Cessnock High School
Annual School Report

2011
Our school at a glance

Students

At the beginning of 2011 there were 610 students enrolled at Cessnock High School. There were 119 students in Year 7, 111 students in Year 8, 111 students in Year 9, 108 students in Year 10, 102 students in Year 11 and 59 students in Year 12. Included in these numbers were 26 students in two support classes. There were students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Cessnock High School receives additional funding from the Priority School Program (PSP) and National Partnerships (low socio-economic status) initiatives. Much of this support is focused on literacy, numeracy and technology.

Students attending Cessnock High School largely enrolled from our partner public schools, Cessnock Public School, Cessnock East Public School, Abermain Public School, Kearsley Public School and Kitchener Public School. A small number of students enrolled from public schools outside our zone, such as Weston, Cessnock West and Ellalong. Approximately 40 students enrolled during 2011 coming from outside Cessnock to live in our city.

Staff

All teaching staff met the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. Based on our 2011 enrolment of 610 students, Cessnock High School was allocated 52.2 teaching staff. Additional staff were employed under a number of programs that specifically support students.

Significant programs and initiatives

Cessnock High School runs the following significant programs:

- literacy and numeracy
- Stage 6 curriculum (The College)
- vocational education and training
- gifted and talented education
- Aboriginal education
- creative and performing arts
- representative sports
- Cows Create Careers

Student achievement in 2011

In Year 7 students performed below the state average and Statistically Similar Groups (SSGs), but were above SSGs in Bands 7 and 8 reading, Band 7 writing, Bands 7 and 8 spelling, Band 8 grammar and punctuation and Band 8 numeracy.

In Year 9 students performed below the state average, but above SSGs in bands 8 and 9 of reading, writing, and grammar and punctuation and band 8 numeracy.

Whilst student performance in the School Certificate (SC) and the Higher School Certificate (HSC) were below state average our SC results in Band 4 Mathematics, History and Geography were above that of SSGs. Ryan McGowan from our College 2 gained the highest ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) in Cessnock.

Messages

Principal’s message

The high school is proud of its broad, general education that strives to meet the learning needs of all students. Students have a broad range of opportunities to enjoy and excel in academically, vocationally, in sports, the creative arts, and in citizenship and leadership endeavours.

As well as teaching the traditional academic subjects, vocational education and training is also an emphasis The College (Years 11 and 12). In our school there is a focus on literacy and numeracy, technology, and student learning (Quality Teaching) is supported with an effective welfare and discipline system.

A key initiative during 2011 has been to continue the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) initiative with all schools in the Cessnock Community of Great Public Schools. In 2011 we established, taught and published classroom expectations for all key learning areas.

Our school excels in many areas and continues to dominate the Cows Create Careers competition. Our school is very well supported by the local community and continues to attract significant sponsorship.

In 2011, as part of the on-going self-evaluation, Cessnock High School has focused on Mentoring and Team Teaching, Curriculum Change through a four-year university-based longitudinal study.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Ian Scanlon
Principal
Parents & Citizens’ Association (P&C) message

In 2011, we started a new approach for P&C at Cessnock High School. We began meeting once a term, rather than once a month. This keeps meetings succinct, and easy to plan around for our busy members. The mid-term meetings are going well, and we are enjoying an increase in P&C membership.

Due to our motion passed last year, to save money and donate toward a bus over a three year period, there was no major funding project completed this year. However, our plan is progressing well. We have had many smaller financial achievements this year. Vicki Slusher researched and arranged fitting of new air conditioning in the canteen, and that is working well. She is also looking into a new ice cream freezer.

Sharon Troy arranged for Roadwise to come to our school, with an educational display and information session, and changed our school photographs to Pixie Photos. We also began a new system in our canteen, where two Canteen Co-ordinators job share. This system is also working well.

As always, there are many thanks to extend. Thank you to each P&C member, for your time attending our regular meetings, putting forward useful ideas and helping to implement them. Thank you to our Canteen volunteers, and especially our co-ordinators. Without them we wouldn’t be able to support our school financially, as well as we do! Thanks also to our P&C executive. Many hours go into keeping a P&C on track, reports, letters, treasury, and banking. Lastly, thanks to our Community Liaison Officer, Sharon Troy, and the Executive of Cessnock High School for their support.

We are all looking forward to another great year at Cessnock High School.

P&C: Committed to Public Education.

Jenni Megson
P&C President

Student Representative’s message

In 2011 the Student Representative Council (SRC) was very active and ambitious in the school and the community. Many fund-raisers were run over the year and money raised was put back into the school. The 2011 captains, Arama Ngatoko, Elizabeth Curry, Shannon Douglas and Sophie Stapleford were excellent leaders, leaving ‘big shoes to fill’ for the 2012 captains and vice-captains.

In their studies, the students found The College system to be a rewarding learning environment. Getting to know The College 2 students was an added privilege as they could give us insightful knowledge into the HSC and how it operated, and how to achieve the best results we could.

Jerrika Taylor, Sam Harwood, Carmela Limen, and Blake Barry
Senior Leaders 2012
School context

Student information

Student enrolment profile

![Enrolments](image)

- **Students**: 800
- **Gender**: Male, Female

Student attendance profile

![Student attendance rates](image)

- **Attendance rate**: 100
- **Categories**: School, Region, State DEC

Management of non-attendance

Student non-attendance is managed on a daily basis. The parent/caregiver of each absent student is contacted by telephone to seek an explanation for their child’s absence. This is managed by the office staff and funded from the Disadvantaged Schools Program (PSP). This gives the office staff an opportunity to remind parents of other matters related to the school.

For more serious and persistent non-attendance issues, the Head Teacher Attendance contacts and interviews parent/caregivers, and in rare situations involves Regional Office staff including the Home School Liaison Officer.

Class sizes

Class sizes at Cessnock High School are generally smaller than those in larger high schools. Classes rarely exceed 28 students, and normally have about 20 students.

Structure of classes

There are five classes in Year 7 and 8. They consist of an extension class and two mixed ability classes. In Year 9 and 10 a similar class structure exists. In The College, the structure of the classes depends on the electives chosen, and the level of English and Mathematics studied. All classes in The College are composite classes with students from both College 1 and College 2.

Students study two electives in Year 8 (one for Semester 1 and one for Semester 2), in Year 9 they study three electives, in Year 10 two electives, and five electives in The College.

Retention to Year 12

![Retention to Year 12 (SC to HSC)](image)

- **Categories**: SC05-HSC07, SC07-HSC09, SC09-HSC11
- **School**, SEG, State

Post-school destinations

The strong Vocational Education and Training (VET) program at Cessnock High School leads to employment opportunities for students upon leaving school. Of last year’s 45 HSC students, 20% are at university, compared with 19% in 2010, 31% in 2009, 22% in 2008 and 2007, 24% in 2006, 15% in 2005 and 6% in 2004. Of last year’s 45 HSC students, 51% are in employment, compared with 53% in 2010, 39% in 2009, 42% in 2008, 31% in 2007, 34% in 2006, 47% of students from 2005, and 62% in 2004. Of last year’s 45 HSC students 13% are at TAFE or further education, compared with 35% in 2010, 19% in 2009, 24% in 2008, 40% in 2007, 32% in 2006, 36% in 2005, and 14% in 2004. Of last year’s 45 students 9% are unemployed and 7% could not be contacted.

There is a strong link between studying VET courses and securing employment.
Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

Of the 45 students completing their HSC in 2011 50% studied at least one VET course.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

45 students completed Year 12, 98% with the award of the Higher School Certificate.

Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce. Of the 85.2 staff employed in 2011, 7% were Aboriginal.

Staff retention

Staffing is quite stable at our school with approximately two newly appointed staff each year. 25% of our staff has been teaching at Cessnock High School for over a decade.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>4</td>
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Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>513906.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>707782.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>112194.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>29502.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>38181.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>1,962,447.30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance carried forward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full copy of the school’s 2011 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
School Performance 2011

Achievements

Arts

2011 was a very positive year for Creative and Performing Arts at Cessnock High School. Students continued the tradition of representing the school with a variety of high standard performances, including the Principal’s Assemblies, International Women’s Day, Close the Gap and Senior recital. Outstanding performers for the year were Samuel Harwood, Mikayla Sheehan, Yasmin Williams, Megan Butcher and Ethan Burke.

Our Art students worked on a variety of practical projects across the school and community, including the completion of a mural at Calvary Retirement Community, which was designed and led by Mrs. Haskett. Mrs. Robson’s College Art class produced a number of original and creative art pieces for their Higher School Certificate Body of Work.

Sport

2011 was an excellent year for Cessnock High School in the sporting arena. Cessnock High School and the greater Cessnock area has a long tradition of sporting excellence and this year our students have failed to disappoint once again. As usual, we had a very strong representation in the Hunter knockout competitions throughout the year but it was some stellar individual performances that really highlighted the year.

In 2011 we had:

- 12 Hunter Region Knock out teams compete
- 25 representatives at a Hunter Regional Carnival
- 3 individual representatives in a Hunter Regional team
- 4 representatives at a NSW State Carnival
- 1 representative at the Australian All Schools Championships

These statistics can be put into perspective when we consider that across the Hunter region and indeed even the Coalfields zone, Cessnock High School is the smallest school in attendance. So to say that we are the “Australia”, in terms of population size to sporting achievement ratio, of the Coalfields zone would be a fair assessment.

We are proud of all those students who participated in our carnivals and teams this year and appreciate the efforts of all staff who helped make achievements possible.

Tim Goodwin: Sport Co-ordinator
Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Yr 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

In the School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7

![Percentage in bands: Year 7 Reading](chart1)

![Percentage in bands: Year 7 Writing](chart2)

![Percentage in bands: Year 7 Spelling](chart3)
Percentage of students in performance bands: School Certificate Mathematics

Percentage of students in performance bands: Australian History, Civics and Citizenship

Percentage of students in performance bands: School Certificate Science

Percentage of students in performance bands: Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship
School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)
Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

Minimum standards
The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

### Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

**Aboriginal education**
Throughout 2011 saw a great improvement in NAPLAN results by our Aboriginal students. Students worked closely with NORTA NORTA tutors Errol Clarke, Rebekah McLean and Hayley Consoridge to develop their skills in both Literacy and Numeracy.

Cessnock High School hosted the Aboriginal Careers Expo for the second year, incorporating students from Kurri Kurri High School and partner primary schools.

Our Aboriginal Art students took out 2nd place in the state wide Reconciliation Art Competition. Students who developed the work were Bethany Dwyer, Dillon Farley and Dylan Parker. The students were led and directed by Mrs. Haskett. The art work travelled around New South Wales and was exhibited in the Australian Museum.

Cessnock High School was represented by a wide variety of students at Close the Gap and Harmony Day celebrations at all of our partner primary schools.
A highlight of the year was our Aboriginal dancers being selected for Stars truck, and Chantel Roberts performing at Schools’ Spectacular. Chantel then went on to be selected from a statewide audition to train at NAISDA Academy based in Sydney.

**Multicultural Education**

Anti Racist Contact Officer (ARCO) training is hosted by Cessnock High School each year. Multicultural studies are included in most Key Learning Areas (KLAs) for example masks in Visual Arts, Latin America music in Year 7 and 9. Year 7 Music developed a cultural instrument.

Incidents of a racist nature are very rare at Cessnock High School. Of the couple reported in 2011, they were resolved promptly and effectively. In 2012 a major multicultural event is being planned to coincide with Harmony Day.

**National Partnership programs**

Cessnock High School has been part of the National Partnerships (low socio-economic status) program since the end of 2009. Three situation analyses (2009, 2010 and 2011) have been completed to ascertain areas for school focus over the four years of the initiative. The results of the 2011 situation analysis will be presented later in this report.

The key focus areas of this initiative are literacy and numeracy with the appointment of a Head Teacher Literacy and Numeracy, and a Head Teacher Technology (connected learning). An Aboriginal Education Worker and a Community Liaison Officer have also been appointed. Funds have targeted teacher professional learning and the purchase of SmartBoards. There has also been a focus on research conducted by the University of Sydney, in student engagement and retention.

**Progress on 2011 targets**

**Target 1**

Repeat target for 2011 from 2010 report

90% of Year 9 students (2011) reach the minimum standard in NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy.

**Our achievements include:**

- Student achievement towards this target in NAPLAN since its inception in 2008 has seen:
  - Reading achieved 83% in 2011, 84.2% in 2010 after dropping to 77.1% in 2009 from 83.0% in 2008

**Target 2**

Repeat target for 2011 from 2010 report

Year 9 students (2011) achieving expected growth in NAPLAN exceeds 60%.

**Our achievements include:**

- Expected growth for Year 9 students was 56.8% for reading, 43.2% spelling, 39.8% for grammar and punctuation, and 46% for numeracy. No growth data was available for writing in 2011 because of the change in text-type.

**Target 3**

Average scaled score growth for Year 9 (2011) exceeds that of H/CC schools and the state by at least five points.

**Our achievements include:**

- Average scaled score growth for Year 9 (2011) compared with the state was 41.7% (state was 37.31) and missed the target by just 0.49
- For reading, 26.6% (state was 36.97%) for spelling, 28.5% (state was 32.29%) for punctuation and grammar, and 36.5% (state was 39.58%) for numeracy. No growth data was available for 2011 because of the change in text-type
- Students engaged in the QuickSmart Program achieved an average expected growth of 48% compared with the school average of 36%.
Target 4
Year 9 students (2010) achieving Bands 7, 8, equals or exceeds SSGs in NAPLAN reading, writing, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Our achievements include:
Year 9 students exceed SSGs in NAPLAN in all areas except:
- Band 8 spelling
- Band 7 numeracy

Indeed, our school exceeded SSGs in Band 9 (not a target) in:
- Reading, and
- Grammar and punctuation.

Target 5
Year 9 Aboriginal students (2011) achieve their expected growth in NAPLAN.

Our achievements include:
- Year 9 Aboriginal students (13) achieved 17 scaled scores above the state average in numeracy.
- 30.8% of Year 9 Aboriginal students achieved expected growth in NAPLAN.

Target 6
60% (the state average) retention of students from Year 7 to Year 12 by 2012. It is currently 45%.

Our achievements include:
- Retention peaked in 2008 at 45.3%, declining to 37% in 2009, 31.7% in 2010, and rising significantly to 53.4% in 2011.
- The 2011 result is well above SSGs (48.2%).

Target 7
The school’s attendance rate exceeds 89%.

Our achievements include:
- The school attendance for 2011 was 82.7% compared with 2010 at 86.7%, and 2009 at 88.5%.
- The 2011 attendance varied from 86% for Year 7 students to 80.2% for College 1 (Year 11) students.

Key evaluations
It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2011 our school carried out evaluations through National Partnerships - mentoring and team teaching, and cultural change.

Educational and management practice
Mentoring and Team Teaching
Background
In our school key initiatives in the strategic plans over many years have been the improvement of student literacy and numeracy. Close analysis of the data (ELLA, SNAP, and NAPLAN) underpinned these plans as developed by the teams. It has been widely recognised that the improvements sought relied of explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy, and in some cases changes in classroom practice.

Strategies
Upon inclusion in National Partnerships (low SES) in late 2009, it was recognised that opportunities lay in the employment of personnel modelled on the early conceptualisation of Highly Accomplished Teachers (HATS). Through merit selection two Head Teachers were employed in these portfolio areas – Stage 4 Literacy and Numeracy, and Stage 5 Technology. These Head Teachers were selected in Term 1 2010 and took up their positions at the beginning of Term 2 2010.

Changes in systems and practice
Both Head teachers worked intensively with classroom teachers from across all KLAS (Key Learning Areas). This included newly appointed teachers and members of the executive. Expressions of interest were called initially, but as the initiative gained momentum a waiting list for support had to be established.

Changes in practice occurred through the following model.
- The intensive planning of a teaching unit was undertaken by the class teacher and the mentor Head Teacher. This was achieved by releasing the class teacher from class, with the class covered for a block of up to two weeks by a teacher on temporary engagement funded by National Partnerships (low SES). The planning specifically involved the embedding of literacy, numeracy and
technology into the program (and therefore practice), and the extensive use of the Quality Teaching Framework.

- The unit/module was then team taught to the class by the class teacher and the mentor Head Teacher.
- Both class teacher and the mentor Head Teacher coded classes using the Quality Teaching Framework (Reform Areas 1 and 2).
- The unit was evaluated.

The two mentor Head Teachers have presented a very well received workshop to a regional National Partnerships Forum in Term 3 2011. They also presented a workshop and modelled team teaching in PDHPE to a Cessnock Community of Great Public Schools (CCGPS) workshop in that term (Reform Area 3).

Findings

This initiative has been well-accepted by teachers, despite some initial reservations. Thirty teachers (over 50% of our staff) have been involved in this initiative. Qualitative feedback has been very positive, and the demand for support has necessitated the establishment of a waiting list. Emerging themes from the research partnership with the University of Sydney indicate strong support for the mentor Head Teacher initiative, and the value of this type of professional learning.

The mentor Head Teachers have also been responsible for a number of other whole school initiatives especially QuickSmart. They have co-ordinated the training of staff (including teachers’ aides and tutors) and the implementation across the school. The improvements in numeracy (85.6% of Year 9 students attaining the minimum standard) has been closest to our target of 90% for the past three years. Furthermore, QuickSmart students achieved growth in numeracy of 48 compared with a school average of 36. Finally, Year 9 Aboriginal students achieved growth in numeracy of 17 scaled scores above the state – a result attributed to QuickSmart and its application through the Norta Norta tutoring program.

Other programs have included Cows Create Careers, where our school has been the most successful school since the program commenced three years ago. Both mentor Head Teachers work with the Agriculture teacher and classes on their individual research projects and emphasise the appropriate use of literacy, numeracy and technology in these written and oral reports. Cessnock High School has taken out each category for the last three years, a meritorious achievement.

Conclusions

The employment of mentor Head Teachers has been effective in embedding literacy, numeracy, and technology across KLAs. The initiative has been well accepted by teachers, and admired by those outside the school. The initiative will focus on sustainability of the practices over the last two years of National Partnerships so that teachers have these enhanced skills and embedded into their practice.

Future Directions

The employment of the two mentor Head Teachers is a most valuable initiative and will continue under the current model until at least the end of 2012 (the penultimate year of National Partnerships).

Curriculum

Change: Partnership with the University of Sydney

Background

National Partnerships (low SES) is a unique opportunity to enhance student learning opportunities and to engage in collaborative cultural change in a school and its community. Upon inclusion in this initiative in late 2009 it was obvious that there was a unique opportunity to ‘chronicle’ this process. As a result a research brief was established to track, analyse, evaluate and communicate our initiative over the four years of the partnership, and beyond. Additionally, the research would provide high quality and extensive data available within the academic domain and for the advantage of all within education.

Strategies

The scope of the project necessitated the engagement of a university in partnership with the school. The longitudinal study has a focus on cultural change (attitudes, values and aspirations) within the school and parent community over four years. It has a focus on Quality Teaching and student engagement. It has a specific focus on Year 6-7 transition, Stage 4 Literacy and Numeracy, Stage 5 Technology, and The College (Stage 6). This became the basis of the research brief.

Through negotiation with the School Education Director (SED) and the Regional Director (RD), expressions of interest were invited from the four closest universities to Cessnock – the University of Newcastle, Macquarie University, the University of Sydney and the University of New England. This was a
competitive process that was decided upon by the SED, and approved by the RD, based on value for the National Partnership’s dollar. The successful application was from the University of Sydney. All necessary and appropriate approvals, including ethics, were attained and the project commenced in Term 4 2010. This and the nature of the project have created some time lags in reporting.

The project has a research co-ordinator and a research officer. The research is based on intensive recorded interviews of students, teachers and parents. About 25 students from each academic year (7-12) have been interviewed, as have their parents. About 25 teachers have also been interviewed. These interviews will be repeated annually over the four years of the partnership – a longitudinal study.

The research co-ordinator reports to school staff meetings each term with a one hour PowerPoint presentation. A comprehensive written report is provided three times during the project. Findings are also communicated, under the usual cover of confidentiality and anonymity, through academic literature and conferences. Initial findings have been reported to an academic conference in London during September 2011.

Changes in systems and practice

The research project has a focus on changes in systems and practice over its four year tenure. In particular, changes in practices (pedagogy) will be analysed and reported. Changes in systems (The College) will also be analysed and reported.

Findings

The College and Stage 5 Technology have been reported through staff meeting PowerPoint presentations during 2011. The findings were:

1. The College (Stage 6)
   - Student initial confusion with the model and the unexpected nature of the change;
   - Student initial concern over territory (the senior centre), status (the assembly), recognition of experience (peer support) and expectation/inherited rights/routines (study periods); and
   - Student acceptance improved as the academic year progressed; they adapted to the new timetable, and grew to understand the benefits of the change;
   - Teacher acceptance and understanding (mostly) of the benefits of the model;
   - Teacher disenchantment (a few) that the model does not advantage Cessnock High School students; and
   - Teacher concern about the necessary changes to program scope and sequence and assessment schedules.
   - Student concern that is some two hour lessons, they ‘zone out’ – a pedagogy issue; and
   - Student positive remarks and anecdotes of what they will remember about their learning at Cessnock High School under The College.

2. Stage 5 Technology:
   - Student initial anticipation of a different ‘paradigm’ in learning with laptops;
   - Student disappointment with the ‘package’ especially the lack of access to specific programs;
   - Student concerns about the pedagogy, especially the laptop as a substitute for pen and paper;
   - Student acknowledgement of the wider applications available through the laptops such as PowerPoint, emailing assignments, and media;
   - Student acknowledgement of the temptation to disengage using their laptop; and
   - Student concerns about ‘redundant’ pedagogies e.g. typing notes into word from the whiteboard.
   - Teacher acceptance and acknowledgement that teaching is changing and of the great opportunities available for learning;
   - Teacher concerns about how the DER money could have been better utilised and their lack of mastery of the technology; and
   - Encouraging breadth of use of technology in classrooms by teachers across the school.

Conclusions

The research project is starting to produce valuable results, despite the associated time lags. It is able to report well beyond the key areas of National Partnership expenditure – Year 6-7 Transition and The College. Furthermore, over the next two years of the project, valuable and informative details of cultural change with the school and its community will be communicated. The ramifications of this research project go well beyond the tenure of National Partnerships (low SES) which will cease at the end of 2013. The key findings of the project will be published in 2014 with implications for the learning of young people at Cessnock High School for the next decade.
Future Directions

The project moved into the next phase of the longitudinal study in Term 4 2011 and Term 1 2012 with the first round of interviews for the incoming Year 7 cohort (twice) and their parents. About 25 students were interviewed. Additional teacher interviews will be conducted to further explore the changing pedagogies in The College.

In 2012, third round interviews will take place for staff, students and parents who have been involved in the project since 2010. This will be repeated in 2013 when the project concludes.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2011 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

- The school’s strongest support was in technology provision (94%), the teaching of core values (91%), extra-curricular activities (88%), connections with the community (88%), and parental encouragement (88%).
- Parents generally agreed that the school was friendly and tolerant (82%), that programs challenged students (82%), that we focused on literacy and numeracy (82%), and that the school promoted a healthy lifestyle (82%).
- Fewer parents agreed that students were the main concerns of the school (76%), that the school had supportive welfare programs (73%), that the school was attractive and well-resourced (70%), that the teachers set high standards (68%), that fair discipline exists in the school (68%), and that the school promotes the wearing of uniform (62%).

Professional learning

Staff have been involved in extensive and intensive teacher professional learning in 2011. This professional learning has been supported by funding from Teacher Professional Learning, Priority School Program, and National Partnerships.

Professional learning has focused on teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy, and technology. It involved a range of strategies including external courses/conferences, school development day sessions, individual and small group training. A key and critical aspect of professional learning at Cessnock High school since May 2010 has been intensive planning, team teaching and Quality Teaching coding by classroom teachers working very closely with the two National Partnerships Head Teachers.

School planning 2012—2014

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents.

School priority 1: Literacy and Numeracy

Outcome for 2012–2014

86% of Year 9 students (2012), 88% in 2013, and 90% in 2014 achieve the minimum standard in NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy. 2011 performance was reading 83%, writing 60% and numeracy 84%.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- 86% of Year 9 students (2012) achieve the minimum standard in NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy. 2011 performance was reading 83%, writing 60% and numeracy 84%.
- Year 9 students (2012), including Aboriginal students, achieving expected growth in NAPLAN exceeds 60%. In 2011 it was 56.8% in reading and 46% for numeracy. 30.8% of Aboriginal students achieved their expected growth in NAPLAN in 2011.
- Year 9 students (2012) achieving Bands 7 and 8 equals or exceeds LSGs in NAPLAN for reading, writing and numeracy. In 2011 SSGs were exceeded in Band 7 numeracy and Band 8 spelling, and Band 9 in reading, and grammar and punctuation.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Teams
- Faculty, and
- Staff (including SDDs).
- The Implementation of QuickSmart Literacy.
• The Continuation of the mentor Head Teacher initiative into its third year.

A key focus across the school on Quality Teaching (QT) by the QT Team based on:
• QT Rounds (in association with the University of Newcastle)
• QT SDD
• Strengthening of the QT component of the mentor Head Teacher role
• KLA colleague/critical friend based coding of lessons and assessment tasks
• Differentiated learning.
• Literacy and Numeracy Teams, NP Head Teachers, and the GATS (TAPS) Co-ordinator will devise strategies linked to NAPLAN that move 8B/8P and 9B/9P students into Band 9.
• Continuation of the National Partnerships AEW (Aboriginal Education Worker) position to maximum support for Aboriginal students and relationships with families.

School priority 2: Retention and Attendance

Outcome for 2012–2014
Retention is 40% (2012), 50% in 2013 and 60% in 2014. Retention has been 44.3% in 2007, 45.3% in 2008, 37.0% in 2009, 31.7% in 2010, and 53.4 in 2011.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
• Retention 7-12 is 40% (2012), 50% (2013), and 60% (2014). The achievement of the initial target was attained when this target was set in Term 3 2011 through the National Partnerships evaluation process. Retention 10-12 achieved in 2011 was 53.4%.
• The school’s attendance rate is 87% in 2012, 89% in 2013 and 91% in 2014. Attendance has been 88.3% in 2008, 88.5% in 2009, 86.7% in 2010 and 82.7% in 2011.
• The attendance rate for Aboriginal students (80.3% in 2011) equals or exceeds the targets for all students - 87% in 2012, 89% in 2013 and 91% in 2014.
• 15 students in Hospitality and 5 from Electro-Technology gain SBATs in 2012 with 10 and five respectively moving directly to apprenticeships in 2013. This will be facilitated through The Institute, to be launched in Term 2 2012.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
The implementation of:
• QuickSmart Literacy, and continuation of:
• An NP funded AEW
• Their own space – an Aboriginal Meeting Place
• A homework centre operating one afternoon each week
• The NP funded QuickSmart (Maths) program
• Two Norta Norta tutors for individual and small group withdrawal.

Year three of “The College” will see full implementation of this initiative, with its inherit advantages for students in managing their HSC studies and excelling.

An embedding of QT following the positive survey results on teaching and learning. QT will be the key focus for teacher professional learning in subsequent years. This will be led by the QT Team, and will be strategic in its approach through:
• Team teaching
• Mentoring with National Partnership Head Teachers
• QT Rounds
• SDDs
• Staff, faculty and executive meetings
• 100% of teaching and learning programs have QT embedded.

“The Institute” has been established in Stage 5 to create employment pathways for students into local apprenticeships in skill shortage areas – Hospitality, Metals and Engineering and Electro-Technology.

During 2012 planning will commence for “The Foundation”. This will be quality teaching based focussed/concentrated approach to studying the KLAs (consistent with the Australian Curriculum) where students deeply explore course material and have options to specialise (electives) in Stage 4.

Recruitment of a Student Support Officer to effectively case manage students and families that struggle with mainstream education and the pathway to full-time employment.

The continuation of the partnership with the University of Sydney to research cultural change, especially pedagogy, within the school over the last two years of National Partnerships, will inform this
focus on maintaining the relevance of schooling and its impact on retention.

The continuation of the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) initiative to establish and strengthen the relationships with parents, business and community members, will focus on the relevance of schooling.

Expenditure on additional computing resources to ensure that students have access to the most current hardware and software to support their studies whilst at school, will be a priority.

Additional funds will also be allocated to the update of hardware and software in special education since Liddell Trust funds have been frozen. Additionally, funding allocated to employ aides to support special education students in the community as part of their work experience, community service, and travel training.

**School priority 3: Quality Teaching**

**Outcome for 2012–2014**

**2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:**

- 90% of students (2011 average is 88%) and teachers (2011 average is 88%) surveyed state that the dimensions and elements of QT apply “always or mostly” to their lessons.
- 95% of teachers (82.8% in 2011) state that they are functional or expert in the use of classroom technology.
- 95% of students state that computers make their school work more interesting (83.6% in 2011) and computers help them do better with their school work (89.1% in 2011).

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Additional expenditure on computing resources (see above).
- Expenditure on hardware and software for special education classes (see above).
- Intensive teacher professional learning, especially through team teaching, with the mentor Head Teacher Technology (Stage 5).

**About this report**

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school’s practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school’s future development.

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Kyle Williams  Head Teacher Literacy/Numeracy
Sue Rigley  Head Teacher Technology
Tim Goodwin  Sport Co-ordinator
Deborah Falconer  Head Teacher CAPA
Jenny Megson  P&C President
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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at:

Cessnock High School

Positive Behaviour For Learning

RESPECT
BE POLITE
CARE FOR EACH OTHER
LOOK AFTER OUR SCHOOL
BE PROUD

RESPONSIBILITY
RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME
BE SAFE
BE ACCOUNTABLE
BE POSITIVE

READY TO LEARN
COME PREPARED
LISTEN WELL
STAY ON TASK
DO MY BEST