

Strategic Improvement Plan 2022-2026

Sydney Distance Education High School 8587



School vision and context

School vision statement

We provide flexible blended learning opportunities for quality individualised education, ensuring excellence and equity. We lead to challenge and support both students and staff to achieve personal success with high expectations. We inspire creative and engaged learning with strong student and teacher connections. We work in partnership with our wider school and distance education communities.

School context

Sydney Distance Education High School is a public school committed to excellence and equity in distance education. We provide flexible blended learning programs, serving students from areas north of Wollongong, south of Newcastle, and west to the Blue Mountains. Close to the central business district of Sydney, we work on the land of the Traditional Custodians, the Gadigal of the Eora Nation.

Students who meet specific enrolment requirements attend our school because they are not able to attend another school on a fulltime basis. We teach courses for fulltime and part program students including students with medical conditions and those with additional support needs. We also teach students studying single courses which they are not able to access at their home schools. We offer a range of courses in Years 7-10 with our middle school program providing further courses for students who need additional literacy and numeracy support. We teach approximately 40 courses for Years 11-12.

The school enrolls around 1500 students with a fulltime equivalent student number of around 735 and employs more than 200 fulltime and part time staff.

We provide flexible blended learning opportunities for quality individualised education. Students may learn in many ways: through online lessons, written materials, web lessons, email and phone. At school, we engage students with individual lessons, study days and open days. We also have virtual assemblies, excursions and a range of peer support activities and student clubs to support student connections with our school. Almost all of our Years 7-10 courses are delivered online. We have a number of learning hubs across the Greater Sydney Region where students may work with teachers and other students in places closer to their homes.

Engagement with creative, challenging and blended learning opportunities is supplemented by inclusive student wellbeing programs and the school's partnerships with communities, families and other schools. We encourage students to take advantage of these opportunities to enhance their learning and sense of connection to their peers, their teachers and their school. Our high expectations are supported by a caring and nurturing environment with strong commitments to sustainability and social justice.

Distance education helps build independence and self discipline. We are proud of our students who have been placed in the top 10 in the state in Higher School Certificate courses and whose work has been selected for a range of prestigious exhibitions and performances. We are equally proud of all students whose courage and commitment is reflected in their determination to do their best.

Our website is for communication, collaboration and the celebration of student achievement. We inspire students to learn and to live their dreams.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

To increase the academic achievement of students, we will implement whole school strategies and programs that focus on data driven targeted support.

Improvement measures

Reading growth

Achieve by year: 2023

There is an improvement in the percentage of Years 7-9 students answering Check-in Assessment Reading questions correctly when compared to the 2022 baseline of 54.4%.

Numeracy growth

Achieve by year: 2023

There is an improvement in the percentage of Years 7-9 students answering Check-in Assessment Numeracy questions correctly when compared to the 2022 baseline of 55.9%.

HSC achievement - top 3 bands

Achieve by year: 2023

Improvement in the percentage of HSC course results in the top three bands at the system-negotiated target of 66.8% or above.

Initiatives

Culture of High Academic Expectations

Develop stronger processes that improve individual teacher analysis and understanding of student achievement data to inform teaching practice and explore, develop and implement new evidence-based approaches to embed high academic expectations for students.

Implement an agreed set of high expectations for all Year 7 - 10 students that are made explicit on enrolment through the Launchpad Student Induction Program and are consistently implemented by all teachers in their classrooms.

Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Support

Explore, develop, implement and embed assessment tools and strategies that accurately identify and provide targeted intensive literacy and numeracy support for students.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

School data shows that student progress and achievement meets or exceeds growth targets for the HSC.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: What processes and approaches have been implemented? What does the data reflect about the effectiveness of the implementation of the initiatives?

How do we know that these initiatives are creating a culture of high expectations?

Data: External student performance measures (HSC, Check-in Assessment, HSC Minimum Standards) and internal student review data.

Analysis: Analyse the data to determine the extent to which the purpose has been achieved and what data was most useful.

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

Strategic Direction 2: Teaching Excellence

Purpose

The school's situational analysis identified the need for greater focus on explicit teaching strategies to increase student intellectual engagement and achievement, particularly in Years 7 to 10. With real time lessons firmly embedded in the school culture the focus is now on developing a range of additional teaching approaches to give students more opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and achieve success.

Improvement measures

Achieve by year: 2023

40% of permanent and temporary teachers employed for 2 terms or more have participated in at least one set of Quality Teaching Rounds in PLCs that cross stage and subject areas.

Achieve by year: 2026

80% of Stage 5 Home students participate in the Personalised Pathway Program and appropriate ongoing support is provided targeting their identified pathway is maintained.

Achieve by year: 2026

Tell Them From Me survey student response to the Intellectual Engagement composite statement "Students are intellectually engaged and find learning interesting, enjoyable and relevant" is maintained or above 60%.

Initiatives

Quality Teaching Rounds

Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) are underpinned by the Quality Teaching Model (QTM), which supports schools in developing a shared vision of quality teaching and learning. Teachers engage in collaborative professional learning with a focus on teaching throughout the teaching and learning cycle. This will include analysis and discussion of their own and each other's teaching in QTR Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Personalised Pathways

Continue to implement the Personalised Pathways Program to support Year 10 students' transition into Stage 6 or post-school destinations, based on academic and vocational goal setting and an ongoing mentoring process. The program will focus on early intervention and ongoing support for every Year 10 student and for newly enrolled Year 11 students. The existing expertise of the Launchpad Team, Careers Team, Learning and Support Team, Student Wellbeing Team, High Potential and Gifted Education (HPGE) Team and the Head Teacher Enrolments will be used and supplemented with additional staffing to implement the program.

Online Real-time Teaching and Learning

Continue to develop and embed high quality evidence based teaching practice in web lessons to intellectually engage students. This will include consistent use of Exit Tickets for formative assessment. Implement induction and support processes for students, teachers and supervisors to increase the participation in real time web lessons. All teachers teach a minimum of 20 web lessons each year.

In addition, develop consistent quality evidence based teaching practice for student learning through courses developed in the Canvas Learning Management System for Curriculum Reform syllabuses in collaboration with other distance education schools.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

There is a whole school approach that ensures effective evidence-based teaching approaches are used to improve learning progress for all students, across the full range of abilities.

There is an increased number of web lessons taught by all teachers in all courses.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions: How has QTR supported a culture of evidence-based teaching and ongoing teacher improvement? How do we know that the understanding and implementation of Personalised Learning and Support Plans (PLSPs) and differentiation have improved? Have quality teaching practices and formative assessment in web lessons increased the intellectual engagement of students?

Data: Surveys including TTFM, QTR participation data, web lesson data and SEF-SaS staff survey.

Analysis: Analyse the data to determine the extent to which the purpose has been achieved and what data was most useful.

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

Strategic Direction 3: Inclusive, supported and positive school community

Purpose

The focus is to support students and staff with increased opportunities to build wellbeing, inclusivity and connection to the school and within the school community.

Improvement measures

Achieve by year: 2024

Tell Them From Me student survey data for "Students feel accepted and valued by their peers and by others at the school" to be at or above 66% (2020 NSW Government Norm).

Achieve by year: 2026

Tell Them From Me survey "student participation in co-curricular activities" to be at or above 12%.

Achieve by year: 2024

50% or more permanent and temporary teaching and non-teaching staff employed for 2 terms or more have participated in Mental Health First Aid training.

Initiatives

Student Community Connections Program

Implement the Student Community Connections Program (SCCP) at offsite learning hubs and raise student attendance at the learning hubs. Implement a new student mentoring program focusing on advocacy and personal support to help students thrive at school.

Staff Wellbeing

Enhance staff wellbeing through strategies such as implementing Mental Health First Aid training for staff and the Staff Wellbeing Committee.

Opportunities for Peer Interaction

Continue to provide the established co-curricular activities available where students build positive relationships and develop a stronger connection to school.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

- The school provides opportunities for students to meet regularly with staff members who can provide advice and support.
- Increased number of students working with the Student Support Officer (SSO).
- Staff morale is maintained or improved as reflected in teacher TTFM and school SASS surveys.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions: Are more students building trusting connections with students and staff in SCCP program at learning hubs? Are staff feeling more supported personally with Mental Health First Aid Program and Staff Wellbeing Committee?

Data: Learning hub attendance data, TTFM student survey, TTFM teacher survey, school SASS survey and SSO reports.

Analysis: Analyse the data to determine the extent to which the purpose has been achieved and what data was most useful.

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