Principal’s message

Ambarvale High School (AHS) is a dynamic comprehensive local high school with a focus on personalised learning, quality teaching and learning and student achievement; academic, cultural, sporting and leadership. We continue to enjoy strong partnerships with Appin, Rosemeadow, St Helens Park and Woodlands Road Public Schools that serve our shared drawing communities.

It continues to be a great pleasure and privilege to lead our school community. Every day I see examples of teaching and learning excellence, high aspirations and a determination to succeed. I see students’ minds and lives expanding, and I see teachers’ skills developing and enhancing to the benefit of our students. I also see our parents and our community eager and committed to a shared approach to the education of the young people in our community.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Ms L Barnott-Clement

Parent participation

In place of a traditional fundraising Parent’s and Citizens Association (P&C), AHS has a system of point of need meetings for parents and the community. These include: Ambartour, Year 7 Meet and Greet, Subject Selection Night, Year 12 Parent Teacher Night, Year 6 Information Night, Ambassadors Presentations, Sports Presentation Day, Whole School Presentation Day and Year 12 Graduation.

In addition parents are involved in surveys and a group of parents from a range of cultural backgrounds engaged in an AHS Action Research Project focus group which was part of a grant from University of Western Sydney (UWS) and Department of Education and Communities (DEC) to promote multiculturalism within the school.

In 2013 the school trialled Student Learning Conferences (SLC) as a means of increasing parent participation in students learning on a more intensive and individualised manner. Parental surveys demonstrated the concept was an overwhelming success and SLC will be held in 2014. The SLC are outlined in greater detail within the Annual School Report (ASR).

Student representative’s message

The AHS Student Representative Council (SRC) was re-established at the end of 2011 and the team has continued to work hard to rebuild their role in the school. Students on the council worked with both the senior leaders and with members of the executive team to lead the student body and represent their needs.

The SRC ran several initiatives throughout the year including: big breakfasts to fund the ongoing free breakfast – Toasties. Toasties has been extremely successful over two years and has provided our students with a free healthy breakfast. This year we had the pleasure of basing Toasties in the Applied Technology block and the brand new kitchen facilities. Student Representative Council members run the program with the support of supervising teachers. We also appealed to companies to support our initiative and were successful in gaining free cereal as well as a vending machine that holds Up’n’Go breakfast drinks. The funds from this will help Toasties to continue to run. Senior members of the SRC also joined the senior leaders in a joint roll call to ensure strong communication and team work between senior members of the school.

In 2014 the SRC will continue to make contact with SRCs from neighbouring schools. This was particularly beneficial last year as it provided our students with an opportunity to discuss initiatives and seek advice on how to achieve set goals. The SRC hopes to improve conditions for our students and lift school pride through celebrating achievements, representing the leadership team on year group and whole school assemblies and working to improve the condition of our school by targeting the rubbish in the playground. The SRC will continue to provide the free breakfast to students throughout the year as it was felt this was particularly beneficial to junior students.

Mrs E Bridle
School context

Our school is committed to preparing students for the 21st Century. An essential component of that commitment is engaging support for our students ‘beyond the school gates’. Inter-agency and community partnerships play a pivotal role in the school’s welfare, academic and vocational programs.

The ethos which underpins the teaching and learning of the school community is ‘individualised education for all’. This is reflected in our staff professional development and learning which focuses on differentiation at all levels of the learning spectrum including from gifted and talented initiatives, to students requiring intensive learning support. Our core values of Trust, Responsibility, Respect, Excellence and Cooperation (TRREC) are inculcated throughout Positive Behaviour and Intervention Supports (PBIS) initiatives. We are currently a second tier PBIS school. Our core values are also evidenced through the leadership programs which continue to strengthen with each passing year. The Ambarvale Ambassadors Social Justice, SRC, Environment Group, Peer Support and The Leo’s Club allow students to engage in their community and develop civic responsibilities.

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State DEC</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance

Background

The vast majority of students have excellent attendance.

Those few students with attendance below the required 85% are identified by an examination of attendance records and those whose absences are unjustified are rigorously followed up.

They are dealt with by the Head Teacher Administration and the welfare team at a local level, with phone calls and letters to parents and interviews with students and parents. The introduction of electronic morning roll call has improved the range and quality of reports that can be received and acted on. The results of the roll call are also available earlier each day.

Follow-up by deputy principals is used as required and involves student and parent interview.
For those students whose attendance fails to improve the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) is involved. Early HSLO intervention is pivotal to improving attendance as she can visit homes, interview carers, note contexts and involve other agencies. At AHS we have an especially effective HSLO and we involve her early in the process so that our intervention occurs before a problem attender becomes a school refuser.

The school supports the HSLO intervention by rigorously following up Attendance Improvement Plans (AIPs), supporting court proceedings and cooperating at court ordered multiple agency meetings.

Findings and conclusions

Students with poor attendance are followed up very quickly by at least two staff members.

School attendance has improved in general. Our improved follow-up procedures, especially with the reluctant attenders in Year 11, aim to try to close the gap.

Future directions

The year 2014 will see the welfare team continuing the more direct and immediate role in improving attendance that they began in 2012. They will remain the first point of intervention as they will examine the rolls on a daily basis, visit their roll call groups and call parents as soon as a child fails to explain their absences or goes missing.

The Head Teacher Administration and the HSLO will continue to intervene very early in the process.

Post-school destinations

Post-school destinations survey results were again impressive with 33% of students successfully gaining entry to a bachelor degree of their choice. Twenty six per cent of these students gained entry through a University Admissions Centre (UAC) offer, 5% gained entry to a bachelor degree or pathway studied at a private institution and 2% deferring their studies until 2015.

This is a steady rise from past years with students’ studies broadening to include engineering, arts, journalism, science, international studies, commerce, communication media, health science, business, education, law, fine arts, design, humanities and information technology. It is also evident that students are broadening their selection and location of tertiary education providers to this year include private institutions such as JMC Academy, Evocca College, Australian Careers Business College, The International College of Management Sydney and options of studying abroad.

Students starting double degrees continue to rise as a result of the changing world of work and its competitive nature. Students are particularly interested in combining their degrees with international studies. Additionally, it is increasingly evident that students are broadening their university preferences to Australian National University (ANU), Charles Sturt University (CSU), University of Wollongong (UOW), University of Sydney (UOS), University of New South Wales (UNSW) and Macquarie (MQU). These universities are taking preference over the local UWS.

A rise in students successfully gaining early entry to the UOW was evident with four students offered engineering and one student offered arts. Early entry to CSU was also successful for one student who gained entry to the degree of journalism.

Twenty one per cent of students will attend a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) course in 2014. This is a 5% rise from 2013 with the majority of students enrolling in Certificate III or diploma courses in the areas of beauty, music, business, childcare, business administration, automotive, animal studies, sound engineering, nutrition and dietetics, community services work, graphic design and enrolled nurse.
Students that successfully gained an apprenticeship or traineeship increased greatly from 6.5% to 14% with most of those students continuing their Vocational Education and Training (VET) studies from school into their apprenticeships/traineeships.

Two students successfully gained entry to the Defence Force into an apprenticeship.

As a result of the pleasing amount of students gaining entry to a form of tertiary education, a decrease is again evident in students that have gained employment. Eighteen per cent have gained employment with 9% working full-time, 5% part-time and 4% casual.

In turn these fantastic results have shown a decrease of students actively looking for work to just 7%. The majority of these students are planning to continue their studies by applying for mid-year entry TAFE or university in 2015.

Three students at the time of the survey were unable to be contacted.

**Workforce information**

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

In 2013 we had 66.9 teaching staff, and this included an additional two teachers as a result of our Transitional Equity Funding. From this additional staffing we created the Student Learning Adviser role. Our Student Learning Advisers were charged with the responsibility of supporting curriculum teachers to increase the level of personalised learning occurring in classrooms.

This included co-planning, team teaching, the collection of learning evidence and the analysis of data to inform future planning and delivery. They were also responsible for overseeing the introduction of **Student Learning Conferences**.

