

**2014 Annual Report to
the School Community**

Waratah Special Developmental School

School Number: 5144



Name of School Principal: Jennifer Wallace

Name of School Council President: Christine Harrison

Date of Endorsement: 26th March 2015

All Victorian government school teachers meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).

This school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, inclusive of those schools granted an exemption by the VRQA under the 'Student enrolment numbers' and/or 'Curriculum framework for schools - languages program' minimum standards until 31 December 2014.

About Our School

School Context

Waratah SDS provides quality educational programs for students with significant intellectual disabilities aged 5 -18 years. In addition to their intellectual disability many students also have sensory or physical difficulties, medical conditions and communication disorders. Approximately 50% of students are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. There are approximately 70 students enrolled at the school and the school community encompasses a wide range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Almost 70% of our students come from non-English speaking backgrounds, 12% have aboriginal heritage and 8% live in out of home care. Our Student Family Occupation index is .7394.

The school recognises and values the individuality of our students and provides a range of responsive individualised teaching and learning opportunities. A functional and integrated approach is taken to student learning with communication a key focus. Alongside speech we use a range of alternative and augmentative communication systems which include signing, picture symbols, photographs and voice output devices. The Picture Exchange Communication System is used extensively throughout the school. Opportunities for communication are incorporated into all aspects of the school day.

The school has a multidisciplinary team of 39 staff (32.5 EFT) - 2 principal class, 16 (5 EFT) teachers and 21 (17.1 EFT) Education Support Staff. The therapy programs are an integral part of the school curriculum and are offered on a needs basis. The therapy team includes a speech pathologist, occupational therapist, music therapist and physiotherapist. The therapists work closely with teaching staff and provide valuable input into individual learning plans. They work throughout the school demonstrating and discussing with teaching and support staff how the therapy components can be incorporated into classroom programs.

The school uses technology to engage students and improve learning outcomes. All classrooms have an Interactive Whiteboard, iPad and PCs.

The school works in partnership with parents, carers and the community to maximise opportunities to improve learning outcomes for our students. Our strategic intent is to maximize students' communication skills, raise levels of students' social competence and further improve student transitions throughout the school and into the community. The school is organised into three aged based sections - Early Years, Middle Years and Transition. A Satellite Unit at Brunswick South West PS provides inclusion programs for primary aged students.

The school is located to new purpose built facilities in Banksia St, Bellfield. The new facility has twelve classrooms; specialist areas for art, physical education, home crafts and music; and therapy work spaces. The school is situated on a large site and a master plan has been produced for the development of the external learning environment. With financial assistance from a number of philanthropic organisations and some school funds we have been able to install two in-ground trampolines, play equipment in two areas, a sand pit and cubby house, some swings, a kitchen garden and sensory garden and an synthetic turf area for students with limited mobility.

Achievement

All students have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which is developed in conjunction with parents/carers. Teachers use the ABLES assessments and developmental pathways to identify students current level of ability and develop well-targeted and realistic goals for each student's learning. Student ILP's and reports are developed using the web-based STAR reporting program which provides a cumulative record of student learning.

In 2014 teacher assessment of student progress in all VELs domains was excellent. Maximizing student communication and language skills is one of the priority areas and 100% of students made satisfactory or better progress in English with 46% making very good or excellent progress.

In the area of H&PE the school provides specialist programs in PE and homecrafts as well as support from the occupational therapist and physiotherapist to assist with the development of motor and self care skills. 100% of students made satisfactory or better progress in H&PE and 42% made very good or excellent progress.

In 2014 we introduced an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialist program. The teachers involved came into the classrooms and used a range of ICT to support student learning. 100% of students made satisfactory or better progress towards their ICT goals.

Significant projects include:

1. Using the ABLES assessment tools to assess all students, identify appropriate goals and strategies and monitor progress.
2. A focus on building teacher capacity to implement PBS through classroom observation, peer feedback and working collaboratively in teams.
3. Continuing to develop students functional communication skills using a multimodal approach.
4. Investigating ways in which ICT can be used to support student learning across the curriculum.

Engagement

The school has adopted a Positive Behaviour Support approach which emphasises prevention and teaching pro-social skills. Students' learning of social skills and behaviour was very good in 2013 with 98% of students achieving satisfactory or better progress in Civics and Citizenship and 90% achieving satisfactory or better progress in Interpersonal Development.

Strategies undertaken to promote student engagement and wellbeing outcomes include:

- Clearly defined expected behaviours that are actively taught.
- Class and whole school reward systems.
- Agreed responses to inappropriate behaviour.
- Professional Development for all staff.
- Functional Behaviour Analysis for students with more complex behaviour.
- Working in partnership with parents and community agencies.

The school has been identified as a PBS mentor school and are working with twelve specialist schools assisting them to implement SWPBS.

In 2014 we started a Student Representative Council (SRC) with students representing each section of the school. Students were asked for suggestions to make the school better and many of their suggestions were acted upon. For example they wanted more gardens so we have commenced work on the sensory garden. The SRC was asked to participate in the Banyule Council Youth Summit and they surveyed students and took their suggestions to the summit.

The school employs a welfare officer whose role is to liaise with families to promote attendance and assist with behavioural issues and access to support services.

The school has also adopted the SoSAFE program which teaches rules for social safety. Students learn about appropriate behaviours with different groups of people and in specific situations. This program is being aligned with the school PBS rules for consistency of language.

Wellbeing

Strategies undertaken to promote pathways and transition outcomes for students include:

1. Developing links with DHS and early intervention groups to identify new students.
2. Providing programs to support transition of students into post school programs via FFYA program.
3. Undertaking appropriate transition activities for students within the school.

Prep students undertake a transition program during Term Four of the year prior to enrolment so as to promote a seamless pathway to school. This involves visits to the school, discussions with parents, Waratah SDS staff visiting pre-school settings and discussions and reports from agencies involved with the child.

Transition for senior students begins at 15 when they move into the senior section. An action plan is developed that identifies students skills and interests and helps to identify future pathways. The assistant principal works with families to help them select an appropriate post school option. This includes running information sessions, providing information about services and organising visits to centres. In their final year of schooling a detailed transition report is prepared. Once a placement has been identified a transition plan is developed which includes staff visiting the school to observe the student and the student visiting the centre with support from our staff.

In school transition and across campus transition is supported through meetings with parents, handover documents, social stories, student profiles and a whole school transition day in December.

Developing links with community organisations in the new school community has been a focus since our move. We have established a number of relationships with local organisations including HiCity, SEDA, Kevin Heinze, Banyule Community Health Service and Banyule Council.

Productivity

The school invests considerable resources towards supporting the development of students' communication, social and independence skills. Staffing is our major resource and in 2014 this was directed towards :

- Providing high levels of staff support in classrooms;
- Employing staff with specialist knowledge and skills i.e. teachers with special education qualifications, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, music therapist, kitchen garden educator
- A commitment to building staff capacity through regular professional development, coaching, peer observation and feedback
- Appointing a Leading Teacher to coordinate the PBS implementation
- Appointing a speech pathology assistant to support the development of communication skills
- Developing a shared understanding of pedagogy

Having an environment that is conducive to learning is also critical and in 2014 improvements to the environment included:

- Development of a sensory garden
- Development of a safe play area for students with limited mobility

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<http://www.waratahsds.vic.edu.au>

Performance Summary

The Government School Performance Summary provides an overview of how this school is performing and how it compares to all other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community will foster engagement and collaboration to support further gains and positive learning experiences for all students.

Key: Range of results for the middle 60% of Victorian government schools: Result for this school: Median of all Victorian government schools:

School Profile

School Enrolments

A total of 70 students were enrolled at this school in 2014, 17 female and 53 male.

Overall socio-economic profile

Based on the school's Student Family Occupation index which takes into account parents' occupations.



Proportion of students with English as a second language.



Parent Satisfaction Summary

Average level of parent satisfaction with the school, as derived from the annual *Parent Opinion* survey. The score is reported on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is the highest possible score.



School Staff Survey

Measures the percent endorsement by staff on school climate derived from the annual *School Staff survey*. The percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) on school climate from staff at the school.

Data are suppressed for schools with fewer than three respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



How to read the Performance Summary

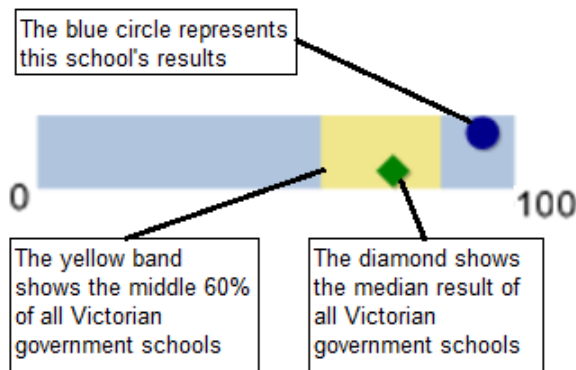
What are student outcomes?

Student outcomes show the achievements of students in this school in English and Mathematics. They also show results in national literacy and numeracy tests and, for secondary colleges, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) examinations. They provide important information about student attendance and engagement at school.

For secondary colleges, the Performance Summary also provides information about how many students at this school go on to further studies or full-time work after leaving school.

You can see these results for the latest year, as well as the average of the last four years (where available).

The Performance Summary also allows you to compare student outcomes for students at this school with the outcomes of students in all other Victorian government schools.



What is a *School Comparison*?

The *School comparison* is a way of comparing school performance that takes into account the different student intake characteristics of each school.

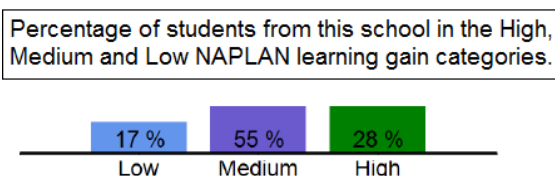
A *School comparison* takes into account the school's academic intake, the socio-economic background of students, the number of Indigenous students, the number of non-English speaking and refugee students, the number of students with a disability, and the size and location of the school.

The *School comparison* measures show that most schools are doing well and are achieving results that are **'similar'** to what we would estimate given the background characteristics of their students. Some schools are doing exceptionally well with the students they have, and have **'higher'** performance. Some schools have **'lower'** performance after taking into account their students' characteristics – these schools will receive targeted support to ensure that there is improvement.

Looking at both the student outcomes and school comparisons provides important information about what a school is doing well and the areas that require further improvement.

Additionally, NAPLAN learning gain charts are provided for each of the NAPLAN domains. These compare a student's current year NAPLAN result to the results of all 'similar' Victorian students (i.e. students in all sectors in the same year level who had the same NAPLAN score two years prior).

If the current year result is in the top 25% their gain level is categorised as 'High', the middle 50% is categorised as 'Medium' and the bottom 25% is categorised as 'Low'.



More information on school comparison performance measures can be found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/pages/performreports.aspx>

What is the meaning of '*Data not available*'?

For some schools, there are too few students to provide data. For other schools, there are no students at some levels, so school comparisons are not possible. Newly opened schools have only the latest year of data and no averages from previous years. The Department also recognises the unique circumstances of Specialist, Select Entry, English Language and Community Schools where school comparisons are not appropriate.

What is this school doing to improve?

All schools have a plan to improve outcomes for their students. The '*About Our School*' statement provides a summary of this school's improvement plan.

Financial Performance and Position

Financial Performance - Operating Statement Summary for the year ending 31 December, 2014

Financial Position as at 31 December, 2014

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$2,591,275
Government Provided DE&T Grants	\$315,912
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$7,671
Revenue Other	\$75,523
Locally Raised Funds	\$22,418
Total Operating Revenue	\$3,012,800

Funds Available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$151,563
Official Account	\$12,867
Other Accounts	\$74,156
Total Funds Available	\$238,586

Expenditure	
Student Resource Package	\$2,530,724
Books & Publications	\$493
Communication Costs	\$6,997
Consumables	\$37,867
Miscellaneous Expense	\$51,968
Professional Development	\$13,671
Property and Equipment Services	\$176,259
Salaries & Allowances	\$233,096
Trading & Fundraising	\$1,672
Travel & Subsistence	\$43,732
Utilities	\$24,358
Total Operating Expenditure	\$3,120,838

Financial Commitments	
Operating Reserve	\$89,910
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$80,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds incl SMS<12 months	\$30,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$38,676
Total Financial Commitments	\$238,586

Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	(\$108,038)
Asset Acquisitions	\$0

Misc Expenses may include Bank charges, Health and Personal Development, Administration charges, Camp/Excursion costs and Taxation charges.

Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

Financial performance and position commentary

The school had a net operating deficit as we made a decision to use some of the school funds to make improvements to the school grounds which included the sensory garden and a safe play area with synthetic surface for students with limited mobility. The school also employed additional staff support in the areas of speech therapy and behaviour support. Locally raised funds included money from an online fundraiser "Doing silly things for a bus" and donations from a number of small grant applications.