

2020 Annual Report

Hunter River Community School



5687

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 is provided to the community of Hunter River Community 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 the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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Dear community

2020 was a year like no other. A year where normalcy was exchanged for uncertainty, confusion, and at times isolation. For our school community, the majority of 2020 was spent distanced from face to face contact with one another.

I am extremely proud of the strategies that were implemented through out the year to support the continuous learning of students and to maintain the connection with families.

In the space of a week, staff became extremely familiar with new remote learning platforms such as Seesaw, and were able to upload interactive lessons for all students. In addition, work packs were collated and sent home to families.

During the last week of Term 1, staff completed a "fun run" to every family at our school. This included staff dressing up, decorating the bus, delivering work packs, Easter Eggs and importantly doing a coffee run for families. The "fun run" was a tremendous success and enabled us to maintain the vital connection between school and home!

This year the school engaged with it's first cycle of External Validation. This inward look at school processes and procedures, enabled us to align core business with standards detailed in the School Excellence Framework. The Framework is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

I am proud of the achievements of all of our students and the ongoing success of the strategies being implemented by the school to create high quality learning experiences and to maximise student engagement. Our continued success can be underpinned by key factors that promote quality teaching and learning programs that all members of the school learning community value and appreciate.

Firstly, the staff at Hunter River Community School are dedicated, highly skilled professionals who work collaboratively to provide an inclusive environment that facilitates individual learning and celebrates student achievement. Our students are remarkable young people who demonstrate on a daily basis that having challenging and often complex disabilities, are not a barrier when it comes to achievement and success. Finally, Hunter River Community School enjoys tremendous support from our parent and local communities. This invaluable support enables our school to provide quality learning opportunities for every student.

I certify that the information provided in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-assessment and review process, undertaken by all members of the school learning community and provides a genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development

School vision

Hunter River Community School is committed to providing quality and adaptive education within an engaging and nurturing environment, which values the cultural diversity of our community. Our core business is to provide all students with access to high quality education that is free from all forms of discrimination and disadvantage. We hold high expectations for all our students and aim to promote a culture of positivity through the provision of meaningful, relevant, caring and supportive learning experiences. We actively encourage and promote school culture underpinned by the beliefs of being safe, caring and being a learner.

WE ARE SAFE

WE CARE

WE LEARN

School context

Hunter River Community School is an established K-12 School for Specific Purpose (SSP), catering for the complex needs of 67 students with a moderate to severe intellectual disability and associated conditions. The school was relocated to a state of the art facility in Metford at the beginning of 2014.

The school serves a diverse population of students from six local government areas. There are currently 67 students attending the school, all of whom have high level support needs and complex communication disorders. The school has ten classes with each class staffed with a full-time Specialist Teacher and a School Learning Support Officer. The school population includes 20% of Aboriginal students and 15% of students in an Out of Home Care arrangement.

All students have a Personalised Learning Plan developed in conjunction with a Multi-Disciplinary Team, including parents, health care professionals, community agency professionals and special education consultants.

With a Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) of 148, the school receives equity funding to improve the learning outcomes of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

As a result of ongoing school evaluation and reference to educational research our school priority areas focus on improved learning outcomes for students through, innovative student learning programs, quality teaching and leadership initiatives and enhancing supportive community engagement and participation opportunities.

Self-assessment and school achievement

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 and participated in an external validation. The Framework is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

Each year, we assess our practice against the Framework to inform our school plan and annual report. Every five years, our school undergoes an external validation process.

During the external validation process, an independent panel consisting of a Principal School Leadership and a peer principal considered our evidence and assessment of our school's progress against the School Excellence Framework.

Our self-assessment and the external validation 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/school-excellence>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2020 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Excelling
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Excelling
LEARNING: Curriculum	Excelling
LEARNING: Assessment	Excelling
LEARNING: Reporting	Excelling
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Excelling
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Professional standards	Excelling
TEACHING: Learning and development	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Excelling
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Excelling

Strategic Direction 1

QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Purpose

To promote, build and sustain the professional learning and development of all staff members through the creation of a professional culture to benefit young people with complex disabilities.. Staff will be encouraged to follow a tiered level of development - engaging in school based mentoring and sharing opportunities, networking with colleagues, and participating in formal, delivered professional learning opportunities for the increase of outcomes for all students.

Improvement Measures

Review of PDP's will demonstrate a commitment to Professional Learning, accreditation and mentoring

An increasing capacity of teachers to explicitly differentiate the curriculum to create teaching and learning programs for young people with complex learning disabilities.

Staff increasingly demonstrate a culture which values mentoring and collaboration.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Professional Learning and culture in relation to the national standards

- * Key staff will continue to work collaboratively to develop a school culture focused on Professional Learning, Professional Accreditation and Professional mentoring.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Tools: Audit of PDP file.	Non - teaching panel to complete PDP
Findings: All PDP's were completed, however not all PDP's were kept in the same folder.	Replacement SLSO Health
Implications: All PDP's were moved to a file on the executive drive.	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-economic background (\$2500.00)

Process 2: Adapting Curriculum

- * Teachers will work collaboratively to develop a culture of explicit differentiation to successfully meet the learning needs of every student at Hunter River Community School

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Was there growth? Have students regressed?	Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional learning (\$1000.00)• Socio-economic background (\$2000.00)
Tools: Summative Data from all assessments.	
Findings: Student growth has been measured in this year's executive summary. There has been a majority of student who have moved forward or remained the same in targeted areas. there has been some regression, however this will be addressed in the executive meeting.	
Implications: Continued Professional Learning with staff on how to effectively use the assessment data to inform teaching and learning	

Process 3: Building Staff Capacity

- * Staff will be engaged in professional learning, focusing on Quality Teaching Framework, the Professional Teaching Standards and Australian Curriculum areas.
- * Staff capacity will be built by Instructional Leaders being selected leading staff in professional opportunities, focusing on development of skills, knowledge and understanding of curriculum content,

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 3: implementation requirements and teaching standards.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Tools: Executive collaboration on the current model. Establish a timetable to accommodate for modifications.</p> <p>Findings: This will be addressed on staff development day in Term 1, 2021.</p> <p>Implications: A new collaborative planning POD model will be trialled</p>	<p>Surveys</p> <p>Professional Conversations</p> <p>Instructional Leadership Model</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$16408.00)

Strategic Direction 2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Purpose

To develop relationships with people in our community which support our students in finding greater success and confidence as citizens. Through encouragement of partnerships with community members and groups, we can create a broader knowledge of how our students can achieve with their support and as part of their network.

Improvement Measures

Increasing the effectiveness of the connections between individual goal setting, student's school outcomes and post school outcomes that facilitate students leaving school and moving into meaningful pathways

There will be an increased level of satisfaction with the communication strategies employed by Hunter River Community School that result in the strengthening of relationships and partnerships

Student outcomes will be positively impacted through partnerships with outside agencies that support students during life long learning and all transition periods

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Student outcomes

Goal setting processes facilitate the development of relationships with all key stakeholders

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>QUESTIONS: How many businesses have topic boards? Were topic boards able to made for each place? What % of students achieved their goals/indicators.</p> <p>TOOLS: School reports. Photos of topic board in businesses.</p> <p>FINDINGS: 51% of PLSP goals/indicators were achieved.</p> <p>IMPLICATIONS: Due to COVID-19 topic boards have not been able to be placed into shops etc.</p>	

Process 2: Community relationships and partnerships

Supporting and informing our school community will facilitate the development of effective partnerships and relationships

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>QUESTIONS: Is the webpage up to date with all current projects and information? What platform will the PRIDE program use to promote and sell its items?</p> <p>TOOLS: Webpage</p> <p>FINDINGS: We have been working with the IT support to update the webpage. Newsletter and school facebook page are the best platforms to promote the PRIDE programs.</p> <p>IMPLICATIONS: The webpage is time consuming to update and can sometimes have problems with uploading correctly.</p>	<p>Employment of a Computer Coordinator x 1 day per week</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Operational funding (\$13300.00)

Process 3: Transition

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 3: Work to support all students in during transition processes to facilitate lifelong learning.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>QUESTIONS: How many session has each student attended? Does each student have a detailed portfolio?</p> <p>TOOLS: Transition timetables and completed portfolios.</p> <p>FINDINGS: Students have not been able to attend their PSO centers due to COVID-19 restrictions. All year 12 students have a portfolio completed so that they can hand it over to their PSO.</p> <p>IMPLICATIONS: COVID-19 has impacted the activities. It has been unfortunate that students have not had the opportunity to visit and transition to their future center.</p>	

Strategic Direction 3

STUDENT LEARNING AND WELLBEING

Purpose

To develop and implement challenging, innovative and inclusive curriculum that enables students to be effective community citizens. Having effective communication skills and positive well being school practices will enhance student learning outcomes.

Improvement Measures

As a result of the program, staff will have greater knowledge of Aboriginal culture and increase the prevalence of Aboriginal perspectives in their teaching and learning programs.

As a result of the programs, 100% of students will have a communication profile that reflects their individual communicative needs and incorporates augmentative communication technologies as required.

.Students increasingly demonstrate the school's values of 'We are Safe - We Care - We Learn'.

An increasing engagement of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) in the Science and Technology Curriculum (K-10).

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Communication: Research and implement best practice strategies for communication with children with complex disabilities.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Questions What have we achieved?</p> <p>Tools Communication Team Meeting Minutes</p> <p>Findings Staff and students refer to the playground communication boards</p> <p>Implications Any new student who does not have Communication Matrix done will have this done in 2021.</p>	<p>Communication Support Officer - SLSO</p> <p>Medical Support Officer - SLSO</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-economic background (\$73100.00)• Aboriginal background loading (\$13740.00)• School Operational Funding (\$30000.00)

Process 2: Wellbeing: Evaluate and plan effective wellbeing practices across all school contexts to enhance individual and system wide effectiveness.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Questions What have we achieved?</p> <p>Tools PBL Meeting Minutes and Student PBL levels</p> <p>Findings Staff fully engaged and embracing PBL lessons, awards and PBL core values</p> <p>Staff confident in uploading Positive Behaviour on computer.</p> <p>More rewards were needed for the increasing higher levels of PAWS.</p> <p>Red and Green choices consistent language across the school</p> <p>Some class resources are missing or damaged</p>	<p>Development of resources</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School operational funding (\$1000.00)

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Implications Set goals for future

Replace resources where necessary

Process 3: Aboriginal Education: Deliver quality professional learning on Aboriginal learning to enhance classroom practices and school wide celebrations..

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Questions What have we achieved?</p> <p>What could we do better?</p> <p>Tools Discussion at staff/team/executive meeting</p> <p>Findings Due to COVID-19 restrictions celebrations consisted of a different format to previous years.</p> <p>NAIDOC Week was postponed until November, however COVID-19 restrictions were still in place.</p> <p>Implications Celebration days were significantly lower key.</p>	<p>Employment of additional SLSO Heath to support students (COVID influenced what activities could occur) - funding as per above program</p>

Process 4: Science and Technology: To refine and implement best practice STEM teaching in the K-12 school environment.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Questions What have we achieved?</p> <p>Tools Science Meeting Minutes and survey</p> <p>Findings Staff prepared for using the Scope and Sequence.</p> <p>More staff are aware of STEM and have included these activities in their teaching.</p> <p>Staff confidence has increased.</p> <p>New staff will need further guidance in implementing Science and STEM</p> <p>Implications Review staff confidence in including STEM and BOTS activities in their teaching in 2021 through peer support.</p>	<p>Employment of additional SLSO's to assist students x 4</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Seesaw Subscription</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SSP Supplementary funding (\$286931.00)• School operational funding (\$1000.00)

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	<p>SLSO Health</p> <p>NAIDOC Day resources</p> <p>In RAM Aboriginal, \$13 740 were received. All funds were expended on SLSO Health wages and resources</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal background loading (\$13 740.00) 	<p>The additional support for students with complex needs proved to be extremely beneficial. The extra support facilitated all individual plans accurately representing student needs, which in turn maximised student engagement in all areas</p>
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	<p>Teacher as an additional RFF position</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$16 408.00) 	<p>The impact of having senior and executive staff fill the role of an Instructional Leader has been significant. Working alongside teachers has promoted a culture of self reflection and review, which as facilitated more effective teaching practices which have improved student outcomes,</p>
Socio-economic background	<p>SLSO Heath x 2</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic background (\$99 453.00) 	<p>Both of these programs proved to be extremely beneficial for all students, staff and families. The additional support enabled the all of the student's individual needs to be met in a systemic, authentic manner. Additionally, this further prompted student engagement</p>
Support for beginning teachers	<p>\$ 14 481 (\$14 429.18-salaries)</p> <p>\$51.82 (software)</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for beginning teachers (\$14 481.00) 	<p>The Support for Beginning Teacher Program is an extremely important initiative to scaffold the development of Early Career Teachers. The additional weekly RFF, enabled both BT and mentor to spend quality instructional time together, to work collaboratively on agreed areas of development.</p> <p>Unfortunately, COVID restrictions limited the external Professional Learning that was available</p>

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Boys	48	47	45	52
Girls	17	19	19	18

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

At Hunter River Community School, we are committed to ensuring that all students attend school regularly to maximise their learning opportunities.

To facilitate explicit tracking of an individual's attendance, weekly Attendance Meetings are held between the Principal or delegate and the School Administration Officer that monitors student attendance.

A two tiered system is implemented to assist families and carers communicate non- attendance. The first is a daily SMS which is sent out after class roles are marked. The second is a follow up Attendance Letter that is sent weekly, if there has been no explanation for absence received.

Attendance meetings are also held to support families and students who have low attendance rates.

As a School for Specific Purposes, we engage in a once per term Attendance Check with the Home School Liaison Officer. This review enables school procedures to be aligned with policy, and ensures that the attendance of all students is closely monitored.

Management of non-attendance

Attendance at school has a big impact on longer term outcomes for children and young people. When a child is not at school they miss important opportunities to learn, build friendships and develop their skills through play. Regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. By working together we can have a positive effect on supporting our children and young people to regularly attend school.

Our teachers promote and monitor regular attendance at school and all our schools have effective measures in place to record attendance and follow up student absences promptly. They are guided by the School Attendance policy which details the management of non-attendance.

Post school destinations

The introduction of NDIS funding has provided students and their families with a greater flexibility in designing a Post School Program that is tailored to meet individual needs, and to maximise life experiences.

In 2020, we had 6 Year 12 students who left school with their Higher School Certificate - Life Skills. Two graduates entered center- based programs and the remaining four have an individualised community and home based program that has been designed to meet their complex medical and self-regulation needs.

In addition to our Year 12 graduates, two students successfully applied for their ROSA and exited school in Year 11. Both of these young people have complex needs and are accessing individualised programs.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational education qualification

6 students were able to successfully graduate Year 12 with their Higher School Certificate - Life Skills.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	9.26
Teacher Librarian	0.4
School Administration and Support Staff	13.82
Other Positions	0.74

*Full Time Equivalent

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce composition

The Department actively supports the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees through the use of identified positions, and scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2020, 3.7% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2020 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	6.30%
Teachers	3.30%	2.80%

Note 1 - The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014-17 introduced an aspirational target of 1.8% by 2021 for each of the sector's salary bands. If the aspirational target of 1.8% is achieved in salary bands not currently at or above 1.8%, the cumulative representation of Aboriginal employees in the sector is expected to reach 3.3%.

Note 2 - Representation of diversity groups are calculated as the estimated number of staff in each group divided by the total number of staff. These statistics have been weighted to estimate the representation of diversity groups in the workforce, where diversity survey response rates were less than 100 per cent. The total number of staff is based on a headcount of permanent and temporary employees.

Teacher qualifications

All casual, temporary and permanent teachers in NSW public schools must hold a NSW Department of Education approval to teach. Teachers with approval to teach must be accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority, and hold a recognised teaching degree. All NSW teachers must hold a valid NSW Working With Children Check clearance.

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is core to enabling staff to improve their practice. Professional learning includes five student-free School Development Days and induction programs for staff new to our school and/or system. These days are used to improve the capacity of teaching and non-teaching staff in line with school and Departmental priorities.

In 2020, an additional School Development Day was included at the start of Term 2 to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, such as online and remote learning.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2020 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	390,210
Revenue	3,556,138
Appropriation	3,506,141
Sale of Goods and Services	7,094
Grants and contributions	41,864
Investment income	1,024
Other revenue	16
Expenses	-3,639,229
Employee related	-3,438,061
Operating expenses	-201,168
Surplus / deficit for the year	-83,091
Closing Balance	307,120

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.

Financial summary - Equity loadings

The equity loading data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' line item of the financial summary above.

	2020 Approved SBA (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	113,193
Equity - Aboriginal	13,740
Equity - Socio-economic	99,453
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	2,934,094
Base - Per Capita	32,179
Base - Location	1,975
Base - Other	2,899,940
Other Total	405,160
Grand Total	3,452,447

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.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

- Through a variety of means, families, friends and carers indicated that they were extremely happy with the school, staff and programs. Any issues that did arise, were reviewed in quick time.
- Student satisfaction was measured through engagement. Each morning, every students enters school with a smile. Via a symbol based document, students registered what they liked about school

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education Policy

The responsibility for enacting the Aboriginal Education Policy rests with all Departmental staff. The policy should underpin and inform planning, teaching practice and approaches to educational leadership in all educational settings.

Evidence of effective implementation of the policy included:

- Establishing, building and strengthening relationships with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal people and communities.
- Providing, in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, education which promotes quality teaching, is engaging, and is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- Implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways for all Aboriginal students in a school culture of high expectations.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. Principals are responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. All schools have an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers address the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. Principals are responsible for ensuring that school policies, programs and practices respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community, and provide opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes.