



Department of
Education

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Ngaanyatjarra Lands School

Public School Review

March 2021



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 its 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 three-year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, three or five-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 school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal, the Chair of the School Council/Board and the regional Director of Education.

Expectations of schools

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

The Statement is between; the Department of Education, 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, as well as the Professional Performance Review of the Principal.

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.



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Context

Ngaanyatjarra Lands School was established in 2007 when eight schools dispersed throughout the Ngaanyatjarra Lands were federated into a single school.

The Ngaanyatjarra Lands are located in the far east of the State within the Goldfields Education Region, and the school is comprised of eight campuses: Blackstone; Jameson; Kiwirrkurra; Tjukurla; Wanarn; Warakurna; Warburton; Wingellina and spread across 250,000 square kilometres of the Western Desert of Western Australia.

Warburton, the largest community, is approximately 1300kms north-east of Perth, and Kiwirrkurra, the most isolated, is 2350kms from Perth.

The campuses are bound together by the culture of people from groups including Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Pintupi. Ngaanyatjarra is the predominant language; however, in some areas the Western Desert, dialects of Pitjantjatjara and Pintupi are spoken.

The school works with the communities to support young people in learning their traditional language and culture.

Educational opportunities are provided for students from Kindergarten to Year 12. Currently, there are 336 students enrolled across the eight campuses, although at times as many as 500 students will be enrolled over the course of the school year.

School self-assessment validation

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

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

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a detailed account of campus-wide planning priorities, school performance and improvement planning.
- Each campus of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands School provided a summary statement for each domain in the ESAT, giving a comprehensive overview of its self-assessment and improvement intentions.
- The executive leadership team provided a range of interrelated and credible evidence.
- A culture of reflection and continuous improvement using a strong evidence base was clear.
- A wide cross-section of executive administrative leaders, campus principals, teachers, allied professionals and parent/carer and community representatives elaborated on the evidence described in the submission, during the validation visit.
- The validation visit was greatly strengthened by the guidance and support of Ngaanyatjarra elder, Daisy Tjuparntarri Ward, winner of the Department's 2019 Women of Achievement Award.

The following recommendations are made:

- Reflect on the Public School Review process undertaken, to guide future school self-assessments, using the Standard as a frame of reference.
- Continue to gather evidence to provide the best endorsement for the school narrative.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

By working closely with community networks and promoting the sharing of campus information, the Executive Principal has the confidence and respect of staff and campus communities.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Communication protocols with parents and caregivers are designed to provide supportive, sensitive and culturally appropriate exchanges of information.
- Home visits by Yarnangu¹ staff are undertaken appropriately, and play an important role in creating a bridge between the communities and school.
- Through collaborations in cultural learning, whether on campus or on Country, the opportunity exists for the extensive sharing of ideas and school information.
- The willingness of elders to show staff areas of the Dreamtime and places of cultural significance strengthens the bonds and their cultural understanding and respect.
- The school collaborates with the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council to provide a range of support services across the Tri-State region.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Explore opportunities to create more cross-school processes involving student leadership and forums for student voice.

Learning environment

Student engagement is an ever-present focus for all campuses. Research into attendance and transience has provided helpful insights into factors impacting on both.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- To maintain a safe learning environment, the school has made a priority of building cohesive teams in what can be at times, an intense and challenging workplace.
- Teaching and Yarnangu staff collaborate to support students to create a strong sense of belonging and connection to the school.
- The school is actively pursuing a strategy to create more 'adult' learning spaces for secondary students. Seeking student input is an important feature of the strategy.
- Behaviour management approaches, including daily Mind Up sessions, restorative practices and role playing, all play an important part in managing trauma-based behaviours.
- The school takes particular care with the management of individual health plans to minimise the impact of hearing loss, a range of imputed disabilities and diabetes for students.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to ensure all staff are conversant in trauma-informed practices.

Leadership

Focusing on professional growth, the Executive Principal has created the conditions for informed campus leadership, engaged staff and culturally respectful community relations.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Executive Principal, with the support of elder, Daisy Tjuparntarri Ward, has forged a powerful school-wide relational culture, creating a compelling spirit of shared professional and personal commitment to meet the needs of all students.
- A shared commitment to the vision of 'preparing students for life on the Lands' was evident.
- Campus operational planning is characterised by high levels of consultation between campus leaders, Yarnangu staff and community representatives.
- The leadership needs of campus principals are supported by the executive administrative team, enabling them to work with their teachers to foster an understanding of culturally appropriate teaching practices.
- The school is committed to its strategic planning priorities, including: co-designing cross-curriculum, a focused EAL/D² approach and Two-way Science. The school's operational planning is revised twice a year to respond to the dynamic nature of the school's context.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Provide in-term staff induction and information sharing sessions to maintain consistent implementation of the school's direction and values.

Use of resources

The school's use of its resources is always with the best interests of students in mind.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Decision making in the use of resources is timely and strategic. This includes investing in programs such as Mind Up, Two-way Science, secondary pathways and the creation of books and films to be used in classrooms.
- Yarnangu staff are regarded as an essential school asset, to be nurtured and professionally developed to the point of them managing and leading learning activities and events.
- While staff continuity remains a challenge, an informed strategic approach to the appointment of campus leaders and staff, has resulted in greater stability in recent times.
- The budget identifies funding required for professional learning options, aspirant pathways and secondary pathways specialist personnel.
- The manager corporate services, with the assistance of the Kalgoorlie Business Office support staff, provides high quality financial operations management support and strategic budgeting advice.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Develop a workforce plan to benchmark progression for Yarnangu staff development.

Teaching quality

Teachers use culturally responsive approaches to the selection of resources for, and instruction in, embedding Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara cultural perspectives in the classroom.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teachers acknowledge and appreciate how student learning is best shaped by cultural experiences derived from working alongside Yarnangu staff on Country.
- A shared campus scope and sequence approach is evident. This has assisted with transiency of students and created opportunities to moderate work samples.
- The locally developed Big Expectation booklet supports teachers to target the incremental immersion into Big Picture learning. This ensures all necessary steps are taken to achieve a common language for consistent campus-wide implementation.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework serves as the core document for planning and reflecting school performance and directions for improvement. It enables a common language across the campuses to ensure there is a sound basis for campus-wide improvement.
- The Capability Framework for Ngaanyatjarra Lands School teachers is the basis for their professional development.
- The success of Two-way Science pedagogy has strengthened the school's conviction and emphasis on using the two-way approach for other learning areas.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Initiate professional learning focusing on the Capability Framework for Aboriginal EAL/D learners.

Student achievement and progress

Despite the patterns of attendance, campus schools maintain a focus on monitoring the progress of students, making timely and insightful adjustments to meet individual needs.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Secondary teachers meet with families and students to create learning pathways that play to the strengths and interests of each student.
- Big Picture exhibitions occur each term to share student learning with families and the local communities.
- To assist the planning, teaching and assessment cycle, Special Educational Need planning objectives have been simplified using the EAL/D Observation Guides.
- Letters and Sounds data has been generated for the analysis of student achievement and to assess the overall impact of the whole-school literacy program.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Explore opportunities to find options for widening the scope of data management and analysis.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Dale Mackesey
Principal, Mount Hawthorn Primary 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 scheduled for Term 1, 2024.



Melesha Sands
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Ngaanyatjarra word to describe local Aboriginal people
- 2 English as an additional language or dialect