

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2025

Girraween High School 8500



School vision and context

School vision statement

Girraween High School is an academically selective environment where we are committed to developing high potential and gifted learners. Our vision is to develop well rounded, confident and responsible students who actively aspire to reach their full potential in all domains of their education. We cultivate an environment of inclusivity, where every student is known, valued and cared for.

At Girraween High School, we foster a challenging, stimulating and differentiated learning environment. Academic rigour and creative and critical thinking skills are promoted through our work within the classroom. Students at our school enjoy a breadth and depth of curriculum which is tailored to meet the needs of students in the selective educational context. We work towards developing our students' gifts into talents and students leave our school as resilient, lifelong learners prepared for tertiary study and the world of work.

At Girraween High School, we empower our students to achieve their personal best and enrich their social and emotional wellbeing. Beyond the classroom, students have considerable opportunities to undertake cocurricular, sporting and leadership pursuits.

School context

Girraween High School (784 students, 20% from an EAL/D background at the level of *Consolidating*) is a fully academically selective, co-educational high school located in Western Sydney. The GHS community has a Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) value of 2. Generally, 100% of Year 12 graduates will undertake tertiary study at University.

Student wellbeing and academic excellence are fostered through programs including student mentoring and our RAW (Resilience, Achievement and Wellbeing) Model of Positive Education. The RAW Model is centred upon strategies for students to deal with challenging situations, enhancing positive emotions and accomplishing new skills through effort.

Teaching and learning is geared towards high expectations of student academic achievement and supporting high potential learners in reaching academic success. Student and staff leadership opportunities are promoted in a supportive environment. Our Core Values: *Aspire*, *Respect* and *Unite* feature strongly within our school community. A wide range of cocurricular activities ensure high levels of student engagement. Dedicated staff are trained in providing learning and wellbeing experiences to meet the cognitive and affective needs of all students, including high potential and gifted learners.

At Girraween High School, we are proud of our comprehensive approach to educating the whole student and we ensure our graduates are well prepared for tertiary education and life beyond high school.

The school is committed to strong NAPLAN and HSC performance and continually strives to improve student educational outcomes of which staff professional learning and collaboration is an important component. There are a wide range of focus areas including data informed practice, differentiation, High Potential and Gifted Education, twice exceptional learners, enhancing literacy, numeracy and HSC attainment strategies, and offering all students opportunities for a holistic, complementary education beyond the classroom.

In creating this Strategic Improvement Plan, we have undertaken extensive consultative processes with key stakeholders including staff, students and parents. The school has completed a rigorous Situational Analysis that has identified three high level areas for improvement. These are:

- Student Growth and Attainment
- The Whole Student
- Outstanding Pedagogy and High Expectations

An aim for this Strategic Improvement Plan is for GHS to develop a whole school writing program to improve the explicit teaching of writing, firstly in Stage 6 and then in Years 7-10. This is to address our targets in HSC Attainment and also NAPLAN growth.

School vision and context

School vision statement

School context

An additional focus for the upcoming planning cycle is further emphasis on individualised support for students. We have a strong Wellbeing Team consisting of Year Advisers, Assistant Year Advisers, SLSOs, SSO and the LaST who work hard to identify students who would benefit from individual or small group withdrawal. Key areas of support will include time management, organisation, motivation, numeracy, literacy and consolidation of learning strategies.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

Our purpose is to ensure students grow in their learning through explicit, consistent and research-informed teaching. Our teachers will evaluate their effectiveness and reflectively adapt their practice through quality, targeted strategies focussed on the areas of reading, numeracy, expected growth and academic achievement. In order to support growth in these areas, multiple data sources are triangulated, analysed and evaluated in order to ascertain future directions.

Improvement measures

Numeracy growth

Achieve by year: 2023

Increase in percentage of questions answered correctly above Similar School Groups in Numeracy Check-in Assessments.

Reading growth

Achieve by year: 2023

Increase in percentage of questions answered correctly above Similar School Groups in Reading Check-in Assessments.

HSC Minimum Standards

Achieve by year: 2025

100% of students achieve HSC Minimum Standards in Reading, Writing and Numeracy tests on their first attempt.

HSC achievement - top 2 bands

Achieve by year: 2023

Uplift of 5.4% of students attaining Bands 5 & 6 (including E3 and E4 in Extension subjects) in the Higher School Certificate.

Initiatives

Reading and Writing

Reading and writing builds comprehension and analytical skills and also equips us with communication and thinking skills. Reading stimulates our memory and helps to recall information. Writing expresses who we are as people and makes our thinking and learning visible and permanent. Writing fosters our ability to explain and refine our ideas to others and ourselves. GHS will support Reading and Writing by multiple strategies including:

- Embedding clear teaching and learning programs featuring which writing types students are expected to know and use. (*SEF-Curriculum*)
- Developing evidence-based teaching practices designed to equip students to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to create various written response types. (*SEF-Curriculum*)
- Establishing and implementing teaching and learning programs that explicitly describe writing skills and strategies required within a Key Learning Area (KLA). (*SEF-Curriculum*)
- Collecting and using of assessment data that monitors achievements and identifies gaps in writing to inform planning for particular student groups and individual students. (*SEF-Assessment*)
- Reviewing and adapting practice so that teachers routinely check that students understand feedback received and the expectations for how to improve. (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)

HSC Attainment

We strive to continually improve our practice in supporting our Stage 6 students in the pursuit of academic excellence. Whole school strategies to support HSC Attainment include:

- Providing individual and class support with the Learning & Support Team for underperforming high potential students.
- Regularly reviewing and revising lesson plans and

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Reading and Writing:

- Students achieve growth in NAPLAN (Reading and Writing) (*SEF-Student Performance Measures*)
- There is a collaboratively designed common approach to the teaching of explicit writing skills as part of a coherent program (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)
- Accommodations and adjustments are made and recorded to suit student needs around writing practice (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)
- All teachers identify, understand and implement effective explicit teaching methods in the areas of reading and writing, with the highest priority given to evidence-based teaching strategies (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)
- Students read for pleasure and understanding.

HSC Attainment:

- Stage 6 Teaching and Learning programs are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable student assessment and monitoring of student progress and achievement. (*SEF-Curriculum*)
- The school analyses student progress and achievement data and a range of other contextual information. Teachers respond to trends in student achievement, at individual, group and whole school levels (*SEF-Assessment*)
- A whole school approach to undertaking HIPL ensures effective, evidence-based teaching methods catering for a diverse student body. (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)

Numeracy:

- Most students achieve growth in NAPLAN (Numeracy) (*SEF-Student Performance Measures*)
- Student assessment data is regularly used school-wide to identify student achievements and progress, in order to reflect on teaching effectiveness and

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Initiatives

- sequences, ensuring that the content is based on the curriculum and that teaching practices are modified based upon HSC data. (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)
- Embedding practices for identifying early intervention for high potential students requiring either academic or wellbeing support.
- Differentiating curriculum to meet the needs of High Potential and Gifted students. (*SEF-Curriculum*)

Numeracy

Numeracy is important for students to develop their logical thinking and reasoning strategies in their everyday activities. Whole school strategies to support growth in Numeracy include:

- Embedding the use of internal as well as external assessments (such as NAPLAN and HSC) to assess student progress in Numeracy (*SEF-Student Performance Measures*)
- Teachers checking for student understanding of feedback received on their work and the expectations for how to improve in Numeracy. (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)
- Providing/facilitating professional learning that builds teachers' understanding of effective strategies in teaching numeracy skills and knowledge. (*SEF-Professional Standards*)
- Identifying individual student growth targets using internal data and provides tailored support for students. (*SEF-Student Performance Measures*)

Success criteria for this strategic direction

inform future school directions (*SEF-Data Skills and Use*)

- The school uses systematic and reliable assessment information to evaluate student learning over time and implements changes in teaching that lead to measurable improvement in the area of numeracy. (*SEF-Assessment*)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: Is Girraween High School on track to meet DoE aspirational targets?

Data:

- External student performance measures including NAPLAN and HSC.
- Internal student performance measures including student assessment data, comparative data and faculty assessment records.
- Student work samples
- Teaching and learning programs.

Analysis: Triangulation of these data sources, faculty discussion, Executive and whole staff reflective sessions at Professional Learning Meetings.

Implications: Regular analysis of the data listed above to determine impact of our strategies will guide ongoing implementation of our key initiatives in *Student Growth and Attainment*.

Strategic Direction 2: The Whole Student

Purpose

Fostering the broader needs of students beyond academics has been observed to be vital to both their academic and personal success. Through the whole-student approach to learning, young people are immersed in learning environments intended to promote a sense of community and encourage interpersonal skills, problem solving, goal setting, creativity, autonomy, and self-accountability. Each student deserves to be healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged.

A whole child approach to education focuses attention on the social, emotional, mental, physical as well as cognitive development of students. Our approach is to develop future citizens and provides the basis for each child to fulfill their potential.

Improvement measures

Achieve by year: 2022

- Uplift of 1.8% in students experiencing *positive wellbeing* in Tell Them From Me Survey.

Achieve by year: 2025

- Uplift of 20% of students enhancing their learning by participating in cocurricular activities.

Initiatives

Holistic, Complementary Education

Cocurricular activities enhance learning by stimulating creative thought, improving social and organisational skills, develop interests and talents, and offering an avenue for students to explore and display their interests. GHS will support this by multiple strategies including:

- Building understanding that the value of learning is enhanced by participating in cocurricular activities which complements students' academic study and maximises their potential.
- Providing opportunities for cocurricular activities which allow students to pursue their interests, while developing important skills, achieving excellence and mixing with like-minded peers.
- Embedding a wide range of cocurricular activities to enrich students on an emotional, cognitive, physical, and social level.

Multi-tiered System of Supports

A focus on wellbeing goes beyond just the welfare needs of a few individual students and aims for all students to be healthy, happy, successful and productive individuals who are active and positive contributors to the school and society in which they live. GHS will support this with multiple strategies including:

- Implementing well-developed and evidence-based approaches, programs and processes that identify, regularly monitor and review individual student learning and wellbeing needs. (*SEF-Wellbeing*)
- Strengthening the school community's recognition that student wellbeing is important to ensure an effective environment for learning. (*SEF-Wellbeing*)
- Supporting wellbeing of students by a team with complimentary and overlapping skill set. This team will monitor and support a whole school approach. (*SEF-Wellbeing*)
- Providing opportunities for parents and community members to engage in a range of wellbeing activities

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Multi-tiered System of Supports

- There is a comprehensive layered approach to support wellbeing so that all students have opportunities to seek advice, support and assistance from a staff member whom they choose. (*SEF-Wellbeing*)
- There is a partnership of responsibility between the staff, students and parents for wellbeing. Planning for learning is informed by sound holistic information about each student's wellbeing and learning needs. (*SEF-Wellbeing*)
- Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread amongst students and staff to ensure optimum conditions for learning. (*SEF-Wellbeing*)
- GHS is recognised as excellent and responsive by its community because it uses best practice to embed a culture of high expectations and effectively caters for a range of equity issues. (*SEF-Educational Leadership*)

Holistic, Complementary Education

- Extensive cocurricular programs offer opportunities for students to be involved in diverse areas. Through this extensive range of offerings, student creative, physical and social abilities and talents are nurtured. This provides the opportunity for every student to reach their potential and develop their talents, skills and confidence, as well as a sense of discipline and teamwork.
- Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote student wellbeing to ensure optimum conditions for holistic student learning across the whole school.
- Cocurricular activities play a significant role in students' overall holistic development, as well as screening for talents and giftedness among students.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Strategic Direction 2: The Whole Student

Initiatives

to support young people. (*SEF-Educational Leadership*)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: Are strong wellbeing and cocurricular activities evident across the school?

Data:

- Tell Them From Me survey data
- Internal student monitoring data
- Student surveys
- Activity tracking data

Analysis: Regular review of these data sources, Wellbeing Team discussion, executive and whole staff are engaged in supporting student wellbeing and cocurricular programs.

Implications: Regular analysis of the data listed above to determine the impact of our strategies will guide ongoing implementation of our key initiatives in The Whole Student.

Strategic Direction 3: Outstanding Pedagogy and High Expectations

Purpose

We foster an environment where students are actively engaged through a range of effective and innovative pedagogies. At Girraween High School, effective pedagogy is underpinned by extensive data analysis to inform teaching practice.

The specific learning needs of groups and individual students are addressed by extensive staff professional learning which caters for varying levels of giftedness and the needs of twice exceptional students.

Through strategies such as *CESE: What Works Best* and tailored professional learning activities, teachers create and deliver a curriculum underpinned by academic rigour. A key priority for our school is having high expectations of our students and staff. We endeavour to set high expectations in all aspects of our teaching practice and pedagogy.

Professional Learning and collaboration, within and across schools, is essential to enable staff to maximise student achievement in an academically selective school context.

Improvement measures

Attendance (>90%)

Achieve by year: 2023

- Uplift of 3.5% in the number of students attending school 90% of the time.

Achieve by year: 2025

- All faculties at GHS are able to show evidence of collaboration in improving pedagogy across multiple schools.

Achieve by year: 2025

- School Leadership Induction Framework (SLIF) implemented with identified early career teachers who demonstrate future leadership potential.

Initiatives

Data Informed Practice

Data informed practice is used to improve student learning and classroom practice. The main purpose of using data in classrooms is to improve teaching and learning so that student educational outcomes are optimised. GHS will support this by multiple strategies including:

- Embedding the use of internal and external assessments to assess student progress and achievement against syllabus outcomes. (*SEF-Data Skills and Use*)
- Reviewing and adapting practices using student progress and achievement data to inform key decisions when resourcing and implementing programs. (*SEF-Data Skills and Use*)
- Embedding a culture where teachers review student assessment data and compare external and internal assessment results to build a consistent and comparable judgment of student learning. (*SEF-Data Skills and Use*)
- Developing deep staff understanding for the need to review the curriculum to revise teaching practices and learning programs to meet the needs of learners based upon evidence of student progress and achievement. (*SEF-Learning and Development*)
- Developing systems to regularly and accurately monitor attendance and take prompt action to address issues with individual students. (*SEF-Learning Culture*)

Quality Teaching - Differentiation and Adjustments

Differentiation and adjustment strategies are designed to lift the performance of all students, including those who are falling behind and those ahead of year level expectations. Differentiation and adjustments benefit students across the learning continuum, including students who are highly able, gifted and/or twice expectational. When differentiating and/or adjusting teaching to suit the needs of individual students, GHS teachers use a variety of strategies including:

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Data Informed Practice

- Staff analyse, interpret and extrapolate data and they collaboratively use this to inform planning, identify interventions and modify teaching practice. (*SEF-Data Skills and Use*)
- Student learning is informed by analysis of internal and external student progress and achievement data. Progress towards goals is monitored through collection of quality, valid and reliable data. Reporting on school performance is based on valid and reliable data and analysis. (*SEF-Data Skills and Use*)
- The school executive implement strategies that reflect research on best practice and integrate ongoing monitoring of success. (*SEF-Data Skills and Use*)
- The school community work together to support systematic processes that ensure student absences do not impact on learning outcomes. (*SEF-Learning Culture*)

Quality Teaching - Differentiation and Adjustments

- Teaching and Learning programs are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable student assessment and continuous tracking of student progress and achievement. (*SEF-Curriculum*)
- A whole school approach ensures the most effective evidence-based teaching methods optimise learning progress for all students, across the full range of abilities. (*SEF-Effective Classroom Practice*)
- The staff evaluate professional learning activities to identify and systematically promote and implement the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning. (*SEF-Learning and Development*)
- The school trials innovative practices and has processes in place to evaluate, refine and scale success. (*SEF-Learning and Development*)
- Teaching staff demonstrate and share their expertise within their school and with other schools. (*SEF-Learning and Development*)

Strategic Direction 3: Outstanding Pedagogy and High Expectations

Initiatives

- Developing systems where teachers regularly use student progress and achievement data to revise teaching and learning programs to meet the needs of learners based on evidence of student progress and achievement. (*SEF-Learning and Development*)
- Engaging in professional learning that builds teachers' understanding of differentiation and learning adjustments to meet the specific learning needs of students. (*SEF-Learning and Development*)
- Demonstrating broad knowledge and understanding of teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with a disability.
- Adopting whole school strategies for differentiation of curriculum delivery for students with particular identified needs. (*SEF-Curriculum*)
- Establishing and maintaining strong links with nearby comprehensive and other selective schools in order to share expertise.

Leadership Development

All members of the Executive Team see themselves as whole school leaders and attend Professional Learning to increase their Leadership skills and increase leadership density within the school. This Professional Learning will include:

- Dan Haesler - High performance leadership course undertaken with executives from the G5 network.
- UNSW Instructional Leadership course - online 5 week Leadership course to improve the quality of teaching and the quality of outcomes for students.
- School Leadership Induction Framework (SLIF) implemented with aspirational, experienced teachers seeking promotion.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

- Teachers collaborate with staff in other schools to share and embed good practice. (*SEF-Learning and Development*)
- The leadership team establishes a professional learning community which is focused on continuous improvement of teaching and learning. (*SEF-Educational Leadership*)
- There is a local community of schools working collaboratively to share expertise in the areas of pedagogy, administration and wellbeing. The school is recognised as a key contributor for its impact on learning progress, its effective practices and continuous improvement, and its active support of (improvement in) other schools. (*SEF-School Planning, Implementation and Reporting*)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: Are the learning needs and adjustments for student groups and individuals being catered for?

Data:

- Faculty Programs & registers
- Student reports
- Individual Education Programs (IEPs)
- Attendance data
- SCOUT
- Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO), Learning and Support Teacher (LaST) and Student Support Officer (SSO) tracking data

Analysis: Professional discussions are focused on improving pedagogy and catering for student needs. Teaching and Learning programs show regular revisions based upon evidence. Data forms the basis of key decision making.

Implications: Where do we go from here? Future directions and next steps.