



Department of  
Education

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Public education  
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# Ballajura Community College

## Public School Review

March 2021



# PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

## Purpose

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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

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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

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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

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Opened in 1995, Ballajura Community College is located approximately 15 kilometres north-east of the Perth central business district. The college is one of the largest providers of Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) courses in the North Metropolitan Education Region, and in 2010, was one of the first schools to gain Independent Public School status in the region.

In 2019, the college underwent a significant transition in implementing a 'one school' model, which saw it shift from a dual middle and senior school campus to a single campus combining all Year 7 to Year 12 learning areas.

The college was successfully re-accredited as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in 2020. As a RTO it provides students access to a range of vocational courses, in addition to Year 11 and Year 12 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), General and Foundation courses.

A range of programs are provided for students, including Advanced Curriculum Enrichment, LINKS, ACCESS, and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D), in addition to education support programs featuring differentiated learning to support student engagement and achievement.

There is a diverse selection of extra-curricular programs for students, supported through established relationships and partnerships with the broader community, service providers and industry.

Currently, 1180 students are enrolled at the college, representing over 50 different nationalities. As an accredited International Fee Paying School, the cultural diversity adds to the richness and quality of the educational experience for all students.

The college has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 977 (decile 6).

The current Ballajura Community College Business Planning cycle concludes in 2021. The College Board is supportive of the strategic directions under consideration in the development of the 2022-2024 Business Plan.

## School self-assessment validation

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

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

- A comprehensive description of the context and recent history of the college was provided in the self-assessment summary submitted in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT).
- The leadership team took a strategic approach to preparing for the review process using the Strategic Directions for Public Schools 2020-2024, Focus 2021 and the Standard to make judgements on achievements and progress.
- The college's self-assessment submission was developed following considerable thought and consultation on how to best present the information in the ESAT.
- Members of the leadership team took responsibility for each of the domains, collaborating with staff to provide additional input and an opportunity to 'share their story'.

The following recommendation is made:

- Consider using the ESAT for ongoing periodical school assessment against the domains between review validation visits.

## Public School Review

### Relationships and partnerships

The college has a strong focus on building positive and supportive relationships between students, staff and families and cultivates partnerships with community groups and industry to enhance learning experiences for students.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is a positive sense of connection between staff, evidenced by the cohesiveness demonstrated during the major change in restructuring the college's model of delivery.
- Relationships are built on trust, with a commitment to the wellbeing of the entire school community and the achievement and progress of students.
- Communication processes and systems are varied and focus on providing information in a clear and timely manner for all stakeholders. A 'no surprise' approach underpins interactions with families about student achievement and support.
- The College Board is a strong advocate for the college and willingly fulfils its role in supporting school governance and strategic direction. The number of long-term members demonstrates their ongoing commitment to the college.
- Parent voice is sought actively by the college and is valued by families. Relationships with the broader community are strong.

### Learning environment

A caring, inclusive and culturally responsive community exists where the values of Respect, Equity, Achievement, Care and Health (REACH) are articulated and embodied throughout the college.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A holistic approach to meeting the needs of every student drives decision making across the college. Individual planning for students at educational risk is developed collaboratively and reviewed regularly with families.
- The extensive student services team has established robust processes and intervention strategies in supporting student behaviour, attendance and engagement.
- Relationships between staff and students are based on trust and mutual respect. Students articulate an appreciation for the care and encouragement they receive from staff.
- Aboriginal students and their families are supported by dedicated and caring staff, external partnerships and active engagement with the Aboriginal community.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to engage student voice in decision making, including through that of the revised student leader structure.

## Leadership

The Principal and other leaders are respected highly and are guiding staff in their understanding of strategic planning and participation in shaping future directions of the college.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal has developed positive and trusting relationships with staff, students, families, the College Board and the broader community, demonstrating a genuine commitment to the success of the college.
- A clear intent from the deputy principals, and the trust of staff in them in the restructuring of the college despite the constant turnover of principals, has led to the unified and cohesive environment that exists.
- The development of strategic and operational plans by the College Development Committee demonstrates the distributed leadership promoted by the college.
- There is an appetite to build the strong pedagogical practices that currently exist into a whole-school agreed model of instruction to be led by the teaching and learning team.
- Professional review processes have an improvement focus built on trust, including an element of classroom observation.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue the current and intended work of the College Development Committee and teaching and learning team.

## Use of resources

Resource allocation is aligned to strategic and operational planning and the impact on student achievement, progress and wellbeing.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Financial management processes are clear and understood by staff. Budget submissions and major purchases or adjustments are approved by the Finance Committee and endorsed by the College Board.
- The Control Self-Assessment indicates a thorough approach to the review of school processes and effectiveness of systems as identified in the expectations of the Funding Agreement for Schools.
- School characteristics and targeted initiatives funding is allocated for the purpose for which it is intended. EAL/D, disability and Aboriginality funding are examples of additionally resourced support that has been sought and implemented for identified students.
- The Workforce Plan 2019-2021 provides a clear overview of the workforce profile, analysis of changing circumstances and contextual factors that could potentially impact the college.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to explore avenues to improve payment of voluntary contributions and charges.

## Teaching quality

The college places a high priority on teaching quality and it is a major feature of the business plan, with professional learning a key driver in engaging staff within a learning culture.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The performance improvement agreement outlines what good teaching looks like at the college and engages teachers in reflection and goal setting against these expectations.
- A strong focus on differentiated practice within classes and specific learning programs is promoted by the leadership. The LINKS and ACCESS programs provide an environment that supports students and promotes learning.
- High levels of collaboration exist between staff in curriculum planning and assessment, with consistent pedagogical practice embedded within learning areas.
- There is a strong use of data analysis that is assisting learning areas in their planning and implementation of intervention strategies.
- Parents and carers are partners in their children's education and are regularly informed of their academic and social and emotional progress.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Encourage learning area representation on the teaching and learning team to identify high impact strategies used across the school and to establish a whole-school pedagogical framework.

## Student achievement and progress

Significant attention to plan for, monitor and celebrate above expected student achievement is evident in the business plan targets, operational plans and individual classroom practice.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Comprehensive data sets are monitored at a whole-school, learning area, program and classroom level, with teaching adjustments and targeted interventions for individual and groups of students determined through data analysis.
- The college provides a broad range of programs to maximise student engagement, achievement and progress.
- Longitudinal data demonstrate higher achievement than that of like schools in all NAPLAN<sup>1</sup> assessment areas. The Minister for Education and Training commended the college following the release of the 2019 NAPLAN results on the My School website demonstrating results above or well above' students from similar backgrounds.
- The percentage of students eligible for WACE is considerably higher than State and like schools. There are above expected Year 12 retention and ATAR participation rates.
- Literacy and numeracy progress between NAPLAN Year 9 pre-qualification and Year 12 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment is significant.
- Grade distributions are similar to the public school distributions for all levels and learning areas. Internal and external moderation exists, with the science common assessment task moderation with local primary schools impressive.

## Reviewers

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Vicki McKeown  
Director, Public School Review

Geraldine Hardy  
Principal, Lynwood Senior High School  
Peer Reviewer

## Endorsement

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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, 2026.



Melesha Sands  
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

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## References

1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy