



EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Golden Grove High School

Conducted in March 2017



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development

Review details

A priority for the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

The purpose of the External School Review is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools.

The framework underpinning the External School Review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by research.

The overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

This Report of the External School Review outlines aspects of the school's performance verified through the review process according to the framework. It does not document every aspect of the school's processes, programs and outcomes.

The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged. While, not all review processes, artefacts and comments are documented, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this Report.

The External School Review Process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented. This information is provided in Appendix One of the report.

This External School Review was conducted by Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Amanda O'Shea, Mick O'Connell and Rob Knight, Review Principals.

School context

Golden Grove High School is a Year 8 to 12 school located 21kms north-east of Adelaide CBD, in the suburb of Golden Grove. Enrolments in 2016 were 1367, and are 1377 in 2017. In 2017, there are 270 Year 8 students and 235 Year 12 students. Enrolments have been steady over the past 5 years. The school has an ICSEA score of 1011, and is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 9% students with disabilities, 28% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 5 young people in care, and 15% of families eligible for School Card assistance. There are 50 students in the Disability Unit.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the first year of his first tenure, a Deputy Principal and four Assistant Principals, all in their second tenure.

Lines of Inquiry

In considering the data summary in the School Performance Overview (Appendix 2) and the Principal's presentation, the Review Panel explored the following Lines of Inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance. During the external review process, the panel focused on three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

Student Learning: How effectively are students challenged and engaged in their learning?

Effective Teaching: How well are results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions by teachers?

Effective Leadership: How effectively does the school leadership foster a culture of learning?

How effectively are students challenged and engaged in their learning?

There are many opportunities for students at Golden Grove High School to become engaged and challenged in their learning, including outbound study tours, sport and the arts. Additional opportunities through the FLO program and a range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs are appreciated.

The 'One+', or shared facilities with the other non-government schools on campus, provides ready access for teachers and students to a well-equipped Trade Training Centre, with opportunities for challenge and engagement through the use of 3D printers, laser cutters and data loggers. It also provides opportunities for students to access a wider range of subjects. It was evident in interviews, however, that many advantages possible through 'One+' are not being fully utilised, and discussions between campus leaders are planned to address these concerns, as well as the impact of the shared timetable.

Students are complimentary about most of their teachers, who "are fun, know their material, can explain, and are patient". They appreciate the support provided to them when they ask, and the time spent in marking drafts and providing feedback. The level of support from the senior school team in monitoring student progress, selection of courses and pathways through and post-school is also appreciated. The Review Panel was unable to determine what strategies are in place to challenge the highly aspiring students, and many students and teachers did not believe having high expectations of students is a priority in the school. Some parents also indicated they are happy if their child 'passed'. Most staff acknowledged that there are minimal behaviour management concerns in their classes and most students are compliant, but believed many students are 'not particularly ambitious or driven academically' nor willing to take responsibility for their learning.

However, support for disengaged or struggling students is outstanding, with staff in the Learning and Wellbeing Centres, including a number of SSOs, providing targeted intervention using a range of ICT-based applications and programs, as well as mentoring and wellbeing support. The Aboriginal Education Team is proud of the system of support provided for the 40 Aboriginal students.

There has been a focus in some Learning Areas (LAs) on introducing project-based learning as a strategy to engage and challenge students, particularly in middle school classes. Some teachers within LA teams are also trialling the sharing of classes as a strategy to better differentiate and meet the needs of individual students. While some

students admitted to initially struggling with these approaches, it was evident that students are engaged in these lessons and could talk enthusiastically about the processes used and outcomes achieved.

A number of teachers are using ICT tools to engage students and are storing Learning Assessment Plans (LAPs), rubrics and resources on DayMap, the school's Learner Management System, so that students can access this information from home. Parents and students are looking forward to increased consistency in teachers using DayMap. Pedagogy in the senior school is generally traditional, with textbooks and worksheets more common. Some use of ICT applications in SACE Stage 2 lessons was observed by the panel, and obviously enjoyed by the students.

The LA teams have been working on a more consistent approach to assessment, task design and the use of rubrics, and informal moderation is now occurring in a number of LA meetings. A more formal approach to collaborative moderation is happening in ECD Partnership meetings. There was evidence that a number of middle school teachers are unfamiliar with the assessment expectations of the Australian Curriculum, and there was also some evidence of over-assessing.

Some students talked about goal-setting and most could predict the grade they would receive at the end of the term.

However, it was evident in many interviews that despite the school leaders having produced quality documentation on the 'Student Engagement Cycle', the 'Literacy and Numeracy Strategy', and 'Goal-Setting' to drive the challenge and engagement of students, there is a wide variation in teachers' understanding, and use of, quality teaching strategies. Teachers believed this is a result of limited professional development planning, and compromised time in meetings to share teaching strategies, prepare and plan. There have been many other priorities that have taken time away from this work. The slow and incomplete roll-out of the BYOD program is also seen to be limiting staff interest in, and capacity to use, the internet and other tools to engage and challenge students in a contemporary learning environment.

The Performance Development Planning (PDP) process, which has been in place in the school for many years, is seen by the Leadership Team to have lost its traction, resulting in a small number of staff missing meetings, and inconsistencies within and across teams in pedagogical practice and support for the school's priorities. Few staff could articulate how they are using feedback from their peers or students to inform their teaching; any processes used are informal and questions used are at a low level.

Direction 1

In order to challenge and engage students, develop a coherent and consistent approach to pedagogy that is understood by all teachers.

How well are results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions by teachers?

The school has invested in improving its SACE results, particularly through the introduction of the 'Traffic Light' data system and individual student case management. There has been some improvement in the completion of the SACE, from February and October enrolments, an increase in the number of Merits awarded to SACE Stage 2 students, and an increase in the number of students achieving an ATAR over 80. There has been an increase in the number of 'A' grades, and a decrease in the number of 'D' and 'E' grades in SACE Stage 2 results.

Golden Grove High School students also consistently achieve above the DECD average for similar students, in both the literacy and numeracy NAPLAN tests.

However, datasets indicate overall limited growth in both Middle School and Senior School students' academic performance. The school's Leadership Team has identified this as a concern, particularly given that most students have strong parent support, the facilities are excellent and there are minimal behaviour management issues.

Abundant quality data is available to teachers and leaders, generally through DayMap. However, in interviews with teachers, it became evident that few are regularly accessing information about their individual students, their performances in NAPLAN, PAT and a range of other tests, and information provided in response to staff and student surveys. Even less could articulate how they differentiate their lessons as a result of the information provided.

Data is shared in whole-staff meetings and there is an expectation that the data will be further analysed in LA meetings. It is also expected that the data about student performance is included in teachers' Personal Development Plans (PDP). The school's Leadership Team conceded that there is significant variation in the capacity

of many teachers to understand the data and inconsistencies in how the data is informing teaching practice. The Principal and Senior School Assistant Principal are about to discuss the 2016 SACE data with all LA Coordinators, which is a new experience for many of the Coordinators involved. Hence, most SACE teachers were unable to discuss with the panel the results of their students in 2016, and were unaware of information about moderation shifts and the impact of examinations on their students' final grades.

Direction 2

In order for teachers to more effectively differentiate their teaching, improve their access to data and their capacity to understand and apply it more effectively in teaching and learning.

How effectively does the school leadership foster a culture of learning?

The school has recently appointed a new Principal who is in his first Principal position. The remainder of the Leadership Team have been at the school for many years in a range of roles and are optimistic about the future of the school. Staff are appreciative of the professionalism and support of these experienced leaders.

The Review Panel noted that most leadership positions at the school are 'multi-barrelled', with a number of apparent disconnected responsibilities. This could explain why many leaders had difficulty clearly articulating their roles and their aspirations during interviews. Teachers also expressed some indecision about who they would approach for support or guidance in particular circumstances, and believed they seek support from the Deputy Principal as a result.

