



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Balcatta Senior High School

## Public School Review

# 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 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 3 year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, 3 or 5 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 Public School Review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal and the regional Director of Education.

## Expectations of schools

The Statement of Expectation (the Statement) makes clear and public the expectations and responsibilities of schools and the Department of Education (the Department) in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department, represented by the Director General; the school, represented by the Principal; and is noted by the school council/board, represented by the Chair.

The Statement sets out the expectations of Principals in relation to the delivery of the 2020-2024 strategic directions *Every student, every classroom, every day*, and *Building on Strength*.

The Statement will underpin each school's strategic planning and self-assessment and will form part of the school's Public School Review. It will also support the Principal Professional Review.

## 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.

For further information or resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact [PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au)

## Context

Balcatta Senior High School is located within the North Metropolitan Education Region, approximately 12 kilometres from the Perth central business district.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1026 (decile 4) and became an Independent Public School in 2017.

Currently 901 students are enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12.

Balcatta Senior High School has the support of a School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The first Public School Review was conducted in Term 4 2019. This 2023 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the next cycle of school improvement.

## School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

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

- A culture of reflective school self-assessment, as the foundation for effective strategic planning and continuous improvement, was evident. The school effectively maintained a school improvement focus during a period of instability resulting from a combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a school rebuild.
- The 2019 Public School Review report provided a starting point and clear direction for school self-assessment and improvement.
- Collaborative processes have underpinned the school self-assessment in preparation for this Public School Review.
- An overview document for each domain of the Standard was provided in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission. Within this one document, analysis, evidence and commentary provided a clear demonstration of the school's performance against the domain and alignment to planned actions.
- Opportunities for staff contribution were provided through individual submissions to the ESAT and during the validation day discussions. There was significant evidence of staff buy-in to the school's improvement agenda.
- A broad representation of enthusiastic staff, students, and community members engaged in discussions with the review team, contributing authentic reflections in support of the school.
- The school's leadership reported that the Public School Review provided an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the school's achievements and to refocus on ongoing priorities for school improvement.

The following recommendation is made:

- For all evidence submitted in the ESAT, provide annotated comment to demonstrate relevance and impact on student outcomes.

## Public School Review

### Relationships and partnerships

The school is focused on building positive and supportive relationships between students, staff and families and cultivating partnerships with organisations and industry. Staff display high levels of positivity and motivation to work collaboratively with a focus on student success.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has moved toward a greater emphasis on electronic communication platforms. Communication is largely through Connect and email. The school seeks community feedback and is endeavouring to make communication more accessible for all stakeholders.
- Extensive partnerships have been established with a variety of agencies and organisations that support learning programs for students. Relationships with universities, in particular Edith Cowan University, support specialist programs in the arts and provide a range of opportunities for students and staff.
- Staff relationships are respectful, confident and demonstrate a deep knowledge and common understanding of their students and the school's strategic direction. Staff hold themselves accountable, ensuring a culture of quality collaboration, feedback, empowerment and commitment.
- The integrated Education Support Program (ESP) reflects the high level of collaboration that exists between staff where both staff and students transition seamlessly between general and ESP classes.
- School Board members are highly effective and professional, with strong processes in place to develop their capabilities. Members engage proactively in important strategic discussions to help guide school decision making and policy.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- To further enhance transparency about student learning and progress, consider developing and sharing a communication policy that identifies the expected type and frequency of teacher to parent communication. Include guidelines for the use of translation and interpreters when required.
- Continue to explore external partnerships that support the contextual needs of students and enhance educational opportunities and pathways.

### Learning environment

Leaders and staff are committed to the wellbeing of every student. They promote inclusive practices and have enacted organisational structures that support a positive learning environment.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Student wellbeing survey data informs the Student Services Operational Plan and strategies are developed to address identified areas of need.
- Trauma informed practice in every classroom supports engagement and improvement in student self-esteem.
- A Reconciliation Action Plan Committee is leading the school's connection to the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework (ACSF). Operational plans for each learning area reference the ACSF.
- The student services team use a case management approach, providing comprehensive support for high needs students at educational risk (SAER).
- Newly completed buildings have enhanced the welcoming appeal of the school. Open and visually linked workspaces enhance the connectedness of learning spaces and improves supervision.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to strengthen processes that support improved attendance and engagement to reduce the number of students in the severe risk attendance category.

## Leadership

Underpinned by a collective desire to improve, leadership structures, reflective processes, Teacher Led Communities and professional learning are guiding staff to participate in the strategic direction of the school.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Strategic changes to the leadership structure are supporting the distribution of leadership, developing the skills of staff and driving school improvement.
- Engagement in the Fogarty EDvance program is enabling development across a wide scope of school activities. Time is dedicated for teams at all levels to meet and engage in strategic and operational planning.
- Through a consultative approach, the need for change is carefully managed and determined in the best interests of students.
- A clear approach to performance management and development is evident. Staff are supported to develop their practice, aligned to school instructional priorities.
- Staff are engaged in development and review of the business plan, strategic plan and operational plans based on student data. There are clear connections between these plans, resourcing and classroom practice.
- Opportunities for staff to undertake leadership roles and responsibilities across the school are extensive and supported by the executive team.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue the processes that develop leaders with particular focus on developing the attributes of leadership which will help them to understand and drive the strategic direction of the school.
- Progress the intention for student leaders to participate as formal members of the School Board.

## Use of resources

A trusting and productive relationship between the Principal and manager of corporate services ensures planning, management and monitoring processes for the use of resources are aligned to school operations. The provision of facilities, resources and staffing that meet students' needs are clear priorities.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Sound processes and practices are established for managing financial and human resources. An effective Finance Committee assists with financial oversight. The School Board is kept well informed of the school's financial management processes and spending priorities.
- In response to student social and emotional wellbeing data, an increase in resourcing for student services is beginning to have a positive impact on student engagement and outcomes.
- Allied professionals are highly regarded and respected for the role they play in supporting individual students, as well as teaching and learning programs across the school.
- Support for building staff capacity in teaching and learning has been prioritised and substantial engagement with Teach Well is providing teachers with the skills and evidence base to improve practice.
- A strategic approach has been taken to the management of the school's information and communications technology, with a comparative assessment made on purchasing versus leasing of equipment. Reserve accounts are in place to maintain currency of equipment.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Ensure that there is a tangible link between student characteristics funding provided for Aboriginal students and the resources and initiatives that support their learning.

## Teaching quality

Successful schools have a culture in which teachers take personal and collective responsibility to deliver a consistent school-wide pedagogy, based on shared beliefs and clear expectations about effective teaching and learning. There are signs emerging of progress towards achieving this aspiration at Balcatta Senior High School.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A priority is given to professional learning for staff that is systematic, action research based, includes goal setting, milestone monitoring and is aligned to school priorities.
- Engagement with Teach Well and the Berry Street Education Model of trauma-informed practice is guiding the development of whole-school teaching practices that support student learning.
- Staff are supported to develop their data literacy. They collect and analyse a wide range of data about student wellbeing, achievement and progress to inform whole-school and class planning.
- Students at risk of achieving below a C grade in any learning area are provided a Special Educational Needs plan and report. Discrete classes in Year 7 and Year 8 provide a modified curriculum and additional supports to engage SAER.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Align the expectations of staff in pedagogical practice to the Department's Teaching for Impact ensuring consistency and connectedness of teaching practice through the development of a whole-school instructional model. Support this with a formal process of classroom observations and feedback.
- Formalise a plan to support the achievement of Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) qualification rates through targeted intervention.
- Continue the development of the whole-school literacy plan. Proceed, as intended, exploring options to implement a whole-school writing program such as Seven Steps to Writing Success.

## Student achievement and progress

The school is utilising an increasing amount of systemic and school-based data to effectively monitor student achievement and progress. Teachers interrogate data to identify areas of focus for planning, aligned to student needs.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Overall student achievement and progress data is aligned to contextually similar schools and is showing a general improvement trend. This applies to OLNA qualification, NAPLAN<sup>1</sup> and Western Australian Certificate of Education attainment.
- Operational plans are developed in all learning areas to articulate strategies, and guide teaching and learning, that support continued improvements in areas identified as business plan targets.
- Through the use of the Essential Assessment program, students are identified for individual targeted support to improve literacy and numeracy.
- In school and network school moderation processes are in place, utilising the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards, to support the accuracy of grade allocation and reporting.
- Students and families are informed of current and progressive results of assessments, enabling opportunities to engage in additional support to improve achievement.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Reassess business, strategic and operational plan targets in line with new senior school and NAPLAN metrics.
- Review data collection and consider introducing new whole-school, contemporary and norm referenced assessments such as Australian Council for Educational Research Progressive Achievement Tests. Use the data to track progress from primary school, evaluate the effectiveness of practice and programs, and inform school improvement planning.

## Reviewers

Craig Skinner  
**Director, Public School Review**

Kerry Chipchase  
**Principal, Lesmurdie Senior High School**  
**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 to be scheduled for 2026. You will be formally notified in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled review.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy