

# Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2025

## Newcastle High School 8509



**NEWCASTLE**  
HIGH SCHOOL



**COOKS HILL**  
campus

# School vision and context

## School vision statement

Newcastle High School strives to be an inclusive, diverse community that demonstrates a passion for learning underpinned by determination, hard work and a shared responsibility for growth in all areas of endeavours. Through respectful and meaningful connections, we are committed to building resilience and perseverance in order to develop goals that help us expand our creativity, knowledge and understanding.

## School context

Newcastle High School is a large, inclusive and diverse comprehensive school, situated on two sites in the centre of the City of Newcastle. The Parkway Avenue, Hamilton South site caters for students from Year 7 through to Year 12, with a diverse, mainstream curriculum. The Cooks Hill Campus (CHC) site on Laman and Union Streets, delivers an alternative curriculum in partnership with Big Picture Learning Australia and caters for students from Year 9 through to Year 12.

The learning community of Newcastle High School (NHS) takes great pride in the promotion of tolerance and good citizenship among students, creating a caring and inclusive environment. Academic and extra-curricular opportunities reflect the interests of students experiencing success in sporting, creative, cultural, performing arts and public speaking endeavours. The school has strong connections with the alumni groups representing our former students and is proud of the long and successful history of Newcastle High School.

The Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) of Newcastle High School was 78 in 2020 and is now 72 (2021-2024), which represents a decrease over the past 4 years. This represents a FOEI that is below the Australian average of 100, indicating there is an increasing socio-economic demographic and education/occupation status of the parents and carers in the Newcastle High School learning community.

Actual student enrolment at the commencement of 2024 is 1,153 students (Years 7-12), including 136 students at Cooks Hill Campus (CHC) in Years 9-12. The school has been experiencing decreasing enrolment patterns in the past 4 years, attributed to declining enrolments within our partner primary schools. Cooks Hill Campus (CHC) is at enrolment capacity with 136 students and this is attributed to high levels of satisfaction in the personalised learning approach. Of the students enrolled at Newcastle High School, 11% identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 3% have English as an additional language or dialect and there is a Support Unit made up of seven classes. There is an increasing trend of students identifying as Aboriginal, which is evaluated to be connected to the strong focus in the school to best practice Aboriginal Educational programs and support, including from our Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO), the Clontarf Foundation Academy, AECG Ngaarr Dhuwi Girls Academy, cultural education, and support embedded in many aspects of the school. An area for focus 2021-2025 is aligning and connecting all aspects of our Aboriginal programs and supports to be collectively known and understood by all, students' support plans and goals being collectively actioned for measurable improvement, and growth in outcomes while maintaining cultural identity.

The school's 2024 anticipated staffing entitlement is 110.10 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff and 38.80 FTE non-teaching staff. In 2024, the school employs additional school funded staff including one additional Head Teacher (Teaching and Learning), a Communications Officer, Technology Support Officer (TSO), and an additional School Administration Officer (SAO). The executive staff has been changing over the past 12 months, with stability in staffing anticipated in 2024. The ratio of beginning to experienced teachers is 20.0%.

The majority of the school's equity funding is used to support initiatives developed in the

# School vision and context

## School vision statement

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## School context

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2021-2025 Strategic Improvement Plan and implementing the New Curriculum. The school is committed to continually improving student growth and attainment through effective classroom practices, with staff professional learning being the key to ensuring this growth. This focus will ensure that both reading and numeracy outcomes can be enhanced through improved data analysis and classroom practice, which underpins our belief in individualised and differentiated learning. There will be a strong focus on Higher School Certificate performance in 2021-2025, including staff professional learning around quality assessment, programming, teaching practice, monitoring, support, data and curriculum supervision.

Newcastle High School will receive a major infrastructure upgrade to facilities starting construction in 2024, to meet predicted demand in the region to 2036 by delivering; a new 3 storey learning hub which includes a new library, canteen and covered outdoor learning area (COLA), support learning unit, general classrooms, hospitality classrooms and science labs; new multi-purpose facility with gymnasium, stage, fitness lab, flexible classrooms, outdoor courts and end of trip facilities; a new student hub within existing Building A and student entry from Parkway Avenue; and retention of key heritage buildings on site.

The Newcastle High School Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2025 has been developed collaboratively and consultatively, as a result of rigorous self-evaluation and evidence based analysis, including the completion of External Validation in 2020 and a thorough Situational Analysis process involving all stakeholders. The development of the school vision and strategic directions has been an authentically shared process.

# Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

## Purpose

To ensure students grow and attain their learning goals through explicit, consistent and research-informed teaching and learning practices. Our teachers will evaluate their effectiveness and reflectively adapt their practice through quality, targeted professional learning and use of student assessment data to inform teaching and learning.

## Improvement measures

### Pathways

There is a focus on positive transitions into meaningful post school pathways.

Achieve by year: 2027

An increase in the proportion of students' HSC results in the top three achievement bands.

### Attendance

There is a whole school focus on improving attendance to strengthen student sense of belonging, engagement and outcomes.

Achieve by year: 2027

Achieve an increase of 6% in the attendance rate, from 79.6% in 2023 to 85.6% in 2027.

### Improved reading outcomes

There is a whole school focus on demonstrating growth in reading to improve the achievement levels of all students.

Achieve by year: 2024

An increase in Check-in Assessment mean scaled score for reading in Year 8 for Term 4 2024 compared with Term 2.

### Improved numeracy outcomes

## Initiatives

### Learning excellence

Provide high quality delivery of Higher School Certificate (HSC) curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and reporting, to achieve a learning culture focused on high expectations, performance and growth.

Embed the effective use of data and evidence-based strategies to inform classroom practice in reading and numeracy through a focus on explicit teaching, best-practice, assessment, feedback and research based strategies.

Implement effective whole school, classroom and cultural practices to enhance learning outcomes, attendance, attainment and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students, while maintaining cultural identity.

### Wellbeing excellence

Develop an evidence-based attendance strategy, focused on improving whole school systems, communication, practices and procedures for the monitoring, support and improvement of attendance across the school. The effective use of data, improvement of systems and evidence-based strategies on the tiered framework of support and intervention to include universal, targeted and individualised strategies for attendance improvement.

Develop a wellbeing and positive behaviour strategy, focused on whole school systems, practices and procedures for the monitoring, support and improvement of wellbeing and behaviour across the school. This will include the development of the existing planned approach to wellbeing and positive behaviour, ensuring the whole school approach is consistent and embedded with evidenced-based strategies including positive psychology and restorative practices, which are strengths based, preventative, focused on early intervention and mapped to the NSW Schools Wellbeing Framework.

## Success criteria for this strategic direction

The school identifies expected growth for each student (Student performance measures).

Teachers collaborate to share curriculum, assessment and pedagogical knowledge, based on a consistent, evidence-based approach (Assessment and curriculum).

The learning culture of the school reflects high aspirations and high expectations for learning growth, strong partnerships in learning support, personalised approaches and motivated students for achieving excellence in transition outcomes (Learning culture).

Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote student wellbeing to ensure optimum conditions for student learning across the whole school. 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 (Wellbeing).

Attendance data is regularly analysed and is used to inform planning. Whole of school and personalised attendance approaches are improving regular attendance rates for all students, including those at risk. Staff regularly and accurately monitor attendance and take prompt action to address issues with individual students (Learning culture).

Teachers use data, feedback and other information about student progress and achievement to address the learning needs of all students (Effective classroom practice and Data skills and use).

All teachers understand and explicitly teach reading and numeracy strategies to students at all levels of achievement, in all subject areas, with success that can be measured by improved student progress and achievement data (Professional standards).

## Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

# Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

## Improvement measures

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There is a whole school focus on demonstrating growth in numeracy to improve the achievement levels of all students.

Achieve by year: 2024

An increase in Check-in Assessment mean scaled score for numeracy in Year 8 for Term 4 2024 compared with Term 2.

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## Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

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The Question-Data-Analysis-Implications evaluative process (Q-D-A-I) will be the approach used to support our analysis of the extent to which our purpose has been achieved. We will;

- determine the impact of using data to inform practice;
- evaluate teachers' collaborative practice;
- analyse external student performance measures (Best Start, NAPLAN, Check-In, HSC and HSC Minimum Standards) against improvement measures;
- analyse internal student performance measures (summative and formative assessment);
- analyse teaching programs and classroom practice improvements through observations;
- incorporate student work samples, focus groups and student interviews into the evaluation of this strategic direction;
- use and analyse wellbeing-based surveys, such as Tell Them From Me; and
- analyse behaviour and attendance data.

# Strategic Direction 2: Staff growth and high performance

## Purpose

To develop a high-performance school culture, where staff growth, wellbeing, resilience and a focus on excellence is strategically supported across all areas of the school, to deliver growth in student outcomes. Our staff will evaluate their impact and reflectively adapt their practice across all domains of the school to achieve our goals.

## Improvement measures

### Teaching and Learning

Achieve by year: 2025

Collaborative practices across all parts of the school improve teaching and learning, with explicit systems and practices that facilitate professional dialogue and collaboration.

Technology and learning spaces are well resourced and utilised to enhance student learning and administrative systems across all parts of the school.

### Professional Practices

Achieve by year: 2025

Embed wellbeing strategies for teachers, building on the Positive Education Enhanced Curriculum (PEEC), within Positive Education (Pos.Ed.).

Embed Growth Coaching as the formalised coaching and mentoring program for staff, to prioritise the ongoing development and improvement of all teachers.

## Initiatives

### High performance and development

Systems and processes will be reviewed and developed to support, monitor and evaluate professional growth in practice; developing a high performance teaching, learning and leadership culture. The professional practice team will support performance and development plans (PDPs), accreditation, maintenance, orientation, induction, professional learning aligned to the SIP, coaching and mentoring; to achieve a culture focused on high expectations, performance and growth.

### Staff wellbeing

A staff wellbeing strategy will be developed to focus on whole school and Departmental support for wellbeing, help staff maintain their own wellbeing and contribute towards a healthy workplace culture. This strategy will empower staff to take ownership of their wellbeing and it will recognise that the workplace can provide support to ensure staff feel well, by developing meaningful and respectful relationships, supports and connections.

### Coaching and mentoring

A formal coaching and mentoring program will be developed and implemented, to build teaching, learning and leadership capacity, growth and support of all staff.

### Quality teaching and engagement

Collaborative practices will be embedded across all parts of the school, with explicit systems that facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation, the modelling of effective practice and the provision of specific and timely feedback between teachers.

### Technology and innovation

Technology and learning spaces will be developed and utilised to enhance student learning and engagement, where teachers are supported to trial innovative or evidence based, future-focused practices.

## Success criteria for this strategic direction

Teachers' performance and development plans (PDPs) are supported by a coordinated whole school approach to developing professional practice, informed by research. Whole school analysis of the teaching staff identifies strengths and gaps, with planning in place to build capabilities and source teachers with particular expertise to improve student learning outcomes. Teachers are proficient in their teaching of literacy and numeracy, meeting the needs of students in their subject/stage (Professional standards).

Formal mentoring and coaching to improve teaching and develop aspiring leaders is provided to teachers who request it or are identified as in need of support. Whole school and/or inter-school relationships provide mentoring and coaching support to ensure the ongoing development and improvement of all teachers, by expert teachers such as those accredited at Highly accomplished or Lead level (Learning and development).

Teachers engage in professional discussion and collaborate to improve teaching and learning in their classes, year groups, stages, faculties, or for particular student groups. This includes negotiated observations of classroom teaching practice, with feedback, to improve professional knowledge and practice. The school uses embedded and explicit systems that facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation, the modelling of effective practice and the provision of specific and timely feedback between teachers. This drives ongoing, school wide improvement in teaching practice and student results (Learning and development).

Teachers demonstrate currency of syllabus knowledge related to digital technology, ICT and information and communication technology capabilities and evidence based ICT teaching practice is used in all teaching areas. The school identifies technology/ICT expertise within its staff. Teachers are supported to trial innovative or evidence based, future-focused practices (Learning and development).

Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote wellbeing to ensure optimum conditions for teaching and

## Strategic Direction 2: Staff growth and high performance

### Success criteria for this strategic direction

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learning across the whole school (Wellbeing).

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

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The Question-Data-Analysis-Implications evaluative process (Q-D-A-I) will be the approach used to support our analysis of the extent to which our purpose has been achieved. We will;

- evaluate the impact of using systems and process to support performance and development;
- determine the impact of increasing the explicit focus on staff wellbeing;
- evaluate teachers' collaborative practice, coaching and mentoring;
- analyse the impact on pedagogy and classroom practice through implementing collegial lesson observations;
- evaluate the use of technology to enhance student learning and engagement; and
- use surveys, interviews and focus groups to evaluate the use of innovative or future-focused practices.

# Strategic Direction 3: Leadership for growth

## Purpose

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To ensure instructional, distributed and visible leadership creates a school culture of shared responsibility for growth and attainment, where the strategic focus on excellence is supported across all areas of the school through high expectations, positivity and high performance to achieve our vision.

## Improvement measures

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### Resourcing and Administrative Practices

Achieve by year: 2025

Resources are strategically used to focus on the achievement of improved student outcomes, and resourcing of new infrastructure as a result of the school re-build.

Administrative systems, structures and processes underpin ongoing school improvement.

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## Initiatives

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### Educational leadership

Instructional leadership will be embedded to support the delivery of high quality curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and reporting to achieve the learning culture articulated in the SIP; focused on high expectations, performance and growth. Develop the leadership team and staff capacity to ensure that the implementation of syllabuses and associated assessment and reporting processes meet NESA and Department of Education requirements, forming a sound basis for student learning. Maintain a focus on distributed and instructional leadership, to sustain a culture of effective, evidence-based teaching and ongoing improvement, so that every student makes measurable learning progress and gaps in student achievement decrease.

### Resource and administration

Effective resource allocation, administration and service delivery across the school's large and complex sites is needed to achieve a learning culture focused on high expectations, performance and growth. Administrative systems improvement to enable the leadership team to allocate staffing and resources effectively to support the school's strategic priorities, deploying support to all NHS strategic directions.

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## Success criteria for this strategic direction

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The leadership team ensures that implementation of syllabuses and associated assessment and reporting processes meet NESA and Department of Education requirements, forming a sound basis for student learning (Educational leadership).

The leadership team embeds clear processes, with accompanying timelines and milestones, to direct school activity towards effective implementation of the SIP. Staff understand what they need to do to help address the school plan's strategic directions and meet the school's improvement measures (School planning, implementation and reporting).

The leadership team uses data to evaluate the effectiveness of management processes, and creates a culture of shared accountability to achieve organisational best practice (School Resources).

All school staff are supported to develop skills for the successful operation of administrative systems and a positive customer service ethic (Management practices and processes).

## Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

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The Question-Data-Analysis-Implications evaluative process (Q-D-A-I) will be the approach used to support our analysis of the extent to which our purpose has been achieved. We will;

- determine the impact of increasing instructional educational leadership;
- evaluate the impact of increasing visible instructional leadership, evidence-based practice and data to improve leadership for growth;
- analyse the administrative systems to measure improvement in educational delivery; and
- analyse annual financial and resource allocation data to determine the effectiveness of aligning resources to achieve strategic directions.