Leadership of student wellbeing is not apparent in the current structure, despite it being included in the current Site Improvement Plan (SIP). Year level management is 'tacked onto' another leadership role, and these leaders are making decisions about how they are prioritising their time.

Learning is expected to be led by LA Coordinators. Many of these are inexperienced in leadership and were clear in interviews that they are "leaders of subjects, not learning", and that they are "not whole-school leaders". However, there are many aspiring leaders at the school who are seeking additional professional development and mentoring, and a number of these were impressive contributors to meetings and quality teachers in the classroom.

The Professional Development calendar is cluttered, and leaders and teachers indicated expectations and outcomes of the numerous meetings are often not transparent or related to school priorities and the SIP.

There is little ownership of the current SIP amongst staff, and its connectedness to current targets, datasets, appointment of staff and leaders is unclear to most who were interviewed. This became apparent during the interview with regard to student attendance, where it was acknowledged that the school is receiving limited support from a number of parents in explaining absences, but it was also evident that some teachers are not meeting their responsibilities, or being held to account.

Direction 3

Collaboratively develop, with all stakeholders, a Site Improvement Plan that has a particular focus on self-review and building a culture of highly effective pedagogy.

What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Golden Grove High School.

There is a high level of intervention provided for students in the Disability Unit and those with Negotiated Education Plans. Effective practice in catering for the varied needs of learning was evident. The school has a Disability Unit, and a Wellbeing Hub that includes facilities for the Aboriginal Education team, and the Students with Disabilities Team. It was evident through interviews and observations of the Hub that there is a high level of cohesion between the team, and high expectations of students, including SACE completion. Parents appreciated the comprehensive transition processes used and their easy access to both teachers and leaders. The school has ensured sustainability of the programs through strategic leadership appointments and the provision of ongoing professional learning for all teachers and support staff.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Golden Grove High School provides a coherent curriculum for students using the Australian Curriculum and SACE. Staff and students are advantaged in having access to an extensive curriculum, subjects, facilities and equipment on a shared campus with two other schools.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following Directions:

1. In order to challenge and engage students, develop a coherent and consistent approach to pedagogy that is understood by all teachers.
2. In order for teachers to more effectively differentiate their teaching, improve their access to data and their capacity to understand and apply it more effectively in teaching and learning.
3. Collaboratively develop, with all stakeholders, a Site Improvement Plan that has a particular focus on self-review and building a culture of highly effective pedagogy.

Based on the school's current performance, Golden Grove High School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Peter Kuss
PRINCIPAL
GOLDEN GROVE HIGH SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson
Martin Kusabs
Chairperson
Governing Council.

Appendix One

Policy compliance

The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented.

The Principal of Golden Grove High School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

Implementation of the DECD Student Attendance Policy was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be working towards being compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 88.2%.

Appendix Two

School Performance Overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Reading

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 64% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 NAPLAN Reading, 11% of students achieved in the top two bands, 19 merits in total.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 32%, or 24 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016, and 50%, or 22 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 69% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

The school is achieving higher than the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 NAPLAN Numeracy, 8% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 25%, or 14 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016, and 51%, or 17 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2016, 73% of students in February and 96% in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Ninety-seven percent of grades achieved in the 2016 SACE were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2014 and 2016, the trend has been upwards, from 91% in 2014 to 96% in 2016.

In terms of the number of grades for attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2016, 18% of students achieved an 'A' Grade, and 44% achieved a 'B' Grade. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' Grade and 'B' Grade respectively.

In terms of successful completion of compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2016; 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 97% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy units, 91% successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy units, and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

In terms of tertiary entrance, 91%, or 193 out of 212 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score.

Sixteen students obtained a merit in their Stage 2 subjects.

In terms of VET, 13% of students completed SACE using VET.

There were 55 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program through the Community Learning Centre in 2016.