

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

Sydney Technical High School 8141



School vision and context

School vision statement

Sydney Technical High School provides an outstanding learning environment where students can achieve their personal best in all fields of endeavour. Students are challenged to engage in intellectual, creative, social and physical domains. We want our students to value life long learning. We expect our students to be respectful, take responsibility and practice integrity in their daily lives. We want our students to grow into motivated adults who make meaningful contributions to the future directions of our global society. We understand the privilege associated with the role that our school community has carriage within this service for our students and value the opportunities this provides.

School context

Sydney Technical High School is an academically selective school for boys with a current enrolment of 920 students. Entry is on merit through the NSW selective schools test prior to Year 7. The school also accepts some additional gifted and talented students in Year 11. We pride ourselves on an academically rigorous setting and 100% of our HSC graduates attend university. Despite these outstanding results, our school is committed to pursuing continual improvement in all of our students' literacy and numeracy competencies as we know how crucial they are to learning and indeed, throughout life. The school draws on students from a wide area who travel from many different parts of Sydney and represent many primary school backgrounds. Students have a strong sense of belonging with retention rates of approximately 98% or higher. They also proudly represent many cultural backgrounds (94% LBOTE) of which 42% are of Australian Chinese origin.

The school reflects a strong sense of inclusion and civic responsibility, developing the engagement and mature relationships that build leadership and social capital. Sydney Technical High School has a close relationship with parents/carers and a community highly invested in the wellbeing and achievement of their sons. Wellbeing, including the physical, emotional and psychological development of young men, plays a central role in the school's culture and goals. To meet the unique needs of gifted and high potential boys there is an emphasis placed on higher-level learning across a broad curriculum that integrates with a range of enriching co-curricular activities. Sydney Technical High School is steeped in a long and proud tradition and its students continue to conspicuously serve the community across a wide range of aspirational vocations.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

Our purpose is to create the most optimal learning at Sydney Technical High School to maximise student performance in literacy and numeracy where all students are challenged and engaged through explicit evidence-based teaching methods which are informed by data.

A literate and numerate society underpins a democratic one and therefore a world where our student citizens can make valuable contributions. As healthy, informed and resilient young men, it will be their experiences as students at STHS that will provide a bedrock to their own knowledge and capabilities to be critical thinkers and creative problem solvers.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

1. Students achieving expected growth in NAPLAN numeracy will improve by 3%
2. Students achieving expected growth in NAPLAN reading will improve by 3%
3. Students achieving in the Top 2 Bands for NAPLAN reading will improve by 3%.
4. Students achieving in the Top 2 Bands HSC will improve by 5%

Target year: 2023

1. Increased 3% from 2022 results of student achieving expected growth in NAPLAN numeracy.
2. Increased 3% from 2022 results of student achieving expected growth in NAPLAN reading.

Initiatives

Explicit teaching

Effective, explicit, evidence-based teaching and high expectations will create optimal learning environments where all students are challenged and engaged to achieve their educational potential supporting growth in literacy and numeracy.

Data driven practices

Assessment and other data are used in an ongoing manner to inform learning and teaching across all domains (intellectual, creative, social-emotional and physical).

Wellbeing

Learning environments support the social-emotional development and wellbeing of high potential and gifted students enable them to connect, succeed and thrive. Effective wellbeing support is vital for both staff and students.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Effective, explicit, evidence-based teaching and high expectations will create optimal learning environments where all students are challenged and engaged to achieve their educational potential supporting growth in literacy and numeracy.

Teaching programs reflect high challenge and high engagement learning experiences.

Teachers will provide opportunities for: learning intentions, modelling, use of exemplars, formative assessment, explicit feedback, and success criteria.

Systems and structures are in place to record data and are accessible to all staff.

Staff are confident in data analysis pertaining to their Key Learning Areas and have good knowledge of how data informs practice.

Data explicitly informs teaching and learning programs across all domains - intellectual, creative, social-emotional and physical.

Assessment - formative and summative is informed by data in an ongoing manner.

Data is compared across year groups to identify trends to meet the learning needs and wellbeing of our students.

Measure of programs - All teachers explicitly teach literacy and numeracy to students in all subject areas using quality, valid and reliable data.

Data informs curriculum compacting and HPGE strategies - differentiation and extension - are visible on teaching and learning programs

Learning environments support the social-emotional development and wellbeing of high potential and gifted students enabling them to connect, succeed and thrive.

The school has implemented evidence-based change to whole school practices, resulting in measurable improvements in wellbeing and engagement to support

Success criteria for this strategic direction

improved learning.

Wellbeing is a collaborative whole school approach demonstrated by strong relationships between students, staff, parents and community.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions:

1. What are the short term and long term student learning outcomes from the school providing sustained, targeted literacy and numeracy support?
2. What has been the impact of using explicit teaching informed by data protocols on student performance? How did the provision of a strategic and proactive wellbeing program supporting staff and students maximise student learning outcomes?

Data:

1. Student attainment in external NAPLAN numeracy growth, literacy reading growth and achievement in top 2 bands HSC.
2. Student attainment in external Check-in, Best Start, HSC Minimum Standards, VALID and ICAS competitions
3. Student attainment in internal literacy and numeracy assessment data

Analysis:

Data is gathered, analysed and triangulated strategically and with transparency to determine the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved.

Implications:

Rigorous analysis of the data by teachers, Executive and Senior Executive to determine impact will guide both

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

ongoing implementation as well as future school planning. This will provide continuous improvement, ensuring students continue to grow to attain their maximum potential.

Strategic Direction 2: Leadership

Purpose

Our purpose is to create a dynamic centre of educational excellence and a school where students and staff alike love to learn. A culture of collective responsibility will ensure that the capacity of all members of our school community is empowered.

Leadership is about influence. Acknowledging that all members of our school community, be they students, teachers, counsellors, administrative staff, parents, external partners or Alumni - we have a collective responsibility to develop and exercise leadership skills. If leadership is about influence, then any type of improvement that a school wishes to explore must come from the relationships within these dynamics. Leadership development over the next four years at STHS will explore authentic programs that can identify and cultivate this at several levels. Leadership is not and should not be confined to personnel across the school with particular portfolios. Teachers are leaders in their classrooms. Students are leaders in their sporting teams. Head Teachers are leaders of their faculty's development of pedagogy. We are all leaders for the advancement of public education across NSW.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

A 2% increase in the percentage of students reporting positive wellbeing from our 2021 *Tell Them From Me* results.

Target year: 2022

Increase teacher leadership capacity from 2021 results through improvements of and commitment to fostering a culture of professional trust within self and others.

Target year: 2024

SEF S-as recognised the Learning - Wellbeing theme of 'caring of students' at the level of "Excellence".

Target year: 2024

Initiatives

Student leadership

Leadership opportunities provide students with platforms in which they can meaningfully develop the skills associated with building effective relationships within teams, defining their identity and making authentic contributions to the school.

STHS aims to provide all students with real-world opportunities to develop themselves as active citizens through an all-round approach to their social-emotional and physical development as students at a selective high school.

Reinvigorating the house systems and rolls to increase student leadership capacity and increase the relevance of the house system can allow student-student mentoring initiatives and positive increases towards various wellbeing indicators.

A review and update of the student recognition/awards systems at STHS: from merits to Wykeham to SRC eligibility to school references, all existing and other future options to be explored so as to provide every student with increased opportunities to connect, thrive and succeed in their student life at STHS.

Teacher leadership

"You need to create a culture in your school where every teacher expects to improve. Not because they are not good enough, but because every teacher knows that they need to get better" - Emeritus Professor Dylan Wiliam.

All teachers are professionally developed and recognised as active educational leaders across many aspects of their professional school life, but in particular, the core business of pedagogy. Whether they be classroom teachers, (Snr.) Executive and/or responsible for additional portfolios, leadership identification and development opportunities will be provided. Teachers can be leaders of pedagogy in their classroom with an impact on student outcomes just as Executive members lead

Success criteria for this strategic direction

'The quality of (school) leadership should be judged primarily by its impact on students' (V. Robinson 2011).

The leadership of self, others and through inquiry will be the focus of this strategic direction's initiatives and subsequent activities. Educators across the school community will be empowered to lead their context with their students at the centre.

The School Leadership Institute's curriculum, resources and personnel will be utilised to drive and measure these initiatives resulting in improved teacher efficacy, professional trust and impact on student achievement.

Student life will be positively impacted by authentic learning opportunities that promote inclusiveness, participation and connectedness to their school and each other.

Teachers collaborate to share curriculum knowledge, data, feedback and other information about student progress and achievement which meet the learning needs of all students.

The school identifies expected growth for each student. Students are achieving higher than expected growth on internal school progress and achievement data.

School data demonstrates student progress and achievement are greater than students at statistically similar schools on external measures. This is consistent with strong student progress and achievement on internal measures.

Progress and achievement of equity groups within the school are equivalent to or greater than the progress and achievement of all students in the school.

EAL/D (English as an additional language or dialect) and LST (learning support teacher) teams are collaborative, build the capabilities of all teachers and are an integral component of whole-school approaches to language, literacy and numeracy programs.

Strategic Direction 2: Leadership

Improvement measures

SEF S-as records 'Teaching - learning and development' theme of collaborative practice and feedback at the level of "Excellence"

Target year: 2024

SEF S-as records 'Teaching - learning and development' theme of professional learning at the level of "Excellence"

Target year: 2024

SEF S-as records 'Leading - educational leadership' theme of high expectations at the level of "Excellence"

Initiatives

faculty improvement within the curriculum or at a whole school operational level. All teachers are empowered and supported to lead themselves and others in a culture of collaboration, trust and inquiry.

2021 Theme - *Leading self* - 2021 STHS professional learning will explore key leadership requirements that draw on a repertoire of practices performed by school leaders. Leaders will review their current practices, recognise their strengths and focus on further opportunities for development.

The role, existence and importance of professional trust is to be explicitly taught and evaluated to/from the teaching staff at STHS. The School Leadership Institute (SLI) has developed a School Leadership Identification Framework (SLIF) to help to identify and support future school leaders. The SLIF is a resource for teacher leaders who want to enhance their leadership impact or who aspire to move into a formal leadership role such as head teacher. This framework recognises teacher leaders and provides them with the opportunity for development - through collaboration and professional learning, and by receiving quality feedback on their leadership behaviours and capabilities. Using the SLIF, teacher leaders at STHS can work with their supervisor to develop a leadership profile and set development goals. The process includes mentoring, shadowing, and classroom observation.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Teachers demonstrate high-quality skills in explicit teaching and differentiation to highly engage our gifted and high potential male students.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions:

1. What is the school's climate in terms of staff satisfaction, trust, morale and collegiality?
2. What has been the impact of using consistent, explicit teaching protocols on student performance? Do teachers collaborate to evaluate, reflect on and adapt practice?

Data:

1. Teacher attendance, promotion, movement, wellbeing, participation, conflict/complaints management.
2. These data sources will be collected and analysed by relevant teachers, leaders and teams: external student performance measures (NAPLAN); Teacher TTFM, surveys, internal student performance measures - Wykeham Award statistics; Negative Wellbeing reports (Sentral); student connectedness to the school and their House groups; School Excellence Framework assessments.

Analysis:

Data is analysed and triangulated strategically and with transparency to determine the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved.

Implications:

Rigorous analysis of the data to determine impact will guide both ongoing implementations as well as future school planning to provide continuous improvement. This will ensure teachers grow in their profession as students grow in their learning through a sense of belonging to

Strategic Direction 2: Leadership

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

STHS.

Strategic Direction 3: Innovation

Purpose

The purpose of innovation in education is to authentically equip our students for the challenges ahead of them in the 21st Century. Innovative pedagogy and enhanced platforms to access and showcase its results builds the capacity of our students to be more inquiry-based, collaborative and creative is paramount.

Every year, 100% of our graduates go on to university. A recent Harvard Business School article identifies that our current generation of young people will experience no less than 17 career/study changes in their lives before - or perhaps not ever - reaching their ideal vocation. Our HPGE students, therefore, require learning opportunities from passionate and expert teachers that can best equip them for their lives ahead for the improvement of our world. This notion is at the essence of public education and we, as privileged educators at a selective high school, are obliged to facilitate.

Across all three of our new Strategic Directions, the epicentre of where its success will evolve is in every single teachers' classroom. Across all three directions, irrespective of the initiatives that will drive it, the expertise of every one of our teachers and leaders is crucial.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

- Increase percentage of student attendance by 4%
- 60% of teachers have achieved their Certificate of Gifted Education or equivalent accreditation

Target year: 2023

- 80% of teachers have achieved their Certificate of Gifted Education or equivalent accreditation

Target year: 2024

- 100% of teachers have achieved their Certificate of Gifted Education or equivalent accreditation

Initiatives

Innovative practices

This initiative will explore, implement and evaluate **innovative pedagogy, programs and partnerships**. Contemporary lesson delivery and learning practices will be revolutionised by embracing emerging technologies and invigorating learning environments, all targeted for our specific STHS setting.

There shall be an emphasis on flexible access to curriculum options, differentiation, personalised learning, and programs that develop resilience, motivation, effort and perseverance.

Within STHS cross-curriculum connectivity and collaboration will be extended. Consistent and optimised use of technology for teaching, learning, assessment and feedback, alongside innovative class formation and curriculum delivery in a selective setting, shall be pursued.

Teachers of high potential and gifted learners will be supported through professional learning, advanced study, and experience in teaching so they display mastery in their teaching practice.

Partnerships will be formed and/or strengthened with similar schools, innovative schools, tertiary institutions, industry groups, families and alumni to provide exciting real world opportunities for our students.

Showcasing innovation

This initiative will look to **showcase the innovation** that emanates from practice and make it central to the identity of STHS. This may take the form of displays, performances and open nights, along with innovative teaching and learning practices, that allow us to showcase innovation at STHS. We will expand and innovate our means of displaying our achievements and attributes to both the wider school and general community with a revitalised website and online presence. Moreover, it may be used as an incentive for students to develop innovative ideas that they are able to then showcase.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

The formation of a selective cluster of schools to share knowledge and pedagogical ideas from the view of selective and HPGE best practice. All teachers to pursue and achieve accreditation in gifted education.

Partnering with innovative schools to pursue the replication of real world expectations of teaching and learning and prepare our students for tertiary education. Rejuvenation of learning spaces will support contemporary teaching and learning.

Increased, inspiring involvement of alumni to share their journeys and experiences and how their time at STHS contributed to preparing them for life after school.

Connections strengthened between KLA, with designated faculty representatives tasked with finding and exploiting common techniques and content. This will result in the partial realignment of teaching programs to facilitate the flow of content and skills between subjects and these skills being taught and implemented in a collaborative way.

Post school readiness programs developed to ensure our graduating students are equipped with the real world life skills required for a smooth transition into productive adulthood.

The effective and maximal utilisation of established and emerging online platforms will enhance differentiated teaching and learning and facilitate provision of immediate feedback.

Compacting the curriculum of selected additional subject/s will reduce the number of courses studied in Year 12 and better engage students in stage 6.

Revitalisation of the school's online media presence; website re-invigoration, increased quality and usage of social media platforms.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Improvement measures

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions:

1. What existing and emerging technologies will have the greatest impact in enhancing teaching and learning in the STHS setting?
2. How will we facilitate the linkages of faculties and realignment of teaching programs to allow for clear, productive and effective connections between subjects?
3. Which schools will be appropriate and willing to partner with STHS to develop contemporary overarching and subject specific selective high school teaching and learning strategies ensuring mutual benefit and growth?
4. Which media platforms will be the most manageable by staff administrators; and most desired and frequented by our students, families and the wider community?

Data:

1. Student attendance rate
2. Percentage of teachers trained in gifted education
3. Frequency and depth of interactions between a cluster of schools
4. Production of pilot strategies and launch of schoolwide initiatives
5. Number of posts and interactions on social media platforms

Analysis:

Objective and subjective data will be strategically gathered, analysed and presented with the intent of gauging our progress, need for adjustment, and ultimately success in meeting the key objectives of the innovation direction.

Implications:

The innovation strategic direction, by its nature, will be

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

evolving during and beyond the life of the School Improvement Plan. Frequent gathering and analysis of data by all staff, as guided by Senior Executive and the Strategic Direction team leaders, will determine the evolving path that STHS will take to meet our core objectives of embedding, continuously advancing and showcasing our innovative practices to the school and wider communities.