



School Improvement Unit Report

Mountain Creek State High School Executive Summary



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Mountain Creek State High School from 12 to 15 October 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

Location:	Lady Musgrave Drive, Mountain Creek
Education region:	North Coast
The school opened in:	1994
Year levels:	Year 7 to Year 12
Current school enrolment:	1966
Indigenous enrolments:	2.6 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	4 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1041
Year principal appointed:	2010
Number of teachers:	150
Nearby schools:	Mountain Creek State School, Mooloolaba State School, Brightwater State School, Buddina State School
Significant community partnerships:	Sustainable Partnerships Australia, University of Sunshine Coast, Salvation Army SCILS program, Epic Employment
Unique school programs:	Creative Industries Academy, International Baccalaureate Diploma, Young Scholars Program, Young Achievers Program, School Split Shift Structure, Sub school structure



1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of four reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school's performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school's Regional Director.
- a school visit of four days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
 - Principal, two Heads of School, two Deputy Principals
 - Six Heads of Department (HODs) and Head of Special Education (HOSES)
 - 90 classroom teachers
 - Year 11 and Year 12 school captains and 120 students
 - Two guidance officers, a chaplain and school-based youth health nurse
 - Indigenous program coordinator
 - One Business Services Manager (BSM) and two finance officers
 - Two sub school officers, Tuck-shop convenor
 - School council chair, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president and 15 parents
 - Four principals of nearby primary schools
 - Vocational Education and Training (VET) in-schools officer
 - Youth support coordinator (Integrated Family and Youth Service)
 - Sustainable Partnerships Australia
 - EPIC employment

1.4 Review team

Paul Bancroft	Internal reviewer, SIU (Review chair)
Trevor Gordon	External reviewer
Robert Coupland	Peer reviewer
Denise Kostowski	Internal reviewer, SIU



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The Mountain Creek State High School community has developed a commitment to continuous improvement which aligns with their values of *'Quality, Opportunity and Excellence'*.

A positive school culture of commitment and participation in learning, respect for self and others as well as pride in belonging to Mountain Creek State High School is clearly evident.

- School leaders, teachers, students and parents are proud that the Mountain Creek State High School curriculum offers high quality learning opportunities for all students.

These opportunities result in students graduating with a range of qualifications including the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA), Overall Positions (OPs), Certificates 1, 2 and 3 and International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP). There are extensive partnerships which provide opportunities for greater student success. High quality curriculum is delivered by teacher expertise and pedagogical structures.

- There is a comprehensive strategic improvement agenda. The improvement agenda is broad in nature and has not yet resulted in a narrowing and sharpening of the whole school's attention on a core learning area.

The improvement agenda flows logically from the Australasian Schools Accreditation Agency (ASAA) review, the four-year improvement plan through to the school's Annual Implementation Plan and individual faculty plans. Staff are yet to consistently articulate an understanding of the explicit improvement agenda.

Teachers believe that whole-school targets lack meaning for their individual classes as they do not take into account the composition of classes in terms of student abilities. Teachers agree that targets are important and suggest that individual class targets, based on the student's previous achievement data, be established in each class.

- The school has an Annual Developing Performance Plan (APDP) process.

Teachers are engaged in the APDP process and some staff see it as a valuable opportunity to reflect on their practice and professional growth. The leadership team are engaged in some initial training in the GROWTH coaching model. The whole school coaching and mentoring program is yet to be fully embedded.



- An overarching whole-school curriculum plan has been developed.

The plan includes details such as overall curriculum structure, pedagogical framework, subject summaries, time allocations and assessment. The plan is supported by comprehensive work programs in most subjects aligned to Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), Australia, IB or Vocational Education and Training (VET) syllabus documents. A number of work programs for students in Years 7 to 10 are yet to be aligned. There is evidence that most subject-area leaders have strong curriculum knowledge and are aware of the need to engage in peer learning through cross-curricula discussions at the leadership level.

- School leaders have a clear understanding that all teachers use differentiated teaching strategies to meet the needs of individual students.

Most teachers interviewed are supportive of the need for differentiated teaching and understand that the implementation of these strategies remains a significant challenge.

- School leaders regard timely feedback as a key action, linked to the schools' focus on improved teaching and learning.

Students in the senior school report that they are given regular feedback. In the junior school this is less consistent and students report that the quality and frequency of feedback depends on the teacher. There is opportunity to expand this process and introduce a formal practice of target setting across the school.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Ensure a focus on core learning areas by narrowing and sharpening the school's strategic improvement agenda. Develop clear targets and timelines, which are rigorously actioned in classrooms.

Strengthen the coaching skills and capacity of the leadership team to ensure all teachers are focused on improving classroom practice by developing a school wide, self-reflective culture.

Develop a process whereby subject-area curriculum leaders through collegial sharing increase their expertise in whole-school curriculum. Use this knowledge to ensure all programs are of high quality and aligned to an approved curriculum.

Develop the capacity of all staff to deliver differentiated teaching and learning through on-going professional development and the sharing of quality practice.

Develop and quality assure a consistent, school-wide approach to student feedback, and provide appropriate professional development for teachers to build capacity in this area.