

Redbank School

Annual Report



2018



5559

Introduction

The 2018 Annual Report is provided to the community of Redbank School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and wellbeing and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

School contact details

Redbank School
Dragonfly Drive
WESTMEAD, 2145
www.redbank-s.schools.nsw.edu.au
redbank-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au
9633 1030

Message from the Principal

The 2018 school year was another busy one at Redbank School as the review of local health district mental health services for children and young people continued. The school's model of educational delivery was revised to ensure our educational programs and services continued to provide optimal support and advocacy for students and our teaching and learning programs reflected the needs of all students. Whilst our model continued to evolve, our core business remained teaching and learning. Students learn regard for themselves and others, perseverance, resilience and self-determination. Our student's learn skills and strategies for mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness and emotional regulation. Our practices empower students with the ability to make better choices about their behaviour. We maximise opportunities for students to make decisions regarding their program, their education and educational pathway. We facilitate and build connection, we collaborate and communicate within and across different areas of education and work closely with other agencies. We listen. We work as a team to meet our student's current needs whilst planning and preparing for student's future needs. We ensure a continuum of learning, a connection across home, school and community. We teach perspective. We perceive our students and our school community through a lens, a lens informed by what we know about wellbeing and it's strong link with learning, the growth and development of a child, the impact attachment relationships and trauma has on a child's growth and development. A lens informed by what we know about mental illness and the impact mental illness has on the state of wellbeing. A lens informed by some key assumptions i.e. people do the best they can with what they have and they can do better, behaviour is a form of communication and that there is a reason for behaviour, a causal link that exists between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Our lens is informed by dialectical thinking, we strive to find a synthesis, a shared path from what are often competing or opposite points of view or concepts i.e. clinical and educational, whole school and personalised, acceptance and change. Everything we do at Redbank School, we do on-purpose. Every day, every student, every member of staff and every member of our school community has a role in achieving the school's vision for Sustainable Wellbeing. I'd like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the resilience, commitment and hard work of my staff, students and community members. I look forward to working with you all as we journey together toward school excellence.

School background

School vision statement

Our vision is for Sustainable Wellbeing.

Our vision is to empower every student with the resources for sustainable wellbeing and learning, for every student to continue on their journey through education and be prepared for rewarding lives as engaged citizens in a complex and dynamic society.

Our vision is to continue to achieve our school's specific purpose and continue to be recognised as an asset to the public education system as a specialist school setting.

Our vision is to play more of a role in supporting schools in their journey toward excellence in wellbeing, in doing so, supporting more students whose education and educational trajectory may be impacted on by mental illness and significant mental health related difficulties.

School context

Redbank School is a School for Specific Purposes (SSP) co-located with Redbank House on the grounds of Westmead Hospital, Westmead. Redbank House is part of the Perinatal Child Youth Mental Health Service (PCYMHS) delivering mental health services and supports for people living with mental health issues and their families and carers in the Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD).

As an SSP, the school's programs and practices reflect the specific learning and wellbeing needs of the student population, all of whom present with severe mental illness and mental health related difficulties. Redbank School works consultatively and collaboratively with Redbank House and other mental health specialists to meet the educational needs of young people, their families and schools experiencing mental illness and mental health related difficulties.

A student's enrolment in the school is an adjustment that enables students significantly impacted by severe, often treatment resistant, mental illness and mental health related difficulties access to education in a comparable way to other students. Redbank School, as an adjustment for students with severe mental illness and significant mental health related difficulties, provides: a small setting with higher staff to student ratio; optimal opportunity for students to connect, thrive and succeed at school; intensive educational support; a positive, calm environment; personalised programs to meet the complex, diverse and dynamic needs of individual and small groups of students; wellbeing focused education programs for students to learn and grow as they progress from levels of intensive support to increased independence at school, home and in the community; more consistent and predictable management, and; staff, students, parents/carers and members of the extended school community working consultatively and collaboratively toward sustainable wellbeing.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

In the Learning Domain the school's on balance judgment was Working Towards Delivering. The school has processes in place to monitor student progress and achievement in learning, practices are in place to support key transition points and student attendance is closely monitored and supported. The wellbeing of all students is planned for, monitored and communicated and the needs of all students are explicitly addressed in teaching and learning programs. Our next steps are to ensure teaching and learning programs are explicit in identifying what students are expected to know, understand and do, develop a system to ensure parents/carers are advised about the adjustments being made in the classroom to support student learning, and develop a whole school assessment and reporting strategy.

In the Teaching Domain, the school was Working Towards Delivering. Teachers maintain calm classrooms and create a positive learning environment that utilises technology and learning spaces to enhance student learning, explicit teaching is the main practice used in the school and teachers routinely review and revise lessons plans to ensure content is based on the curriculum. Teachers work together to revise learning programs, provide regular feedback to students regarding their learning and check that students understand the feedback and the expectations for how to improve. Next steps are to ensure teachers develop a process for clear and consistent analysis and use of student progress and achievement data and the development of an explicit system for staff to facilitate increased collaboration between programs, support

classroom observation and feedback processes and the modelling of effective practice to drive and sustain on-going school wide improvement in teaching practice.

In the Leading Domain, the school was Delivering. Efficient and strategic financial management ensures the school's available resources are used flexibly to meet a broad range of student learning and wellbeing needs, provide learning spaces for students to optimise learning and achieve the priorities identified in the school plan. Parents/carers have the opportunity to engage in their students' programs which helps build the school as a cohesive educational community. Our leadership team supports teaching and non-teaching staff with annual staff performance and development reviews and continuously strive to create a culture of high expectations for all staff. The leadership team engages in a process of planning, implementation, monitoring and self-assessment and leads the collaborative development of evidence-based school plans. Next steps include a focus on syllabus implementation to ensure assessment and reporting processes provide a sound basis for student learning and a focus on creating more opportunities for staff, students and the extended school community to provide feedback on a range of areas.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our school plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/self-evidence-guide>

Strategic Direction 1

Sustainable Learning

Purpose

Sustainable learning is learning for all, learning that matters and learning that lasts. It's foundation is effective classroom practice, and it's goal is to provide for the learning needs of students and for students to progress from being developing learners to lifelong learners. Every student is engaged in evidence-based, purposeful, relevant learning that is responsive to individual needs and considers the complexities and diversity of learning in the 21st century.

Overall summary of progress

Progress toward achieving sustainable learning for all students included a focus on inclusive learning practices. Limited progress was made on the collection and assessment of appropriate learning data to measure student progress and achievement. Significant progress was made in the staff understanding of the school's specific purpose and their respective roles and responsibilities. Staff also reported increased confidence in their ability to respond to individual student learning and wellbeing needs. Some progress was made in improving staff knowledge of instructional leadership and in their capacity to work as lead learners.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
100% of students achieve individual and program learning goals.	\$30000	Educational programs revised to include quality teaching practices All students with program and individual learning goals Teaching and learning programs revised to focus more explicitly on program goals Collaboratively developed personalised learning and support plans target individual learning goals
100% of students report learning is meaningful and they feel connected, inspired and more confident that they will realise their potential.	\$20000	All students with detailed profiles and profiles used to inform teaching and learning Programs developed and delivered in partnership with specialist service providers Students engaged in project based learning activities Every student with an Individual Transition Plan
100% of staff working in the role of lead learner and contributing to instructional leadership.	\$20000	All staff with opportunities for lead roles Staff engaged in professional learning related to instructional leadership All staff active participants in school based professional learning activities

Next Steps

Next steps include the refinement of the school's process for curriculum planning including the communication of adjustments made to support student's learning in each key learning area and the revision of the school's assessment and reporting practices. Next steps also include professional learning for staff in a range of quality teaching practices with a focus on monitoring and measuring student learning progress and achievement and the development of a system to gather and analyse feedback from students, parents/carers and the school community.

Strategic Direction 2

Teaching Wellbeing

Purpose

Teaching Wellbeing is wellbeing for all, wellbeing that matters and wellbeing that lasts. It's foundation is effective classroom practice, and it's goal is to explicitly teach wellbeing and the skills and strategies for wellbeing and for students to realise their potential. Every member of staff delivering quality wellbeing focused educational programs for students with complex, dynamic and diverse educational needs related to severe mental illness and mental health related difficulties.

Overall summary of progress

Significant progress was achieved including the development of revised educational programs. Progress was made in ensuring teaching and learning programs include the explicit teaching of dialectical behaviour therapy skills and strategies. Progress was made in delivering more meaningful educational programs for students with a more explicit focus on building students capacity to better manage transitions to and between educational settings.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
100% of students with the knowledge, skills and strategies for achieving and sustaining physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive wellbeing.	\$20000	Teaching and learning programs focus on the concept of wellbeing Teaching and learning programs include the skills and strategies for wellbeing i.e. distress tolerance, mindfulness, emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness Community Access Program developed and delivered
100% of students progress toward and achieve wellbeing related individual and program goals.	\$25000	Educational programs revised to include quality teaching practices All students with individual and program wellbeing goals Teaching and learning programs revised to focus more explicitly on program wellbeing goals Collaboratively developed personalised learning and support plans target individual wellbeing goals
100% of staff working in the role of lead learner and contributing to instructional leadership.	Nil	All staff with opportunities for lead roles Staff engaged in professional learning related to instructional leadership All staff active participants in school based professional learning activities

Next Steps

Next steps include the refinement of the school's process for the recording and communication of adjustments made to support student wellbeing, revision of the school's wellbeing assessment and reporting practices including the analysis and use of student wellbeing related data. Next steps also include the need to embed explicit systems for teacher collaboration and the provision of constructive feedback to drive and sustain on-going school wide improvement in teaching practice and student outcomes. Our schools leadership team will continue to build the collective capacity of all staff through instructional leadership practices.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	\$4000	<p>This funding contributed to the school's capacity to meet the individual learning and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</p> <p>Every identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student with a Personalised Learning and Support Plan</p>
English language proficiency	\$2085	<p>This funding contributed to the school's capacity to meet the individual learning and wellbeing needs of students with a background other than English</p>
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	\$46972	<p>This funding contributed to the provision of equal and appropriate access to curriculum for all students.</p> <p>Every student with a Personalised Learning and Support Plan</p> <p>Every student with access to intensive support</p> <p>Staff with access to a mentor and informal support</p> <p>Staff engaged in professional learning relating to best-practice for students with mental illness</p> <p>Quality Teaching</p>
Socio-economic background	\$20838	<p>This funding contributed to the provision of equal and appropriate access to curriculum for all students.</p> <p>Every student with a Personalised Learning and Support Plan</p> <p>Every student with access to intensive support</p>
Access Program	As per the school's financial information published in this report	Detailed information regarding this program can be found in Other school programs in the Policy requirements section of this report
Engage Program	As per the school's financial information published in this report	Detailed information regarding this program can be found in Other school programs in the Policy requirements section of this report
Empower Program	As per the school's financial information published in this report	Detailed information regarding this program can be found in Other school programs in the Policy requirements section of this report
Community Engagement	As per the school's financial information published in this report	Community Engagement is part of every program – information regarding how the school engages with the community is included in the program reports in the Policy requirements section of this report
Aspire	N/A	Delivery of the Aspire program was delayed until 2019

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Boys	13	27	19	11
Girls	10	17	14	21

The data in the above table does NOT reflect the school's enrolment. At any one time, the school has the capacity to enrol up to sixty-three students. In 2018, the school enrolled 109 students.

Our students:

100% of our students have a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act

Our students are eligible for enrolment through an Acute Adolescent Unit admission, an ENABLE Unit admission and through the NSW DoE's Access Request process – High School ED Support Class

The length of a student's enrolment is dependent on a student's unique situation, their individual educational needs and their educational aspirations. Students may also have an enrolment offered after a parent/carer accepts an offer of placement made through the department's access request process. This process is managed by the Macquarie Park Educational Services Team. Schools, in negotiation with and on behalf of parents/carers, submit a request through the department's access request process. Eligibility for consideration includes the department's confirmation that the student is experiencing emotional disturbance and an intensive level of educational support in a specialist setting is optimal to meet the additional learning and support needs.

The school's enrolment profile includes those students whose educational trajectory has been impacted on by a hospital admission for acute mental illness or significant mental health related difficulties. Our student cohort is unique, our students present with, and have on-going complex, diverse and dynamic educational needs. Our students and their families arrive with a unique story, they often present at what is a difficult, stressful and distressing time.

Management of non-attendance

All students are expected to attend school full-time unless a student requires a flexible program. Student attendance data is recorded and attendance is closely monitored to ensure students are progressing toward and achieving their individual and program goals. Student's non-attendance is managed according to the school's attendance policy implementation procedures which include strategies to support attendance i.e. personal telephone contact, consultation with

community mental health teams and on-going communication with parents/carers to ensure optimal support for students. Student attendance data is communicated to their community schools if students have a shared enrolment status.

Structure of classes

Redbank School's specific purpose is to deliver specialist education programs and services for students whose educational trajectory has been impacted on by a hospital admission for acute mental illness or mental health related difficulties. Classes are structured to meet this purpose and ensure the educational needs of students are met. The school has eight classes for students to access education during a hospital admission and to provide intensive educational support for students, families and community schools post hospital discharge. The school also has a NSW Department of Education Support Class for students confirmed by the department as having an emotional disturbance and requiring intensive educational support.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	6.85
Teacher Librarian	0.4
School Counsellor	1
School Administration and Support Staff	11.52

*Full Time Equivalent

The Australian Education Regulation 2013 requires schools to report on the Aboriginal composition as a proportion of their school's workforce. Redbank School has 0% of staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Teacher qualifications

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

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	2

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Staff demonstrated an on-going commitment to professional learning through participation in a variety of school and non-school based activities. Professional experiences were reflective of the school's strategic directions, individual and whole school staff professional development goals as well as school and departmental priorities.

Professional learning/ topics included:

- Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation and Anaphylaxis
- Child Protection
- Code of Conduct
- Change Leaders Program
- Leading Improvement, Innovation and Change
- Writing a Quality Application
- Information Communication Technology Coordinator's Induction
- Project Based Learning
- The Voices of Autism
- Emergency Evacuation Management
- School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) Conference
- Disability Provisions
- Record of School Achievement and High School Certificate Eligibility/Credentialing
- Schools Online/Students Online Workshop
- Introduction to the Literacy and Numeracy Progression
- NSW School of Languages Supervisor Training
- Teaching Strategies and Activities for your whole class that Support LGBTIQ Families
- 2018 Redbank School Conference Wellbeing Teaching, Learning Leading
- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- Art of Nature
- Law Sense
- School and Student Administration and Learning Management.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) define the knowledge, practice and professional engagement needed for high quality effective teaching that improves student learning outcomes. The Standard uses nationally agreed indicators of teacher quality to guide the preparation, support and development of teachers throughout their careers from Graduate to Proficient Teachers, to Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. One permanent and one temporary teacher completed their accreditation at proficient level in 2018. By the end of the 2018 school year, all teaching staff at Redbank School had been accredited by the National Education Standards Authority (NESA) as proficient.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	929,102
Revenue	2,876,400
Appropriation	2,632,549
Sale of Goods and Services	229,823
Grants and Contributions	2,563
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	11,466
Expenses	-2,390,976
Recurrent Expenses	-2,390,976
Employee Related	-2,085,825
Operating Expenses	-305,151
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	485,425
Balance Carried Forward	1,414,526

Redbank School implements effective financial management processes and governance structures to ensure the accuracy, reliability and integrity of accounting and financial administration. The Finance in Schools Handbook is used to support the school in complying with the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. Professional learning was undertaken this year to develop a sound understanding of the integrated administration system provided by the introduction of the Learning Management Business Reform (LMBR) focussing on the Human Resources Budgeting Tool and the Electronic Financial Planning Tool.

Redbank School does not charge school fees, the revenue amount for the sale of goods and services reflects the fees paid by delegates to attend the school's conference. The amount does not include the cost of delivering the conference.

The intended use of the funds available at the end of the 2018 school year is to continue to upgrade technology in the school and the infrastructure to support it. We also intend to relocate the school's administration area to what will be the front of the school. This will also bring the school's administration and support resources together which will improve efficiency and efficacy in this area. We intend to refurbish the school's tennis court/basketball court and

further enhance the schools programs and services.

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Base Total	518,637
Base Per Capita	23,286
Base Location	0
Other Base	495,352
Equity Total	24,451
Equity Aboriginal	1,882
Equity Socio economic	20,485
Equity Language	2,085
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	1,702,942
Other Total	113,587
Grand Total	2,359,617

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents/carers, students and teachers about the school. In 2018, the school sought opinions about school events, programs, transition programs and community engagement.

Our students feedback suggest a varied level of satisfaction. Whilst most students appreciate the school's practices, some students find the level of supervision and the intensity of our programs difficult.

Our parents/carers present at what is often a difficult, stressful and distressing time for themselves and their families. Parents/carers express their appreciation for the understanding and non-judgemental approach that forms the basis of all our interactions and for the level of care and commitment shown by staff at all times. Parents/carers expressed a very high level of satisfaction regarding the learning and wellbeing support we provide for their child and for the

professional manner in which we advocate for them and their child.

The schools we work with report a very high level of satisfaction in our communication throughout a student's stay and for the support we offer them in understanding and meeting students individual learning and wellbeing needs.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

All Aboriginal students were involved in a process of consultation and review to develop a Personalised Learning and Support Plan. (PLSP). This process ensured that 100% of Aboriginal students had a PLSP to support learning and the achievement of their individual goals.

The school celebrated National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week. This year's theme was 'Because of her, we can', students learned about and celebrated the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and reflected on how these women have shaped our lives, our communities, our history and our nation. Students reflected on the strength, resilience and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their achievements in social justice and regarded the self-determination the women demonstrated. Reconciliation Week was celebrated with students participating in a variety of learning experiences.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait perspective continues to be integrated across all key learning areas and staff and students continue to engage in learning experiences to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

The staff and students celebrated World Harmony Day with a focus on cultural diversity and the positive contributions that different cultures make to the Australian community.

Students participated in learning aimed at recognising and celebrating diversity. This included the preparation of meals inspired by different cultures, delivering school assemblies that celebrated the uniqueness of staff and students as well as participating in numerous expressive arts and mindfulness activities.

Transcultural support services and resources were engaged to support families from culturally diverse backgrounds.

A member of staff began the Anti Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) training and is due to complete the course in 2019.

Other school programs

Redbank School provides intensive educational support for students experiencing severe mental illness and significant mental health related difficulties. Our students are entitled to equitable opportunities and choices in their education even though they don't have the same experiences as other students. They have the same rights as other students, including the right to education on the same basis as students without a disability. This means our students have the same opportunities and choices in their education that are available to other students, our students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning opportunities drawn from the curriculum and set in age-equivalent learning contexts and, while our students will access age-equivalent context, the way in which they access it and the focus of their learning may vary according to their individual learning and wellbeing needs, strengths, goals and interests.

Our model of educational delivery aligns with our school's specific purpose and with our partner PCYMHS Teams' Models of Care. Our model is flexible and responsive to ensure every student is supported in their unique journey, and to minimise the impact a hospital admission can have on a student's education and educational trajectory. We plan to enhance the model to include more opportunities for us to build the capacity of schools to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of students experiencing mental illness and significant mental health related difficulties.

In 2018 our model of educational delivery included the following programs:

ACCESS PROGRAM

This program is a wellbeing focused education program delivered in a classroom setting in the acute adolescent unit within Redbank House. School integration plays an important role in a young person's recovery, staff work with other members of the multidisciplinary team to implement the program in the context of the young person's health care plan. The classroom acts as a safe and supportive learning space for students as they access treatment and begin their journey of recovery. Education planning for individual students starts as close as possible to the time of admission. Longer hospital stays require on-going planning and review to ensure the young person, with the support of parents/carers and mental health staff, has a voice and contributes to the decisions being made about their education and future educational pathway.

Students can access their community school curriculum by bringing in hard copies of their school work into the classroom or by using the school's technological resources to access learning digitally. In addition to the existing desktops, laptops were purchased to ensure all students could access technology when required. Students also engage in a wellbeing program that focuses on the explicit teaching of wellbeing and the skills and strategies for wellbeing. Dialectical Behaviour Therapy skills and strategies form the basis of the learning. The overall program aligns with the department's wellbeing framework and includes activities to enhance student wellbeing across each of

the domains i.e. cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual. Learning modules include mindful meditation, coping skills, relaxation, visual arts, food technology, social skills and health and fitness. This year the classroom environment was updated to incorporate mindful teaching and learning principles that included painting the classrooms calming colours, purchasing new furniture and accessories to promote learning as well as incorporating mindful educational resources.

Ninety seven students accessed the program in 2018, 50% of students were from government schools and 50% were from non-government schools. Seventy nine percent of students returned to their schools with support whilst twenty one percent of students required more intensive educational support post discharge.

The students requiring more intensive support post discharge accessed an educational program focused on supporting their journey of recovery whilst building their capacity to return to school. Of the 21% of students accessing this part of the program post discharge, 33% of students returned to school whilst 66% of students required longer term intensive educational support.

ENGAGE PROGRAM

This program caters for secondary students who have been discharged from the acute adolescent unit and require intensive educational support whilst they recover from serious mental illness. The program provides optimal support for students, opportunities for students to learn and practise the skills and strategies required for them to better manage the symptoms of mental illness and opportunities to explore educational options. Staff work closely with mental health teams and other key stakeholders to support the student to realise their educational potential.

Students' programs include individual academic tasks provided by their home school, Redbank School or Sydney Distance Education High School. All students participate in the cognitive remediation program which involves students in computer based tasks designed to improve concentration, focus and memory. The wellbeing component of the program supports students to identify triggers for, and responses to distress, and allows them to practice the skills in a classroom situation. Students are supported to identify goals they would like to work toward and the steps they need to take to achieve them. A large component of the wellbeing programs involves health and fitness, relaxation, mindfulness meditation and use of coping skills, sleep hygiene, gratitude, DBT skills and strategies to support the management of difficult emotions. Mindfulness and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy skills and strategies underpin the wellbeing approach taken in the classroom with students having ready access to strategy tools, calm take space areas and meditation sessions being conducted regularly. All students participate in Mindfulness meditation sessions daily to promote wellbeing through sleep, managing emotions, improving focus and concentration, behaviour and stress management.

Students' programs also include a range of workshop based activities including gardening, sport, food technology, social interaction and communication skills, music and expressive arts. Students also participate in a weekly community access program to support their transition from school to the community. The program includes travel training, shopping, budgeting, eating out, locating services in the community, employment and TAFE courses.

Other features of the program include:

A newsletter called #CALMCORE. The aim of the newsletter was to create a valuable learning experience for students, engage with parents and families and community leaders, inform, educate and unify our community, recognise student progress and achievements and to promote relevant community services, activities and events.

Students worked on the newsletter throughout the term and, under the supervision and support of their teacher, published the newsletter at the end of each term. Features of the newsletters included recipes students had made during Food Technology as well as 'try at home' ideas, photos of learning tasks including art work created during class and workshop programs, pictures related to whole school activities including excursions and assemblies and certificates of achievement. Film, book reviews and interviews conducted by students are also regular features. Staff, parent/carer and student feedback was very positive, some of the feedback received included:

"I enjoy sitting with a coffee to read the newsletter at home with my child."

"I love the newsletter, thank you."

"The newsletter keeps me up to date with what is going on in the school."

"Seeing my child's name in the newsletter makes it special."

Community Access – this program prepares students for community participation by providing opportunities for them to engage with the community and to apply their learning in a range of situations. Students participate in weekly outings to venues within walking distance of the school or to venues that require students to plan for and use public transport. Students have demonstrated improved communication skills, budgeting and research skills and have reported feeling more independent and confident in social settings. Students researched various locations and worked on plans to travel there using opal cards and trip view apps. They completed a variety of tasks; navigating their way around suburbs, shopping centres and stores. As a result, some students have ceased using the assisted transport to school and have begun travelling to and from school independently. Other students have been successful in gaining part time employment in their local areas. All students showed improvement in their communication skills and confidence within the community. Students also participated in community volunteering activities at the RSPCA where they

showed care and regard for the animals. Volunteering enabled students to participate and interact in their community in a positive and meaningful way whilst developing skills and confidence in communication and team work. Students were encouraged to talk about their participation in the volunteering activities and reported increased happiness, a sense of purpose and satisfaction and improved self-esteem.

EMPOWER PROGRAM

This program caters for students who have been discharged from the acute adolescent unit and require intensive educational support to achieve their educational goals whilst they recover from serious mental illness. The program aims to empower students with education whilst learning the skills and strategies they require to better manage the symptoms of mental illness. Staff work closely with mental health teams and other key stakeholders to provide optimal support for students to overcome the mental health related difficulties that are impacting on their capacity to access education in a community school setting.

All students engage in an academic program and a comprehensive wellbeing program. A student's academic program is informed by the student's educational goals whilst all students wellbeing programs focus on the skills and strategies of dialectical behaviour therapy. Student progress is reviewed as required and each semester with families, community schools and community-treating teams to ensure students are progressing toward their goals. Students' goals may be revised and adjustments made as the learning and wellbeing needs of the students change.

Students whose goal is to return to school have an individualised academic program focused on work provided by their community school or by Redbank School.

Students whose goal is to transition from school are supported to secure a pathway to TAFE, employment or alternate education settings.

Students whose goal is to achieve the Higher School Certificate (HSC) at Redbank School access specialist subject teachers through a Sydney Distance Education High School (SDEHS) enrolment. All students have a Personalised Learning and Support Plan that includes the identification of the need for any adjustments necessary to support their learning. Adjustments may include an application for an extension of time to complete a task and/or an application for special examination if required. Teachers supervise and support student's distance education programs, consult and communicate constantly with subject teachers, facilitate students' participation in online learning, web and phone lessons and manage the administration process around learning tasks. In 2018, we had 18 students working toward the HSC. Every one of these students should be proud of and commended for the progress and achievements they made throughout the year. Some notable achievements included a First Place in the Preliminary (Year 11) Mathematics Standard course, a Second Place in the HSC

Chemistry course, a First Place in the HSC Community and Family Studies course and a Third Place in the HSC English Advanced course.

The **ENGAGE** and **EMPOWER** programs share some key features including:

A Healthy Start Breakfast Club. The school recognises the link between a regular healthy breakfast and improved learning and concentration at school. It is based on research that suggest a healthy breakfast improves alertness, concentration, visual and thinking abilities and improved mood and memory. Our breakfast club ensures all students can access a free nutritional breakfast before going to class.

The opportunity to engage in a range of workshop-based groups to support their learning. Some of the workshops delivered in 2018 included:

Expressive Arts – students have the opportunity to engage in experiences to recognise and represent feelings and emotions. The expressive arts can play a role in shaping our sense of personal, social and cultural identity. Learning in, through and about the expressive arts enables our students to be creative, experience joy in learning and express themselves in different ways. Students develop an appreciation of aesthetic and cultural values, identities and ideas. Students have explored how meaning can be incorporated in their own art works through the exploration of the work of other artists. They developed technical skills and explored ways to express their ideas and emotions, along with experiencing the sensory component of art making that supports their wellbeing. Students had the opportunity to attend the Art Express 2018 Exhibition at Newington Armoury, titled Curious Visions. Students viewed a selection of outstanding artworks developed for the art making component of the HSC. The exhibition encompassed a broad range of approaches and expressive forms, including ceramics, drawing, graphic design, painting, photo-media, printmaking, sculpture, textiles and fibre, and time-based forms. Our students were then able to expand on their own artworks and express themselves using various forms of styles and media. All students kept a Visual Arts Process Diary to hold their works, journal ideas and processes. All students' art work were displayed throughout the school and at the annual school conference.

Music – students engaged in activities delivered by the Australian Children's Music Foundation. The program aimed to increase emotional resilience, wellbeing, self-esteem, socialisation and concentration through the development of musical skills and performance. Students were engaged in learning to play different instruments individually and in groups. Instruments included the drums, ukulele and the guitar. Feedback indicated students enjoyed learning to play the musical instruments especially the drums and ukuleles. Some students commented they found creating music without instruments through Garage Band on the schools iPads was challenging but creative and interesting.

Gardening – students were involved in teaching and learning activities about sustainable living, healthy food

and the importance of a healthy life-style. The first stage of the program involved students in building the garden beds and preparing the soil for planting. Students then planted, grew and harvested a range of herbs, fruits and vegetables. for use in the Food Technology program. Students also created a garden for sensory stimulation . Students researched plants to determine those that would provide sensory stimulation. Students planted and grew lavender and basil and engaged with the garden as part of their individual support plans. The gardening programs provided opportunities for students to imagine possibilities, share and connect ideas, generate designs, make plans, communicate effectively, work collaboratively and transfer knowledge into new contexts.