School Improvement Unit
Report

Mareeba State High School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Mareeba State High School from 22 to 25 March 2015. It provides an evaluation of the school’s performance against the nine domains of the National School Improvement Tool. It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to consider in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The review and report were completed by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU). For more information about the SIU and the new reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the Department of Education and Training (DET) website.

1.2 School context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Jasper Street, Mareeba 4880</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>Far North Queensland</td>
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<td>The school opened in:</td>
<td>1960</td>
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<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Year 7 to Year 12</td>
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<td>Current school enrolment:</td>
<td>754</td>
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<td>Indigenous enrolments:</td>
<td>22.8 percent</td>
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<td>Students with disability enrolments:</td>
<td>4.1 percent</td>
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<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>931</td>
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<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>Number of teachers:</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Nearby schools:</td>
<td>Mareeba State School, Dimbulah P-10, St Stephens Catholic School, Biboohra State School, Mutchilba State School, Mt Molloy State School.</td>
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<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>College of Agriculture, Skills 360 and TAFE North, Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC), Mulungu Corporation and the Collaborations for Indigenous Outcomes.</td>
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<td>Unique school programs:</td>
<td>SWAD, Rock and Water, Drumbeat, Northern Pride (Rugby League), Goodstart, Gateway AG</td>
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1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school’s performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school’s assistant regional director
- a school visit of four days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal and two Deputy Principals
  - 47 teachers
  - Business Services Manager (BSM) and 3 administration officers
  - Eight student leaders and 56 students
  - Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) President and 15 other parents
  - A member of the Mareeba Council, two other community leaders, Coordinator of PACE.
  - Five principals from local schools
  - 15 Teacher-aides, eight cleaners, schools officer- facilities and schools officer- grounds
  - Youth support coordinator, school based youth nurse, community education counsellor, chaplain, guidance officer, vocational education coordinator.

1.4 Review team

Valerie Hadgelias  
Internal Reviewer, SIU (Chair)

Boyd Jorgensen  
Internal Reviewer, SIU

Trevor Gordon  
External Reviewer
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school has an improvement agenda, however it is not accompanied by timelines.
  Teachers identified explicit teaching and improved student behaviour as the main priorities for the school. However the agenda lacks the clarity, targets and timelines necessary to steer the work of teachers in the classroom. Plans for improvement are not rigorously driven.

- School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) has been adopted as the research based platform for improving behaviour.
  The SWPBS values are prominently displayed around the school and these values guide all discussions concerning student behaviour. Most teachers agreed that SWPBS had improved behaviour.

- The Student Support Services team provides a coordinated and highly successful system of support for students.
  The school has prioritised and organised facilities, resources, programs and strategies in a way that significantly lessens the impact of disadvantage on student access to the curriculum and learning.

- The school has adopted explicit teaching as the basis of its pedagogical framework.
  An explicit teaching coach works with teachers to build their capacity in the explicit teaching model. Teachers speak favourably of this support. Lesson observations and written feedback to teachers are embedded practices and teachers value receiving feedback on their teaching performance. There is an ongoing focus on the professional development of teachers to help build consistency of practice in this framework.

- Staff awareness is growing in regards to the importance of becoming skilled in differentiating the curriculum for the increasingly diverse range of students.
  Some use is made of differentiated teaching, and there is some evidence of subject areas and teachers catering for individual differences by offering multiple means of representation, engagement and expression. Some modification of the curriculum occurs. Not all teachers feel confident that they are skilled in this area and refer to the great diversity of students for whom they have to cater.

- The school has engaged in a range of community partnerships to enhance student learning and wellbeing.
  Partners include parents and families, local schools, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations. There is a particular focus evident in supporting student wellbeing and senior education pathways.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Sharpen and narrow the focus of the school’s improvement agenda to one or two key priorities. Ensure rigorous implementation of agreed strategies. Allow sufficient time to fully embed these priorities before moving the developmental focus to the next priority area.

- Collaboratively establish clear school-wide targets for improvement expressed in terms of measurable student outcomes with accompanying timelines.

- Drive the embedding of the SWPBS program as a high priority for school leaders. Review all aspects of the program, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Positive Behaviour Lessons. Strive for consistency of behaviour management processes throughout the whole staff in both classroom practices and in consequences for unsatisfactory behaviour.

- Develop a culture of rigorous and systematic implementation of agreed strategies. Ensure all prioritised pedagogical programs or processes are supported through targeted professional development, modelling by leaders and peers, observation, feedback and coaching in order to ensure effective embedding.

- Develop teacher skills in differentiation so that teachers are able to work to ensure that all students – including high achieving students - are appropriately engaged, challenged and extended by designing classroom activities to meet students’ diverse learning needs, levels of readiness, interests, aspirations and motivations.