Cessnock High School
Annual School Report

2012
Our school at a glance

Students

At the beginning of 2012 there were 595 students enrolled at Cessnock High School, 15 fewer than in 2011. There were 108 students in Year 7, 123 students in Year 8, 97 students in Year 9, 100 students in Year 10, 85 students in Year 11 and 61 students in Year 12. Included in these numbers were 21 students in two support classes. There were 85 students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Cessnock High School receives Transition Funding (formerly the Priority Schools Program) and National Partnerships (low socio-economic status) funding. Much of this support is focused on literacy, numeracy and technology.

Cessnock High School is a proud member of the Cessnock Community of Great Public Schools (CCGPS). CCGPS includes two high schools and 14 partner primary schools within the local government area, striving collectively to provide the best possible educational opportunities for students from pre-school to Year 12 through a collaboratively developed strategic plan. In 2011 CCGPS was recognised with a Director General’s Achievement Award for “A K-12 approach to improving student learning outcomes”. The core values of the group, Collaborate, Inspire and Achieve, support the collective goals and align strongly with those of the individual schools within the local management group.

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 2012 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 2012 enrolment of 595 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 a number of significant programs including:

- literacy and numeracy,
- Stage 6 curriculum (The College),
- Vocational Education and Training (VET),
- VET in Year 10 (The Institute),
- gifted and talented education,
- Aboriginal education,
- creative and performing arts,
- representative sports,
- Cows Create Careers, and
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)

Student achievement in 2012

In Year 7 students generally performed below the state average and similar schools and communities as ours (Statistically Similar Groups or SSGs), but were above SSGs in Bands 7 reading, Band 7 writing, Bands 7 and 9 spelling, Band 7 grammar and punctuation and Band 7 numeracy.

In Year 9 students generally performed below the state average, but above SSGs in Band 9 writing and Band 8 grammar and punctuation.

In the Higher School Certificate (HSC) student performance in General Mathematics equaled the state average. Student performances in General Mathematics, Biology, Legal Studies and PDHPE were above those of SSGs. Jasmine Lasky from College 2 gained the highest Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) in Cessnock. 33% of our HSC students enrolled at university after completing the 2012 HSC compared with the rolling four-year average of 22%.
Messages

Principal’s message
Welcome to the Annual School Report 2012. Cessnock High School is an innovative school that puts student learning at the forefront of all of our endeavours. We believe that our school provides all students with the opportunities to excel at their level and in their chosen areas of expertise.

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’ and Citizens’ (P & C) message
2012 was another very active year for Cessnock High School P&C. Our new meeting schedule is going well. We have been meeting once a term rather than once a month this year. This works well for our busy members and we have maintained our increase in members. With meetings being friendly, informal, succinct and extremely informative, we include guest speakers and opportunities to ask questions about our school, curriculum, its PBL culture and any other concerns or ideas.

Our canteen is still the backbone of our fundraising efforts, thanks to the enormous efforts of our canteen staff, Vicki Slusher and Sue Giles and of course our dedicated volunteers. The sale of school uniforms continues under this umbrella, making uniforms available to our students at a reasonable cost and extending that with a payment plan. This supports our school’s push to attend in uniform.

Cessnock High School P&C also had the responsibility of administering a donation of almost $80 000 from Hunter Music Academy. These funds saw the purchase and installation of screens in the Multi Purpose Centre (MPC) to serve as visual display units for assemblies, presentation days, class work and other occasions, and also gave us the opportunity to bring our stage curtains up to fire standards. The academy also provided musical instruments for our school.

Jenny Megson:
Chairperson Cessnock High School P&C

Student representative’s message
Throughout 2012 the Student Representative Council (SRC) became extremely active with a focus on fundraising. This was decided earlier in the year by the captains and junior SRC so that funds were available for 2013. Because the student body elects their own representatives, the decision to fund raise for future endeavours was well beyond their years.

An excellent group of students was elected to the SRC for 2013. Since 2009 the SRC has grown to master The College. With the help of SRC Co-ordinators Ms Burke and Ms Miles we have developed a system that is able to work around the seniors’ busy schedule. With much more responsibility placed on the junior years, they have taken the task in their stride. We look forward to a big year ahead.

Joel Troy, Mikayla Sheehan, Rhys Binns and Bethany Dwyer
Senior Leaders 2013

Anzac Day March 2012
School context

Student information

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>State DEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance

During 2012 the parents of every absent student were contacted by phone. This direct and personal approach from our school office managed absenteeism and gave an opportunity for direct contact with parents over other school matters. This initiative was funded through Transition Funding (formerly Priority Schools Program). In Term 4 the school moved to electronic roll marking using the Millennium system. Rolls were marked at the beginning of every lesson and any truancy closely monitored and managed.

Post-school destinations

Of last year’s 59 HSC students, 32% are at university, compared with 20% in 2011, 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 59 HSC students, 24% are in employment compared with 51% in 2011, 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 59 HSC students 15% are at TAFE or further education, compared with 13% in 2011, 14% in 2010 and 2009, 24% in 2008, 40% in 2007, 32% in 2006, 36% in 2005, and 14% in 2004. Of last year’s 59 students 29% are unemployed or could not be contacted.

In 2012 there was strong growth university admissions of our College 2 students with 32% enrolling compared with the four-year rolling average of 22%. There is also a strong link between studying VET courses and securing employment.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

Of the 59 students completing College 2 in 2012, 93% were awarded the Higher School Certificate. 7% were pathways students who were awarded a record of attainment.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

Of the 55 students awarded the HSC in 2012, 20% completed one VET subject and 7% two VET subjects. Of the 55 students awarded the HSC in 2012, 16% had completed a VET subject as part of the 2011 HSC (in The College) and 7% had completed two VET subjects.

Some of our excellent Science Projects
Staff information

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>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Permanent Teachers:</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional staff have been employed under National Partnerships, Every Student, Every School, and Transition Funding Programs. Under these programs additional staff support students and teachers. These include our Head Teacher Technology, Head Teacher Literacy and Numeracy, Community Liaison Officer (CLO), Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), school learning and support officers (SLSO), and Norta Norta Tutors.

Of the permanent teachers reported above, 7.5% are Aboriginal. The school employed Norta Norta Tutors in 2012, two of whom 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. In 2012 there were three new staff appointed to Cessnock High School – a Head Teacher Technology and Applied Studies, a teacher of English and a Teacher of Human Society and its Environment. During 2012 our Primary Industries/Agriculture Teacher Greg Matthews retired, our Head Teacher PDHPE Paul Colla transferred, and our IO Teacher Jackie Smith transferred.

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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>30/11/2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>465116.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>586834.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>724177.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>215258.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>24002.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>73548.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>2088938.65</td>
</tr>
</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 2012 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the P&C in Term 2. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
School performance 2012

Cessnock High School is an innovative school. This innovative approach focuses clearly on providing opportunities for all students to excel.

Achievements

Arts

2012 was a busy year for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA). A wide variety of students presented performances at the weekly Principal’s Assembly, including small ensembles and soloists. College Music students Mikayla Sheehan and Samuel Harwood performed at International Women’s Day. The Performing Arts were highlighted during an Education Week Concert at Cessnock High School, with performances by Yasmin Williams, Mikayla Sheehan and Emily Crosdale.

Visual Arts students worked on a variety of practical works within the school and community. Elective students, led by Mrs Robson, highlighted their works with an Exhibition of Still Life drawings at Cessnock City Library. Junior students focused on new programs in Ceramics and Digital Media.

Deborah Falconer
Head Teacher Creative and Performing Arts

Sport

2012 was another great year for Cessnock High School in the sporting arena. Cessnock High School and the Greater Cessnock Area have a long tradition of sporting excellence. The biggest gift that sport can bring is opportunity and it is an absolute privilege that our school can provide broad sporting opportunities for our students. The opportunity to meet new people, the opportunity to improve your health, the opportunity to build feelings of self esteem and self worth and for a lucky few the opportunity to earn a living doing something they love. It is for this reason that Cessnock High School’s greatest achievements this year have come in the form of increases in participation across all sports. Highlights of the year included:

- The number of state knockout teams fielded by Cessnock High increased from 9 to 17
- We had a record number of students attend Annual Coalfields Zone Year 7 Gala Day
- Twice as many teams were entered in the Year 7 and 8 Coalfields Zone Cricket Gala Day
- Record numbers attended and competed in the swimming carnival
- Record numbers attended and competed in the Cross Country and Athletics Carnival resulting in our school fielding the strongest zone teams in years.

All of these increases in participation numbers have meant that many opportunities have been available to more students than ever before. The benefits of sport and physical activity for young people cannot be denied and it seems as though that message is resonating strongly with our staff and students.

The 2012 sports year was highlighted by some outstanding individual and team performances. These included Jason Zechel’s selection in the NSW CHS Soccer Team, our Year 7 Coalfields Cricket Gala Day team taking out the Annual Trophy, and four students representing our school at the New South Wales Combined High Schools Athletics Carnival - Jacarna Bain-Fenton, Maddison King, Mitchell O’Neill and Antonio Tassone. Each of those students and teams represented at a higher level. They kept Cessnock foremost in mind and were proud of where they started their sports journey for the year.

Tim Goodwin
Sports 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 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)

and/or

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

Aboriginal Education

During 2012 we saw another improvement in NAPLAN results by our Aboriginal students. Students continued to work closely with NORTA NORTA Tutors Errol Clarke, Rebekah McLean, Hayley Conserdyne and Julie Perret. Tutors focused on the learning areas of literacy and numeracy, through one-on-one tutoring and the QuickSmart program.

Sistaspeak and Brospeak continued to run successfully throughout the year, under the direction of Chris Gillespie and Errol Clarke.

Students, staff and the community participated in a number of Aboriginal Days of Celebration, including Pathways Awards, Close the Gap, NAIDOC Week and Harmony Day.

Cessnock High School entered our first ever school team in the “Indigenous Knockout” Football competition. Our team was coached by Errol Clarke and Natalie O’Neill.

Students participated in many Art programs, and received a Highly Commended in the “Reconciliation Art Challenge”.
Aboriginal Art

Multicultural Education

Departmental ARCO training was provided during 2012, and was attended by Cessnock High School’s ARCO Contact Officer, Deborah Falconer.

Multicultural awareness and study is incorporated into each Key Learning Area (KLA) within the school. Multiculturalism was also celebrated on Harmony Day, with a whole school Expo.

There were minimal racist issues which occurred at Cessnock High School throughout 2012. Any issues that were reported were resolved promptly and effectively.

National Partnership Programs

There are significant National Partnership’s Programs running in our school. Under this program $600 000 each year has been provided by the Federal Government. In 2012 these funds were used to:

- Employ a Head Teacher Literacy/Numeracy to enhance teacher professional learning in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8);
- Employ a Head Teacher Technology to enhance teacher professional learning in Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10);
- Employ and Aboriginal Education Worker to engage Aboriginal students, their families, and their communities;
- Employ a Community Liaison Officer to promote the school’s achievements within the community;
- Work closely with the University of Sydney in a four year longitudinal study of Year 6 transition, literacy, numeracy, technology, and The College;
- Implement QuickSmart literacy and numeracy in association with the University of New England;
- Implement Quality Teaching in association with the University of Newcastle; and
- Purchase computing hardware including SmartBoards.

Other programs

At Cessnock High School three innovative structures provide opportunities for students to excel. They are The College, The Institute and The Foundation.

- The College is an innovative HSC structure that compresses studies into two one-year blocks. As a result students study just three subjects each year instead of six. Students report that this is less stressful and gives them the opportunity of studying in greater depth. The College begins in Week 6 of Term 4 each year. All students are promoted to their next year of study and Year 7 commence in the first week of December.
- The Institute targets those students in Year 9 who are seeking an apprenticeship in the Hospitality industry. In 2012, 17 students were invited to join the Year 10 HSC Hospitality class and 4 students the Electro-Technology class, for the first year of The Institute in 2013.
- The Foundation was conceived in 2011 and will re-structure Year 7 with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum in 2014.

Progress on 2012 targets

Target Area 1: Literacy and Numeracy

Repeat target for 2012 from 2011 report

- 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.

Our achievements include:

- Target 1 was achieved for numeracy, and approached in other areas except writing
- Target 2 was exceeded by the Year 9 QuickSmart and Aboriginal students in numeracy, and achieved by all Year 9 students in reading
- Target 3 Band 7 exceeded statistically similar schools (SSGs) in Year 9 reading, and Year 9 equaled SSGs in Bands 7 and 8 writing.
**Target Area 2: Retention and Attendance**

- 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.

**Our achievements include:**

- Target 4 was exceeded with a retention rate of 44%

- Target 5 was not achieved with a Term 1 2012 attendance rate of 82%.

- Target 6 was not achieved with a Term 1 2012 attendance rate of 80.6%.

- Target 7 has been approached with 17 students accepted into the Hospitality class, and four into the Electro-Technology class. Traineeships will be negotiated in 2013.

**Target 3: Quality Teaching**

- 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).

**Our achievements include:**

- Target 8 was exceeded with 92% of students and 93% of students responding “always/mostly/occasionally” to a suite of Quality Teaching questions.

- Target 9 was exceeded with 96% of teachers stating they are functional/expert in the use of classroom technology.

- Target 10 was not achieved with 85% of students stating computers make their school work more interesting and 83% stating computers help them do better.

---

**School evaluation**

NSW public schools conduct evaluation to support the effective implementation of the school plan. Our four year longitudinal study (2010-2013) in association with the University of Sydney has produced the evaluation below as part of the Interim Report. The study commenced in 2010 and by mid 2012 280 semi-structured interviews with students, parents and teachers had been undertaken representing 300 hours of interview recordings and 5000 pages of transcription material. The interim results of this research have been presented above.

**Change: Changes in Higher School Certificate (Stage 6) Structures.**

**Background:**

The College Model introduced a two-step approach to the HSC with students taking examinations in three subjects in College Year 1 and College Year 2. It was initiated in 2010 and is now in the third year of implementation.
Findings:
This intervention was the most challenging to students and teachers principally because of changes to the daily and yearly schedules. Initial student cohorts also reported that they were concerned with the lack of consultation, speed with which the model was introduced and the changing culture of the senior school and their concomitant loss of privileges.

Students however responded well to the reduced subject load as less stressful. The 2012 College 1 cohort were also positive about the reduced number of subjects and the mixed classroom demographic which enables them to make friends with and seek guidance from College 2 students. This current cohort did not report loss of privileges but rather reported privileges gained as senior students. Two hour classes were commented on by all students and responses to these were dependent upon teachers’ pedagogical practice. For example, when teachers employed ‘mixed up teaching’ and gave students short breaks, students ‘zoned in’ to the longer class times. Teachers’ perspectives were enormously varied and embedded in individual beliefs systems about student maturity and subject discipline.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Future Directions:
The College Model has resulted in significant changes to the daily routines in the senior school, to students’ expectation of the privileges associated with being a senior and more significantly it has challenged many teachers’ pedagogical and disciplinary beliefs. It is recommended that the College Model be given maturation time of at least another five years. This is a relatively short timeframe when it is considered that the College is replacing a senior school structure which has been extant for over 40 years. Specific recommendations:

- Develop faculty specific action research projects focusing on developing pedagogical changes to further student engagement in two hour classes
- Use the Quality Teaching framework in the action research projects
- Develop formal peer support for Year 10 students to ensure their ‘examination readiness’ in College 1 (This is particularly critical with the demise of the School Certificate)
- Ensure that the language of the College is employed rather than that of the traditional model HSC
- Develop classroom practices that reflect the adult status of senior students and move beyond the ‘ideology of immaturity’ which is evident in some teachers’ attitudes to senior students
- Improve communication between the executive, faculties and students.

Change: Changes in Transition Stage 3 to Stage 4.
Background:
The school has a well-established and long running transition program for Year 6 students. There is a strong relationship between the school and its five partner schools, and with other schools in the Cessnock Community of Great Public Schools.

Findings:
All teachers and students were positive about the benefits of the transition/orientation program for Year 7 students and for teaching. The ‘rollover’ to high school in the final weeks of Term 4 allowed Year 6 enabled students to settle into high school and made ‘a positive end of year’ and a seamless beginning to the following academic year. Students reported being less fearful of the transition as a result of the program.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Future Directions
There was a very positive response from teachers and students to the social and academic benefits accruing from the transition programme. Specific recommendations include:

- Focus on vulnerable students to balance activities for gifted and talented students
- Review class allocation procedures with less input from primary schools thus enabling students to ‘escape their past’
- Streamline identified orientation processes
- Review the orientation programme annually
- Improve communication between Year 6 teachers and high school faculties to prevent repetition of primary school content and so ensure students do not become disengaged with high school.
Change: Changes in student learning through technology

Background:

The school’s response to the initial Government distribution of laptop computers to Year 9 students under the Digital Education Revolution Initiative was to appoint a specialist Head Teacher Technology (HTT) to work with individual teachers on integrating technology into their pedagogical repertoire.

Findings:

There is evidence that the HTT has worked with teachers on developing units of work which make best use of technology. However, the data from student and teacher interviews indicates that there has been limited integration of technology into classrooms mainly because of teacher lack of confidence and technical problems associated with the laptops.

Recommendations and Future Directions

- Develop faculty specific action research projects facilitated by the HTT to develop teachers’ technological pedagogical content knowledge
- Improve/ streamline maintenance processes – a systemic issue
- Encourage teachers to clearly articulate their expectations to students regarding frequency of use of laptops and permitted uses in class
- Encourage teachers to undertake subject specific professional development and subsequently develop others within their faculties. These activities to be aligned with the recommended action research projects
- Develop school-wide classroom management strategies for the use of laptops.

Change: Changes in the quality and quantity of teacher professional learning plans

Background:

The school appointed a specialist Head Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (HTL&N) to work with individual teachers and to work strategically with small groups of teachers and students. The HTL&N reported using the Quality Teaching Framework to revise programmes and assist teachers integrate specific literacy strategies into curriculum areas. The research found that all teachers interviewed regarded literacy as each teacher’s responsibility. This corresponds with the most recent research which emphasises the subject specific nature of literacy.

Findings:

Taken together, the interventions examined in this report represent an impressive, coordinated, integrated approach to improving student engagement and transition. The overall success of the initiatives is, however, dependent on classroom practice because research indicates that ‘excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influence on student achievement’. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that teachers engage in action research projects aligned with each of the initiatives.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Future Directions

- Develop action research projects to establish closer link between students’ in-class and out-of-class literacy activities
- Develop literacy strategies which require students to transform texts rather than copy texts
- Develop ways to harness students’ literacy practices such as texting and encourage them to work collaboratively with other students to process this informal communication style into longer and more cohesive texts.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2012 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. This was almost exclusively done through the four year longitudinal study in conjunction with the University of Sydney. The interim results of this research have been presented above. Additionally, 50 parents were surveyed. They responded in this way:

- 96% agreed that the school had supportive welfare programs
- 94% agreed that the school teaches and promotes core values
- 92% agreed that there is good student access to computers and strong technology programs
- 90% agreed that the school encouraged contact to discuss any problems relating to children
- 88% agreed that the school maintains a focus on literacy and numeracy
- 88% agreed that the school offered a wide range of extra-curricular programs e.g. sport and music
- 88% agreed that the school is connected to its community and welcomes parents
- 87% agreed that the school was a friendly, tolerant and accepting of all students
- 84% agreed that the school promotes uniform
- 82% agreed that the school offers challenging programs for its students
- 82% agreed that the school is attractive and well-resourced
- 82% agreed that the school promotes a healthy lifestyle
- 77% agreed that students are the school’s main concern
- 74% agreed that the school has competent teachers who set high standards of achievement
- 70% agreed that fair discipline exists in the school.

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

Outcome for 2012–2014

Improved student performance in NAPLAN Literacy and Numeracy

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- To increase the percentage of Year 9 students achieving the NMS and above in reading from 87% in NAPLAN 2011 to 90% in 2013
- To increase the percentage of Year 9 students achieving the NMS and above in writing from 81% in NAPLAN 2011 to 84% in 2013
- To increase the percentage of Year 9 students achieving the NMS and above in numeracy from 87% in NAPLAN 2011 to 90% in 2013
- To increase the percentage of students achieving expected growth in NAPLAN reading from 40% in 2011 to 45% in 2013

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Explicit teaching, group and individual interventions in Stage 4 literacy and numeracy
- Clear and coherent assessment tasks that are Quality Teaching (QT) coded
- Effective use of SMART data by teachers
- Teacher Professional Learning through planning and team teaching with the Head Teacher Literacy/Numeracy
- Engagement of teachers in professional learning through the action research project with the University of Sydney
- Training of Year 9 students as Year 7 literacy tutors in a ‘Z’ elective
- Gifted and Talented Programs that extend students in debating and public speaking
- Implementation of QuickSmart Numeracy and Literacy with dedicated Student Learning and Support Officers (SLSOs) and Norta Norta Tutors.

School priority 2

Outcome for 2012–2014

Improved Student Attendance and Retention.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- To increase retention 7-12 from 44% in 2012 to 48% in 2013
- To increase the school’s attendance rate from 81.7% in 2012 to 85% in 2013
- To increase the attendance of Aboriginal students from 79% in 2012 to 85% (the same as the school population) in 2013
To achieve the placement of 10 students into Hospitality SBATs in 2013 and 2 into Electro-Technology SBATs.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Implementation of curriculum structures that support Quality Teaching and student engagement – The College, The Institute and The Foundation
- Daily phone calls to parents inquiring about absent and truanting students
- Support for students with special needs through “Every Student, Every School”
- Effective and efficient roll marking through Millennium every lesson
- Planning for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum
- Employment of a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and an Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW)
- A focus on teacher professional learning through Quality Teaching and Action Research.

School priority 3

Outcome for 2012–2014

Increased student engagement

Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- To increase the percentage of students surveyed who state that the dimensions and elements of QT apply “always /mostly occasionally” to their lessons, from 92% in 2012 to 95% in 2013
- To achieve at least two teachers from each KLA who engage in effective action research in the integration of technology through QT
- To increase the percentage of students who state that computers make their school work more interesting, from 85% in 2012 to 90% in 2013
- To increase the percentage of students who state that computers help them do better with their school work, from 83% in 2012 to 90% in 2013.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Teacher professional learning through planning and team teaching with the Head Teacher Technology
- Purchase of computing hardware, especially SmartBoards, to enhance student engagement through technology.

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.

Ian Scanlon: Principal
Lesley Scanlon: Senior Lecturer University of Sydney
Deborah Falconer: Head Teacher Creative and Performing Arts
Jeremy Rennex: Head Teacher Technology
Tim Goodwin: Sports Co-ordinator
Jenny Walker: Careers Adviser
Stacy Jacobs: Student Support Officer
Sharon Troy: Community Liaison Officer
Jenny Megson: P&C Chairperson
Natalie Sweetman: School Administration Manager
Joel Troy: School Captain 2013
Mikayla Sheehan: School Captain 2013
Rhys Binns: School Vice Captain 2013
Bethany Dwyer: School Vice Captain 2013

School contact information

Cessnock High School
Aberdare Road, Cessnock, NSW, 2325
Ph: 02 49901977
Fax: 02 49911815
Email: cessnock-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.cessnock-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 8108

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: