

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

The Forest High School 8372



School vision and context

School vision statement

At The Forest High School, we strive to provide opportunities for students to be challenged to engage in school and community life now and into the future. We are committed to ensuring that every student, every year is improving and progressing. We have high expectations of our staff and students and we continually strive to improve ourselves and our work so that all students can acquire the knowledge, skills and character needed to live happy, healthy and successful lives.

School context

The Forest High School is a co-educational, comprehensive secondary school for Years 7 to 12 students with a unit of three special education classes catering for the learning needs of students with autism. The school is located in Northern Metropolitan Sydney's Northern Beaches area. The student population of 825 students has been steadily growing over the last several years. Our school community is culturally and linguistically diverse. Approximately 20% of students are from an EAL/D (English an additional language or dialect) background. 2.2% of all students identify as having Aboriginal background, with some of the students coming from rural and remote areas of NSW. Students participate in a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences focusing on academic improvement and excellence across a range of academic, cultural, sporting and vocational pursuits.

The school's staffing entitlement in 2020 was 62 teaching staff and 13.5 non-teaching staff. The school also employs a third Deputy Principal, a Head Teacher Secondary Studies, a Head Teacher Wellbeing and an additional 0.6 Learning and Support Teacher (LaST) as well as several School Learning and Support Officers. The majority of our executive staff have been at the school for more than five years. There is a small turnover of staff each year due to retirements, transfers and promotions.

The school is strongly supported by its diverse community, with an active Parent and Community (P&C) Committee. We have fostered strong community partnerships with the Gawura AECG, Tibetan Community, Northern Beaches Hospital, local communities of schools, universities, businesses, cultural institutions and community groups. The school has established in-house enterprise learning opportunities for students, including a student managed coffee cafe. Students represent the school across the metropolitan area in art exhibitions, music and dance ensembles, charity work, public speaking and a wide range of sporting activities with national, state and regional representation.

The majority of the school's equity funding will be used to support initiatives developed in the 2021 - 2024 School Improvement Plan. Some funds will be used to support other activities not embedded in this plan.

The school is committed to continually improving and embedding quality teaching practices with professional learning being a key strategy for achieving this objective. Professional learning will ensure that both students' literacy and numeracy levels are enhanced through improved data collection, analysis and use, which underpins our plan to ensure individualised and differentiated learning programs are effectively implemented whole school.

The school will move forward with a focus on four themes: data to inform practice, classroom management, assessment and explicit teaching. We will continue to expand and refine the Writing Passport Program 7 - 10 and continue our focus on wellbeing for effective learning with a goal to ensure every student can identify a teacher advocate at school. Professional learning will be implemented to build teachers' capacity to coach and mentor students.

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The focus on Higher School Certificate performance will continue in the School Improvement Plan with staff professional learning around analysis and use of data to increase teachers' understanding of how to deepen student knowledge and skills through explicit teaching of concepts and writing extended responses.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

Our purpose is to ensure that every student is engaged, challenged and encouraged to learn in every classroom. By creating a school culture of aspirational learning, students are empowered to achieve sustained and long term growth.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

- Increase of 5% of students achieving in the top 2 NAPLAN bands in reading to reach the school's lower bound system-negotiated target.
- Increase of 5% of students achieving in the top 2 NAPLAN bands in numeracy to reach the school's lower bound system-negotiated target.
- Increase of 6% of HSC course results in the top three bands to reach the school's lower bound system-negotiated target.

Target year: 2023

- Improvement in the percentage of students achieving expected growth in Year 9 NAPLAN reading of 4% to meet the lower bound system-negotiated target.
- Improvement in the percentage of students achieving expected growth in Year 9 NAPLAN numeracy of 6% to meet the lower bound system-negotiated target.

Target year: 2024

- Lift of 6% of EAL/D students achieving in the top three bands in HSC English as an Additional Language/Dialect.
- The literacy and numeracy goals as set in PLPs are met by all Aboriginal students.

Initiatives

HSC - Raising the Bands

Strengthening students' knowledge and skills and improving student achievement in the HSC through a continued teacher focus on quality teaching practice, effective formative assessment, explicit feedback, high expectations and differentiation. The most effective evidence-based teaching methods are identified, promoted and modelled, and students' learning improvement is monitored, demonstrating growth.

- Teaching practice is informed by research such as What Works Best and High Impact Professional Learning.
- Develop thorough teacher understanding and professional capacity for analysis of HSC (RAP data) and minimum standard data to identify improvement measures and to target areas as required. (WWB - use of data to inform practice)
- Strengthen teacher use of effective formative assessment and feedback as guided by the School Excellence Framework.
- All teachers build a culture of high expectations in their classroom through appropriate differentiation of the curriculum in order to challenge and engage students.
- Whole school PL on effective differentiation strategies to build all teachers knowledge and capacity to support EAL/D students, Aboriginal students, students with low-level disabilities and students with low SES to achieve their best.
- All teachers collaborate on their teaching practice and reflect on teaching effectiveness.
- Evaluate and review the Trailblazer program in order to improve providing extra support and assistance to senior students with their HSC work and assessments.
- Review and improve the use of student goal setting, mentoring and study skills program to plot student learning and differentiate teaching.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

At least 35% of students achieve in the top two bands for NAPLAN reading and numeracy. (Learning Domain -> Student Performance Measures -> NAPLAN -> Sustaining & Growing)

The expected growth for each student is identified and students are achieving higher than expected growth on internal school progress and achievement data. (Learning Domain -> Student Performance Measures -> Student Growth -> Excelling)

All teachers understand and explicitly teach literacy and numeracy to students at all levels of achievement, in all subject areas, with success that can be measured by improved student progress and achievement data. (Teaching Domain -> Professional Standards -> Literacy & Numeracy Focus -> Excelling)

All teachers are committed to identifying, understanding and implementing the most effective explicit teaching methods, with the highest priority given to evidence-based teaching strategies. (Teaching Domain -> Effective Classroom Practice -> Overall excelling statement)

Teachers clearly understand, develop and apply a full range of assessment strategies in determining teaching directions, monitoring and assessing student progress and achievement, and reflecting on teaching effectiveness. (Teaching Domain -> Data Skills and Use -> Data use in Teaching -> Excelling)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions: Are effective evidence-based teaching methods used to improve student literacy and numeracy and their achievement in the HSC? What is the impact of increasing teachers' ability to analyse data, collaborate and reflect on practice on student performance?

Data: A combination of multiple data sources will be collected, analysed and regularly reviewed by teachers, leaders and project teams. These will include: external student performance measures (NAPLAN, PLAN2,

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Initiatives

Literacy and Numeracy

Build the capacity of all teachers to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills through effective professional learning, data analysis, use of progressions, collaboration and explicit teaching practice.

- Professional learning in literacy and numeracy via MyPL and teaching practice is informed by CESE research.
- Develop thorough teacher understanding and professional capacity for analysis of Best Start, NAPLAN, Check-in assessment data to identify monitor improvement measures and to target areas as required. (WWB - use of data to inform practice)
- Whole school adoption of Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions and PLAN2.
- Strengthen whole school teacher collaboration of the evidence-based programs used for writing and numeracy, guided by the School Excellence Framework.
- Develop high impact professional learning for EAL/D and GAT teaching and implementation.
- All teachers explicitly teach literacy and numeracy skills to students, addressing individual student needs (e.g EAL/D students, Aboriginal students, students with low-level disabilities and students with low SES) and ensuring that all students are challenged and all adjustments lead to improved learning. (WWB - explicit teaching)
- Implement targeted intervention and strategies for students identified as achieving in the bottom two bands of NAPLAN for literacy and numeracy.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

SCOUT, RAP and HSC minimum standards, VALID 8 & 10, Check-in Assessments); internal student performance measures (Literacy and Numeracy Progressions); school-based data (student work samples, PLPs, ILPs); feedback from project teams, staff and community via observations, surveys and focus groups; and School Excellence Framework assessments.

Analysis: Regular review of data for analysis, reflection and reporting. Collegial discussion and collaboration by teachers, leaders and project teams to assess the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved. Regular reporting against the progress measures by the leadership team will inform feedback to project teams.

Implications: Whole school data will show the level of student growth and achievement attained that will inform future school planning to ensure continuous improvement in teaching practice and a school culture of student empowerment in learning.

Strategic Direction 2: Quality Teaching Practices

Purpose

We have high expectations and we continually seek to improve ourselves and our work. Teachers will work collaboratively and reflectively adapting their practice through quality, targeted professional learning and use of student data to inform teaching.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

- Canvas is consistently utilised by 100% of teachers as the whole school online learning platform

Target year: 2024

- All targeted teachers trained in Quality Teaching Rounds reaching 68%.

Initiatives

Collaborative Teaching Practice

Improve Quality Teaching practice through focus on dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation and practice. To achieve this:

- Teachers work collaboratively in groups by undertaking Quality Teaching Rounds Professional Learning. This is facilitated by experts in the school and increasing the number of groups trained each year.
- Teacher participation in QTR practices promotes deeper understanding of educational pedagogies which become recognisable and measurable in the classroom.
- Teachers trained as experts in Quality Teaching promote a deep understanding of educational pedagogies in the classroom
- Teachers model effective practice resulting in improved and measurable student outcomes

Effective Classroom Practice

This initiative aims to support teachers to work collaboratively, effectively teach online and provide meaningful assessment and feedback to students. To achieve this the school has employed the Canvas platform. To achieve this:

- Mentoring and support for Canvas in all faculties is provided through whole school professional learning opportunities
- Faculty appointed "Experts" are trained to support individuals and whole faculties in the implementation and maintenance of their CANVAS courses across all stages
- Students access CANVAS online at school and at home to promote sustained engagement in learning and assessment
- Parental access to CANVAS is available and supported

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Observable characteristics of the desired future state for the school once their success has been achieved. A description of what success looks like:

Quality Teaching Rounds

The school uses embedded and explicit systems that facilitate ongoing professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation, the modelling of effective practice and the provision of specific and timely feedback between teachers (SEF-SaS Framework, Learning & Development-Collaborative Practice and Feedback-Excelling). The number of teachers trained in QTRs increases.

A whole school approach ensures the most effective evidence-based teaching methods optimise learning progress for all students, across the full range of abilities. Teachers employ evidence-based effective teaching strategies. Effective methods are identified, promoted and modelled, and students' learning improvement is monitored, demonstrating growth. (SEF-SaS Framework, Effective classroom practice-Explicit Teaching-Excelling)

CANVAS Learning Platform

Teaching staff demonstrate and share their expertise within their school. All teachers have expert contemporary content knowledge and deploy effective teaching strategies. The school trials innovative practices and has processes in place to evaluate, refine and scale success. (SEF SaS Learning and Development-Expertise and Innovation-Excelling)

Teachers clearly understand, develop and apply a full range of assessment strategies- assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning - in determining teaching directions, monitoring and assessing student progress and achievement, and reflecting on teaching effectiveness. (SEF SaS - Data Skills and Use-Data Skills in Teaching-Excelling)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Strategic Direction 2: Quality Teaching Practices

Initiatives

- CANVAS implementation is observable and measurable through the platform's data tracking tools
 - Effective analysis of student data helps teachers identify areas where students' learning needs may require additional attention, support and development.
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Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions: To what extent does teacher participation in the Quality Teaching Round process and use of CANVAS, improve teacher practice in the classroom and student learning outcomes?

Data: Collection of data through:

- Lesson observations
- Collaborative discussion
- Coding of lessons using the Quality Teaching Framework
- Sentral tracking measures
- CANVAS data
- SCOUT
- Tell them from Me data
- A comparative study of participating and non participating class groups for QTR.

Analysis: Regular review of data for analysis, reflection and reporting. Collegial discussion and collaboration by QTR participating teachers to assess the extent to which the purpose and improvement measures have been achieved. Comparison of data between participating and non participating class groups by tracking student engagement and improvement of learning outcomes.

Implications: Whole school data will show an increase in the number of teachers trained in Quality Teaching Practices and a resulting increase in the engagement and attainment of learning outcomes by students in these classes.. This data will inform future whole school practices in this initiative. CANVAS is sustained as a whole school teaching and learning tool and allows greater access to learning materials by students at school and at home. Teachers have ready access to an effective communication tool with students and parents.

The level of student growth and achievement attained that will inform future school planning to ensure continuous improvement in teaching practice and a school culture of student empowerment in learning.

Strategic Direction 3: Learning and Wellbeing Support

Purpose

Our purpose is to ensure a shared community responsibility where school, families and support services work together to achieve a sense of belonging in a supportive and inclusive environment. We aim to empower students to develop resilience and empathy through positive relationships and student advocacy.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

- Increase percentage of student attendance to an uplift of 5.4% points from baseline data.

Target year: 2022

- Increase percentage of students' with sense of well being (TTFM) to an uplift of 3.6% points from baseline data.

Initiatives

Attend and learn

Teachers, parents and the community work together to support consistent and systematic processes that ensure student absences do not impact on learning outcomes. Improve attendance, learning and well-being through a tiered framework of support and intervention. (Government school attendance 2019 CESE) To achieve this:

- Attendance data is regularly analysed and is used to inform planning. Whole of school and personalised attendance approaches are implemented to improve regular attendance rates for all students including those at risk.
- Implement whole school strategies to promote and celebrate excellent and improved attendance.

Advocate for me

The school is organised so that all students have regular opportunities to meet with an identified staff member who can provide advice, support and assistance to help students fulfill their potential. To achieve this:

- Embed evidence-informed practices through an effective Pastoral Care Program. (What works best 2020; CESE)
- Work with community consultation groups (EAL/D, Refugee, AECG) teachers and students to develop proactive, culturally inclusive opportunities for improved communication and welcoming community events to increase participation and well-being. (Aboriginal Background, English Language Proficiency and Socio-economic Background funding)
- Professional learning to build capacity for enhancing the social, emotional and learning outcomes of all students. (What works best 2020, CESE) (Teacher Professional Learning funding)

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Observable characteristics of the desired future state for the school once their success has been achieved. A description of what success looks like:

- Consistent and systematic processes ensure attendance data shows improvement towards upper bands and student absences do not impact on learning outcomes. (SEF, Learning Domain, Learning Culture, Attendance)
- The number of student whole school awards for improved and excellent attendance increases.
- The percentage of students who identify a positive sense of belonging and advocacy at school increases. Planning for learning is informed by sound, holistic information about each student's wellbeing and learning needs in consultation with parents/carers. (SEF, Learning Domain, Wellbeing, Individual Learning Needs)
- The percentage of students who can identify a staff member who can provide advice, support and assistance increases each year with all students able to identify a staff advocate by 2024. (SEF, Learning Domain, Wellbeing, Caring for Students)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Attend and Learn

Question: To what extent are consistent processes in place and to what extent has student attendance improved?

Data: We will use a combination of data sources. These will include:

- SCOUT attendance
- Sentral well-being attendance e.g. late to class, truancy, P by P
- Suspension and Expulsion
- Surveys
- Observation

Strategic Direction 3: Learning and Wellbeing Support

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Document analysis
- Resource allocation analysis (Aboriginal Background, English Language Proficiency and Socio-economic Background funding, Low Level Adjustment for Disability)

Analysis:

Whole school data will show an increasing level of improvement in student attendance rates.

Regular reporting against the milestones by the leadership team will inform feedback to project teams.

Advocate for me

Question: To what extent have we achieved the our purpose to ensure all students can identify a staff member who can provide support for them.

Data: We will use a combination of data sources. These will include:

- Tell Them From Me (Sense of Belonging and Advocacy)
- Sentral well-being data
- Suspension and Expulsion
- Surveys
- Observation
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Document analysis
- Resource allocation analysis (Aboriginal Background, English Language Proficiency and Socio-economic Background funding, Low Level Adjustment for Disability, Teacher Professional Learning)

Implications:

Strategic Direction 3: Learning and Wellbeing Support

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Whole school data will show an increasing level of student engagement and connectedness

Regular reporting against the milestones by the leadership team will inform feedback to project teams