



Department of
Education

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Newman Senior High School

Public School Review

November 2020



PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed by the Department of Education's Public School Accountability directorate. A review gives assurance to the local community, the Minister for Education and Training and the Director General about the performance of public schools in delivering high quality education to its students. The review acknowledges the achievements of the school and gives feedback to support the principal and staff with their improvement planning.

Initially conducted on a three-year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, three or five-year timeframe.

The principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence from the school. Information to be validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school council/board and the regional executive director.

Expectations of schools

For all Western Australian public schools, expectations are set out in either:

- the Delivery and Performance Agreement, which is an agreement between the Department (represented by the Director General), school (represented by the principal) and school board (represented by the school board chair); or
- the Principals' Statement of Expectations

together with the Funding Agreement for Schools.

Public School Review – The Standard

A Standard has been developed across the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework to describe essential indicators of performance. The selection of the indicators is based on literature research and historical reviews of school performance in Western Australian public schools.

The purpose is to better ensure that judgements about student performance are standardised and objective. Indicators describe what is evident in schools functioning 'as expected' within each domain.

The Standard defines the expected level of school performance. Judgements are made in relation to the Standard. External validation is also based on evidence presented relating to the Standard.



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Context

Opened in 1974, Newman Senior High School is located within the Pilbara Education Region in the mining town of Newman, 1200 kilometres north of Perth. The Nyiyaparli people are the traditional owners of the land, and the Martu people the traditional custodians.

Newman Senior High School became an Independent Public School in 2015, and has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 926 (decile 9). There are 322 students currently enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12.

Strong partnerships particularly exist between the school, BHP and other local organisations that support many of the school's programs. Examples include the 'sister school' partnership with Shenton College and the strong, locally supported Vocational Education and Training (VET) program.

Parents and members of the wider Newman community advocate for the school through their representation on the School Board and the Parents and Citizens' Association.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

The following aspects of the school's self-assessment process are confirmed:

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission and feedback provided during the validation visit delivered an account of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- Performance evidence was selected for the submission, including planned actions for improvement.
- The School Board understands and accepts the value of self-assessment processes and the associated drivers identified as necessary for school improvement going forward into 2021.
- Staff engagement and collaboration in the school self-assessment process offered insights as to the possibilities of further staff involvement in school planning.
- Staff demonstrate ownership for student success, with professional and personal responsibilities and expectations understood.

The following recommendations are made:

- Establish the ESAT as the primary 'warehouse' for school performance information and reflection, with particular attention given to reviewing the impact of school operations and learning programs.
- Backward map the information submitted in the school's ESAT assessment to influence 2021 planning intentions.
- Establish clear links between areas identified for improvement and the school's strategic and operational plans for raising the standards of student achievement.

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Relationships and partnerships	
<p>Strong and respectful relationships fostered through mutual trust and acceptance are features of successful schools in isolated regional communities. Well-intended efforts to achieve sustainable levels of positive community engagement are noted; however, there is a need to reframe the language and mindset from defensive reasoning to a focus on opportunities.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff demonstrate genuine interest, care and consideration for students, parents and each other. • School Board members are committed to supporting the school's strategic direction using their governance experience and links across the Newman community. • The Principal is acknowledged for her frank assessment of the challenges the school faces. • Communication strategies are evident, with a focus on updating and clarifying modes of communication. • The school has established positive working relationships with several not-for-profit organisations in the town, which offer support for all students, particularly those students and families at risk.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the School Board to maintain a focus on the strategic direction of the school, including preparing a joint narrative about the implementation of the Fogarty EDvance school improvement initiative.

Learning environment	
<p>Schools in isolated communities often face challenges relating to attendance, student vulnerability and behaviour. The school's focus is on building staff cohesion, establishing routine practices and positively influencing community perceptions.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school provides a learning environment based on a caring and student-focused ethos. It demonstrates a commitment to creating a positive and inclusive school culture. • Significant progress has been achieved in establishing structural improvements to the delivery of student service provision. • Although small steps, there have been positive inroads with the engagement of Martu students. This is significant and important to the school and wider community.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop common practices for monitoring, tracking and improving student engagement. • Maintain the focus on establishing an affirmative behaviour culture, with the use of classroom visuals, lesson structures and class observations.

Leadership

Establishing mutually beneficial relationships in complex and diverse local communities is a challenge for school leaders. Building sustainable levels of trust and confidence with individual staff to advance a school culture of continuous school improvement is the school's priority.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and policies are documented, with alignment seen as the next step to optimising staff understanding and implementation. • The school has started implementation of a three-year Fogarty EDvance School Improvement Program, to continue to improve educational outcomes for students.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advance teacher practice through adopting an agreed language of what constitutes high-quality teaching. • Develop a well-communicated school self-assessment schedule. • Enhance the ethos of collective responsibility through the continued engagement of staff in school self-assessment. • Communicate, clearly and widely, plans for improvement to ensure greater impact on teachers' day-to-day work. • Harness opportunities afforded by the Fogarty EDvance initiative to ensure a clear vision, strategic direction, operational planning, reporting schedule and role clarity. • Continue the process of clarifying, aligning and communicating the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team.

Use of resources

Time and resources are allocated to enable staff to focus on teaching and learning. Resourcing is managed effectively to meet the needs of school programs. However, the strategic deployment and alignment of human, physical and financial resources to facilitate school direction is less apparent.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a sound alignment between the use of resources and the management of the school. • The school has made effective use of support staff to support school-wide programs and initiatives. • The manager corporate services works in partnership with the Principal to ensure decision making processes are transparent, accepted and monitored effectively. • The day-to-day management of resources is sound and the contributions of the manager corporate services are acknowledged and valued.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reframe the workforce plan to ensure longitudinal staff profile needs are aligned to strategic directions.

Teaching quality

Improving teaching quality as a whole-school priority is a key goal for the school. The leadership has identified the conditions for school improvement. This involves, but is not limited to, strengthening curriculum knowledge, identifying and sharing best practice, lifting expectations for student achievement and providing informed feedback on teaching practice.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capacity of staff to use achievement data to inform classroom practice continues to develop. • The focus on the needs of individual students is to be commended and is supported by a strong commitment to pastoral care. • Whole-school pedagogies are being implemented progressively, with considerable effort being applied to reduce variability across learning areas.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consistent and collaborative planning practices when progressing whole-school initiatives such as the literacy plan. • Adopt a whole-school common language for target setting. • Develop a school-wide understanding of quality teaching. • Establish strategies to increase a culture of trust, as well as role clarity and expectations related to peer observations. • Build a student assessment and reporting tracking system in combination with a senior school backward mapping process.

Student achievement and progress

Standards of student achievement and progress for several assessment areas and across learning areas over past years have been variable, with recent improvement noted in Year 9 data. Comparative senior school student performance data is limited due to low levels of participation.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student tracking and monitoring strategies are evident with NAPLAN¹ and OLNA² data. • VET opportunities are supported through a range of course offerings. • OLNA results for Year 12 improved in 2020 due to students receiving extra literacy and numeracy tuition.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop moderation processes in grade allocation for Australian Tertiary Admission Rank subjects. • Continue to review subject offerings to ensure alignment between student aspirations, academic capabilities and performance. • Refine, communicate and follow up a process for collecting and analysing student performance data. • Commence strategic OLNA interventions earlier.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Ryan Govan
Principal, Carnarvon Community College
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse the commendations and recommendations made by the review team regarding your school's performance.

Your next school review is scheduled for Term 4, 2021.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 2 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment