and History however averages are still below like school averages.

Ninety six percent of students were classed as competent or highly competent in Computer Skills compared with 98% for the state.

In Science, forty three percent of students achieved in the top three bands of achievement compared with an average of 54% of students from the Like School Group.

**School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)**

The graph indicates that despite some improvement in English, students are not performing up to the levels expected and show a decline in academic performance from Year 5 through to Year 10.

**Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)**

On average students did not perform in Year 12 as might have been expected from their Year 10 results. By definition, state average value-added is zero.
Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

Improving outcomes for Aboriginal students remains a school priority. A significant amount of time and money was again committed to programs addressing identified specific educational needs as well as providing the opportunity for engaging with culturally appropriate community activities.

NAIDOC Week: Students and the community participated in a series of events to celebrate and acknowledge the contribution made by the indigenous students and community to the culture of the school.

Reconciliation Week: The school held a special assembly to mark Reconciliation Week.

In-Class Tutors and Mentors: Members of the Aboriginal Community were employed to support students across all years. Years 7 & 8 received in class support in literacy and numeracy. Years 9 through 10 were given mentoring support to assist them to meet Board of Studies requirements for the award of School Certificate and Higher School Certificate.

Visiting community groups: The school welcomed community groups who provided students with information on Aboriginal culture, health and employment opportunities.

Multicultural education

This year’s program built on the great successes of last year however, without the additional funding, our activities were somewhat curtailed.

Year 12 HSIE classes visited the Malek Fahd Islamic School to strengthen the relationship established last year.

We welcomed visitors from a Korean school and established links that may lead to further contact.

Erin and visiting Korean students

Students also had the opportunity to experience the culture of an Africa nation through story and musical performance.

Respect and Responsibility

Teacher, Melissa Ellis, and her team continued the good work from last year with a feature being a Values Forum during Term 3 holidays.

The school captains attended the AGM of the Tamworth and District War Widows Guild. The State President presented them with a copy of the NSW War Widows’ Guild book titled “No Peacetime Cinderellas”, in recognition of the significant involvement by Peel High School during the Field of Remembrance ceremony.

Our Captains and War Widows Guild
A large number of students again volunteered for the Annual Red Shield Appeal and Daffodil Day, and attended the Tamworth ANZAC Day ceremonies.

After wowing the crowds at CAPERS, the Peel High Indigenous Dancers were invited to perform at a cultural day at Dungowan Public School.

**Other programs**

The Homework Centre continued to provide after-school support to students. The centre is run by a teacher supported by an Aboriginal Education Assistant and other helpers, who volunteer their services. Students are given access to the school’s technology and learning support to ensure that they have the best opportunity and the resources to complete homework and assessment tasks.

Our school Chaplain, Darren Bonnell has been encouraged by the response to the breakfast program. The school thanks Darren for his work in this area and also for the assistance of Lyn and Bobby in the Canteen.

**Progress on 2008 targets**

The School Improvement Plan outlines the areas to be specifically targeted for improvement each year. Our targets in 2008 were determined to a large extent by the Schools in Partnership objectives and the findings of the annual school review.

**Target 1**

*Literacy and Numeracy* – to improve each child’s performance to equal the state average.

Individual students have achieved excellent results in all aspects of literacy and numeracy, however, average school literacy and numeracy outcomes remain below state and like school results. Despite the special support programs initiated to support students, there are obviously factors which continue to impact on student results in these critical areas.

Our achievements include:
- Personal Learning Plans continue to be developed/maintained for all students;
- parent teacher evenings continued to be held for all junior years;
- teachers were trained in the use of interactive whiteboards and other curriculum support technologies.

**Target 2**

*Community Participation* – to have one in three families in contact with the school.

Research indicates that the closer the relationship between parent/carers and the school, the better the outcome for students.

Our achievements include:
- P&C meetings are held every month. Average attendance figures have been maintained throughout 2008. The P&C provides fund-raising support and also participates in the governance of the school through representation on professional committees.
- All parents/carers were invited to participate in student Personal Learning Plans. It was disappointing that only a small number of parents wished to be involved in the program in 2008.
- Strong community support for special events such as NAIDOC Week and Harmony Day.

**Target 3**

*Attendance* – to improve whole day attendance to the state average and reduce partial truancy by fifty percent.

Our achievements include:
- The attendance of Year 7 – 10 students has improved by 2% over the last three years however average attendance is still below region and state averages.
- The attendance of senior students has improved by 3% over the last three years.
however average attendance is below region and state average.

- Partial truancy has been reduced by 15% over the last three years but remains an issue.

**Target 4**

**Quality Teaching with Technology** – to have all students using technology in all KLAs.

Our achievements include:

- Expanding access to computers by providing an additional set of mobile notebook computers for whole school use.
- Upgrading network cabling and application software on the network and ensuring computers were available to all subject areas either as permanent desktops or mobile notebooks.
- Installing three interactive boards in PDHPE, HSIE and Science blocks in addition to the DET provided interactive board and video conferencing facilities in the Library.
- Providing ongoing technology support to all staff and training five teaching staff in the use of the Connected Classroom software and hardware.

**Target 5**

**Values** – to have all members of Peel High School community respect and value cultural differences and individual identity.

Our achievements include:

- The SRC and Junior AECG fearlessly express the students’ opinions on matters of school governance and planning.
- All members of the school community indicate their pride in individual and group achievements through acclamation at special awards assemblies. Individuals and groups are proud to be nominated and to accept awards for achievements.
- Student representatives demonstrate pride in attending and the wearing of school uniform at community events.

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**Key evaluations**

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2008 our school carried out evaluations of the Human Society and Its Environment curriculum and Personal Learning Plans.

**Educational and management practice**

**Personalised Learning Plans**

**Background**

In 2006-2007 the school commenced the development of personalised learning plans in response to the *Schools in Partnership* initiative. A Head Teacher position was created to lead the initiative and there was a genuine commitment by the school executive to implement a quality process. While the PLPs were aimed initially at ‘closing the gap’ in the educational results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, the school saw the potential to support all students and subsequently involved all students in the process.

A Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) is designed to enable each student to develop a trusting relationship with a teacher and to provide them with the opportunity to:

- Share their successes and set goals;
- Ask for assistance if having difficulty at school;
- Think about what they aim to achieve at school and to discuss these aims with the adults involved in their education;
- Gain a better understanding of what they need to do to be successful at school.

There was an external review of the PLP initiative conducted this year.

**Findings and conclusions**

Personalised Learning Plans have become embedded into the culture, management and organisation of teaching and learning programs in the school. There are a range of programs offered by the school, working together with the PLPs, to improve the literacy and numeracy performance of Indigenous students.

There is qualitative evidence that students:

- are more engaged with school and feel they have some influence over their learning programs;
- now read and value the information provided in their school reports;
set goals which have led to the introduction of new activities and relationships within and beyond the school;
• are taking up work experience opportunities as a result of the support provided by their learning advisor to identify community mentors and build relationships.

Future directions
Parent/carer involvement in the PLP interview process has been declining each year even though the school provides information regularly via the school newsletter and posts individual letters home to all new families to explain the process and encourage them to be involved.

It is recognised that many parents are now comfortable with the PLP process and choose not to be directly involved in the interview as long as the school provides regular feedback. It is also acknowledged that some students prefer to have the interview with their learning advisor without parent/carer support.

Key principles for the future include:
• PLPs are about building and strengthening relationships. Better relationships = greater resilience;
• Leadership is pivotal with the principal as the key driver for the process;
• Teachers need to ‘yarn with kids’;
• PLPs are about collaboration and working with a student, not doing PLPs “for” or “to” them;
• It is important that all students continue to see value in a PLP and that it is not something that only ‘smart’ students do.

Future actions will include:
• Development of a clear understanding, by all teachers, students and parents, of the purpose of PLPs;
• Provision of quality professional development for staff in interview technique, team building and the PLP process;
• Empowerment of the community through information, informal contact and celebrations.

Curriculum
Human Society and Its Environment

Background
The school aims to provide a curriculum which meets the needs of the majority of students. The HSIE faculty provides a range of elective subjects each year including Aboriginal Studies, Ancient History, Business Studies, Commerce, Geography, History, International Studies, Legal Studies and Society and Culture.

The school and faculty was interested in determining what factors influence student elective choices and what factors influence their decision to continue in these courses beyond the junior years.

A review of the HSIE Key Learning Areas was conducted through survey and interviews with students, parents and teachers.

Findings and conclusions
The student survey, supported by interview responses, indicated that the majority of students (85 – 95%) make elective choices based on their future goals and educational/career aspirations. Interest in the subject area and the belief that they can achieve good results in the subject are more important than teacher advice, parent preference or peer choices.

This would indicate that the students are being provided with a comprehensive description of the elective courses on offer at the school and that they are also aware of the career connections with the various elective courses.

A small number of students (<30%) indicated that they felt their choices were limited and that they “had to” take a certain course of study.

Having chosen a subject, students tend to remain very positive in their attitude to the subject over time. A majority (90 – 95%) indicate that the material they are being taught is important and useful to their future. Motivation and interest is also quite high at 70 – 75%. Students indicate that while electives are important to them, this does not mean that other subjects suffer in terms of time and effort committed to study.

Teachers of elective subjects are endorsed with 80 – 85% of students indicating that find the work interesting and that they know what they need to do to succeed. Although many (60%) feel that they do not have much say in what is taught or how they learn the material.

The most important factors in determining how much effort is put into assignments include
academic success, teacher expectations, interest and enjoyment. Students do not rate academic competition with other students, personal recognition or rewards very highly as motivators.

Retention into the senior years appears not to be related to elective choice but rather to student commitment.

**Future directions**

Unfortunately the nature of school organisation and staffing limitations will sometimes result in some students not being able to study all their favourite subjects. The school will strive to provide the combination of electives that meets the needs of the majority of students.

Parents and students will be given opportunities, both formal and informal, to discuss elective choices with teacher mentors.

Students and parents will be provided with a detailed explanation of the scope and requirements of each elective subject.

Career advice will be included, where appropriate, in the PLP process to ensure that students make informed decisions when choosing elective subjects.

**Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction**

The school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

A majority of students (75%) are generally happy with the school and the opportunities provided. Positive responses related predominantly to the extra-curricular life of the school with sports and excursions rating very highly. Negative responses included mainly individual inter-personal differences between students, and between students and staff, and a perception that these are not addressed appropriately.

For the majority of parents (74%), discipline and welfare are the major issues. There is a general satisfaction with, or lack of understanding of, the academic program and belief that good students are able to achieve excellent results. However, some parents are not satisfied that the school is doing enough to address the discipline issues that impact on student outcomes.

Staff generally (95%) commented positively regarding collegiality and the support of colleagues. There was also general agreement that there were many opportunities for professional training. Teachers (98%) are concerned about the impact that attendance, welfare and discipline issues have on their ability to improve student outcomes.

**Professional learning**

Quality Teaching and Learning remains the focus of all professional learning.

A major emphasis this year was the Connected Classroom. Five teaching staff trained in the use of the software and hardware.

**School development 2009 – 2011**

The School Improvement Plan 2009 - 2011 outlines the areas for strategic action over the next three years with specific targets for the next twelve months.

**Targets for 2009**

Our targets are focused by the objectives of the Schools in Partnership program and Priority Schools Funding which place emphasis on improved literacy and numeracy results.

**Target 1**

*Literacy and Numeracy – to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students in line with Like School Groups.*

Goal:

All students to have value-added scores equal to or better than the state average as measured by NAPLAN. (2008 – 35% at or above average)

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Effective use of SMART data to:
  - inform teaching and learning programs across all KLAs;
  - identify individual students requiring additional strategic support;
- Professional learning for all teachers focussed on Quality Teaching and Learning;
- Support Teaching and Learning Assistance resources used to support the most needy students;

Our success will be measured by:

- NAPLAN results for every student showing positive growth in all aspects of literacy and numeracy at each of the transition points;
- School-based assessments indicating growth in knowledge and understanding across all KLAs;
Target 2
Attendance and Retention – to improve student average daily attendance.

Goal: Average school attendance 90%
(2008 – 85% Average Y7 - Y12)

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Rigorous daily monitoring of attendance and partial attendance records;
• Immediate contact with the parents/carers of students developing unsatisfactory attendance patterns;
• Raising community awareness of the links between attendance and academic achievement;
• Expansion of the awards for attendance program;

Our success will be measured by:
• Increase in daily attendance and decrease in partial attendance/class truancy;
• Parents supportive of the school’s strategy resulting in a decrease in unexplained absences and unsatisfactory explanations;

Target 3
Community Participation – to build the capacity of the community to participate and support the education of their children

Goal:
Fifty percent of parents/carers to participate in school governance (Professional Learning Groups, PLPS, Surveys, etc.) or school support (P&C, special assemblies, cultural and fund raising activities). (2008 – 33%)

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• Individually inviting particular members of the community to be involved in planning groups such as the P & C, SiP advisory board and Aboriginal Parent Group;
• Reviewing school-community information channels for efficiency and effectiveness;
• Ensuring key members of the school community are individually invited to special school functions;
• Building on existing school-community relationships through regular formal contact;

Our success will be measured by:
• An increase in community participation in committees and volunteer work groups;
• Parents increasingly confident to participate and provide regular feedback to the school;
• School – business community links providing students with better opportunities for better school to work transition experiences.

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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Gordon Hile – HT Mathematics
Andrew Frost – HT HSIE
Greg Parker – HT TAS
Louise Taylor – HT CAPA
Athol Latham – HT Administration
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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: