

# Western Suburbs State Special School

## Executive Summary





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## 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Western Suburbs State Special School** from **13 to 15 September 2021**.

The report presents an evaluation of the school's performance against the nine domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB [website](#).

### 1.1 Review team

Laurelle Allen	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Bronwyn Paxton	Peer reviewer
Paul Herschell	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Glenala Road, Inala	
<b>Education region:</b>	Metropolitan Region	
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 12	
<b>Enrolment:</b>	186	
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	7 per cent	
<b>Students with disability:</b>	<b>Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:</b>	100 per cent
	<b>Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:</b>	100 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	1000	
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2004	



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, four Heads of Department (HOD), HOD – Registered Training Organisation (RTO), guidance officer, Business Manager (BM), three administration officers, four cleaners, schools officer, 34 teachers, 47 teacher aides, four therapists, 12 parents and 15 students.

Community and business groups:

- Four members of the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), parent liaison officer of MyTime, manager of Wesley Industries and coordinator of Quick Response.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Feeder primary school Head of Special Education Services (HOSES).

Government and departmental representatives:

- Lead Principal.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Strategic Plan 2018-2021
Behaviour Referral Process	School Data Profile (Semester 1, 2021)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional Learning Plan 2021	Inquiry Cycle plans
School pedagogical framework	Mentoring Beginning Teachers guidelines
Literacy and Numeracy data plan	School newsletters, Facebook and website
Draft Communication Guidelines	Student Code of Conduct
Parent Handbook	Senior School Handbook
Classroom displays	Data walls
Overview of Professional Learning Teams 2021	Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (CARF): 2020-2022
WSSSS Collegial Engagement Framework	Sample Individual Curriculum Plans (ICP) and student reports



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

#### **Staff members have an unrelenting focus on meeting the needs of every student.**

The motto '*Strive to Succeed*' is important to members of the school community with many acknowledging that successful learning is carefully planned rather than left to chance. Staff members express a belief that all students have the potential to learn and are committed to providing appropriate and engaging learning experiences that are highly differentiated to meet the diverse needs of every student. The teacher/teacher aide team works seamlessly and with a strong moral purpose to support every student to experience success each day. Parents indicate that staff members go 'above and beyond' to support their child, and students comment that teachers and teacher aides 'help them become good men and women'.

#### **Strong and cohesive sector teaching teams are leading learning.**

The school is establishing a collaborative culture through high functioning sector teams. These teams meet formally and informally to discuss and plan the implementation of the school's priorities, including curriculum implementation, student support and sharing experiences and resources. Teachers speak positively regarding their team and the opportunity to support each other's learning and wellbeing. Staff indicate that sector teams have a shared commitment to understanding and meeting the complex and challenging needs of students.

#### **Responsibility for leading improvement across the school is supported by the leadership structure.**

Heads of Department – Curriculum (HOD-C) lead one or two teaching sectors through the supervision of sector leaders and the facilitation of Professional Learning Teams (PLT). Teachers observe that leaders have different approaches and foci within PLTs. Many staff members suggest that during the current strategic cycle, the focus of improvement strategies has changed before they are fully implemented and embedded in practice. Knowledge and understanding of the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) vary across the school. Staff members express a desire to gain clarity regarding the EIA and the strategies planned to drive improvement. They communicate a desire to work collaboratively with leaders to progress a narrowly focused EIA with aligned capability development and Quality Assurance (QA) that supports embedded and consistent practice in every classroom.

#### **Staff members articulate appreciating opportunities to contribute to whole-school improvement.**

They express pride in the work they do and indicate feeling valued by their sector team. Teachers and teacher aides comment on the cohesion of the sector teams and the willingness of members to consult widely to solve problems of practice. Staff members describe a perceived growing divide they believe is emerging between the leadership team and other members of staff. Many staff members indicate a desire to participate in authentic



whole-school consultation and decision-making processes supported by professional protocols.

**The school has developed a sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that provides a reference for monitoring learning.**

In Prep to Year 10 all students are working towards individual learning goals articulated in their Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP). These are aligned to English and mathematics units of work developed and adapted from the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource by the HOD-C. Teachers articulate valuing the work and support provided by their HOD-C in terms of providing complete work units that they are able to adapt for their own students. Processes vary across classes and sectors in terms of how work is directly aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC) and students are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate the AC achievement standards. Formal school-wide QA processes to ensure that planned teaching and learning activities are enacted and delivered consistently across the school are yet to be established.

**The leadership team is dedicated to building the capability, skills and confidence of class teachers and teacher aides.**

Most teachers are observed once per term by a member of the leadership team. Observations are generally scheduled well in advance and teachers indicate they predominantly welcome classroom visits and appreciate the feedback. Teachers and school leaders articulate that the quality and consistency of the feedback vary. Staff members express a desire for greater visibility of leaders in classrooms. Some school leaders indicate that they would value additional support to enhance their instructional leadership capability to ensure that feedback provided to teachers is consistent and aligned to the EIA and the school's pedagogical priorities.

**The school has processes established to identify and respond to student needs through the allocation of staff and resources.**

The school is making a considerable investment to create opportunities to build staff members' capability. This is through release time to support intentional collaboration and to support the enactment of the collegial engagement framework. Leaders identify the need to ensure that the annual budget allocation is targeted to supporting the current cohort of students and expended in a timely manner. A process to monitor the plan for expenditure, and the effectiveness of this resource investment to support student learning outcomes, is yet to be developed.

**The school has identified the development of students' literacy and numeracy as the key to ongoing success and engagement with the curriculum.**

The systematic implementation of the Balanced Literacy and YuMi Deadly Maths (YDM) programs is occurring across all school sectors. Units of work are aligned to these approaches and simultaneously provide the opportunity for teachers to report on achievement against the AC. Teachers clearly understand these approaches and describe



using sophisticated strategies to help students develop skills and understandings as they progress through the phases of schooling. Teachers suggest that their confidence in teaching literacy and numeracy skills is being refined through the implementation of these pedagogical approaches.

**The school delivers successful programs that transition students to post-school options.**

The senior school has identified and developed long-standing partnerships with work experience and post-school program providers. Representatives of these organisations speak highly of the partnership with the school. Parents indicate they appreciate the options available in the senior years, in particular access to the Work Training Centre and work experience opportunities in Year 12. They are particularly appreciative of the individualised pathways into supported employment and lifestyle programs provided for their child. Strong staff commitment to whole-school strategies that prepare students to become adults who are 'active, productive and happy members of society' is apparent.





## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop and communicate a plan for the sustained implementation of strategies aligned to a narrowly focused EIA to ensure consistency and effectiveness of practice, and improvement in student outcomes.

Collaboratively develop processes that are supported by professional protocols and enable all staff members to authentically contribute to whole-school decision making.

Establish a systematic school-wide process to quality assure curriculum planning, delivery and reporting for all elements of the AC.

Enhance the instructional leadership capability of school leaders to ensure that feedback provided to teachers is consistent and aligned to the EIA and the school's pedagogical priorities.

Strategically align the investment of school resources to the EIA and regularly monitor expenditure and evaluate the impact on teaching and learning.