Mr Mark Johnston joined us as Relieving Head Teacher English, returning to his substantive position at Camden High School in 2014. A large number of outstanding temporary teachers were on staff throughout the year; filling both short term vacancies and as the human resource component of our **Improving Numeracy and Literacy National Partnership** funding.

Mr Demertzis, one of our support unit teachers, was successful at interview and gained a position within a support unit in Wollongong, and Mrs Saleh, another support unit teacher, was successful in seeking promotion as **Head Teacher Support** at Auburn Girls High School.

**Workforce composition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2013 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

During 2013 we did not have any staff located at our school that identified as indigenous, however a number of ATSI DEC staff spent time in our school working with staff, students and parents.

**Teacher qualifications**

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Date of financial summary 30/11/2013

Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>$484002.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>$512447.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>$552597.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>$171939.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>$16131.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>$28487.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>$158583.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1924189.03</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>$183342.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>$57623.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>$76009.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>$19704.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>$9346.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>$404690.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>$196363.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>$140408.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>$141609.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$111501.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>$39460.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>$31848.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>$119606.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1531515.33</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balance carried forward $392673.70

Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2013

Arts

Background

The Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) faculty consists of two music teachers and 3.5 visual arts teachers. Two Stage 4 visual arts classes (12 periods) were taught by teachers from outside the faculty with visual arts qualifications. The mandatory music and visual arts courses are taught in a semesterised fashion in Years 7 and 8. Two Support Unit students from Year 10 completed the Life Skills music course as part of the Stage 5 elective music class. Support Unit students participate in visual arts and music for six periods per fortnight in all years.

In 2013 the following courses were studied:

Stage 4: Music and Visual Arts
Stage 5: Music, Visual Arts and Photography
Stage 6: Music, Visual Arts, Visual Design and Photography
Support: Music and Visual Arts

Findings and conclusions

The annual CAPA exhibition was once again staged in late November and was a resounding success with artworks and musical performances by students. The exhibition included artworks from staff members and students of Thomas Acres Public School.

Year 9 visual art students Adriana Athanasopoulos, Naomi Men, Oliver Wicken and Emilie Zhu, participated in the Artsmart program at the Campbelltown Arts Centre. All four produced artworks that were chosen for the Director's Choice Exhibition held at Homebush.

An art competition was held as part of our TRREC day in Term 3. The winning design of our trademark TRREC foot was created by Eli Neti of Year 7. Eli has been busily transforming his original A4 sized drawing into a large canvas painting that will be displayed in the office foyer.

A keyboard lab has been established in the former music staffroom between the music rooms. The lab allows students to quickly commence performance lessons and increases the lifespan of headphones and power supplies. Students wear headphones which increase their focus and minimises disruption to other students and classes.

Two new ensembles were formed in 2013 to give students performance opportunities and increase the profile of the faculty. Miss Sutton has been working with a select group of music students from Years 8 to 11 throughout the year culminating in the excellent musical items that were highlights of the annual exhibition. Mr Olsen worked with some very enthusiastic and talented Year 7 guitarists to perform for the first time at the Multicultural Day concert.

Future directions

The music ensembles founded are to continue in 2014 with performance venues expanding to include our local community of schools (COS) and community groups. An extra guitar group is planned for beginner students.
The keyboard lab will be expanded to include headphone mixers that will allow teacher monitoring of student performances.

Plans are in place to lead the way in the Film by the Sea film festival that links schools in our area with schools across Sydney and Canada. A group of AHS students will create their own film and lead students from the Support Unit and COS in preparing their films.

**Sport**

**Background**

Ambarvale High School students continued their achievements and participation through 2013. All three of our sporting carnivals ran with great success. The students that excelled at our school carnivals were then able to represent our school further at the Fisher Zone and Sydney South West (SSW) carnivals. At these carnivals we had many students display their talents and competed with excellent sportsmanship. We had a wide range of students who achieved excellent results with one Year 11 student represent our region at the state athletics carnival in shot put.

During the 2013 year our school participated in numerous knockout carnivals and teachers maintained and attained different sporting qualifications. We have seen more interest shown in a wide variety of sports. This has been seen in the increase of those interested in participating in lunch time sports clubs. This is really positive and is also making our school more competitive in competitions throughout the zone. We had several students selected to represent in zone, regional and state sport competitions. All students should be congratulated on their efforts and participation; they displayed good teamwork skills and represented the school with pride at all times. All knockout and sport coaches should be commended on their efforts for both coaching the teams in their own time and the ongoing organisation that is involved. Without them this knockout sport competition would not be possible.

This year, our sports organiser Ms Stevens was placed in charge of coordinating the Fisher Zone swimming carnival for all Fisher Zone representatives of the surrounding six schools. The students involved all had a very successful day and should be commended on their sportsmanship and talents both in and out of the water.

The ‘Ambarcup’ continued into its second year at AHS. This was an initiative to meet the enthusiasm of competition between staff and students in a variety of sporting activities. This is an eagerly anticipated event by all. Students are given the opportunity to take on their teachers in the best of seven sporting contests. The winning team (staff or student body) of the ‘Ambarcup’ will be presented with a shield at the end of the year at the sports assembly.

In 2013 AHS reintroduced our entry into the Wests League Cup. This is a rugby league competition for students aged 13 and 15. They participate in five games of rugby league against other schools in the Fisher Zone and become placed in a division based on the results and played off in a knockout style competition for the ultimate crown of Wests League Cup champion. Students were not allowed to participate in this event if they had been on a behaviour card in the previous term. This gave challenging students a reward and a goal to achieve when they curb their behaviour.

Sport underwent a revamp this year. Sport usually ran over one day, however, was moved to be spread across two days. This was in an attempt to increase the effectiveness of in-school sport for students and teachers.

In 2013 the Premier’s Sporting Challenge Leadership (PSCL) program enabled the school to use student and teacher knowledge, skills and interests in sport and physical activity to develop and implement programs for student interests. There are now three stages of the PSCL program which involves Years 5 to 8 students in the ‘learning to lead’ stage, Years 8 to 9 in the ‘leading with action’ stage and Years 11 to 12 in ‘leading through change’.

**Findings and conclusions**

At AHS we had a total of 204 students represent our school at our major carnivals. This was an increase of 19 from the 2012 year and 50 from the 2011 year. From the 204 students who represented our school at the Fisher Zone carnivals, we had 52 who were successful and qualified to represent the Fisher Zone at the regional carnival. This was a similar number to the 2012 school year. From the 52 students who represented our region we had one student to progress to compete for SSW team at the state carnival and placed fifth. This was an outstanding
effort and all students from AHS should be commended.

There were eight sports teams participate in the SSW knockout competitions. We had two teams progress to the second and third rounds. There were six teams which participated in a variety of round robin gala days. All students who represented our school in sports demonstrated excellent sportsmanship and respect to others.

Due to rapid development of our Premier’s Sporting Challenge (PSC) within our school, we are now active participants in many sports gala days and sports carnivals. At these events we provide our PSC students to help out and lead the days in order to develop themselves.

Through the PSCL students in Years 8 to 12 organised, led and implemented a variety of sporting activities at Rosemeadow Public School (RPS) during their Primary School Sports Association (PSSA) gala day. This was a very successful program that enabled students to utilise their leadership skills, interact with primary students and promote AHS. Positive feedback was given from both students and staff about the performance of the PSCL AHS students.

Students involved in the ‘leading the action’ stage of the PSCL attended a one day workshop in term four. Thirty AHS students attended the workshops across Years 8 to 11. Students were engaged in a variety of sports through which development officers aimed to extend their knowledge, skills and abilities when taking on a leadership role within physical activity and sport.

This year the ‘Ambarcup’ broke into its second year and was hotly contested between staff and students across all seven events. The events were dodgeball, snap, soccer, cross country, swimming, singstar and kickball. This year the staff won for the second year in a row and due to popular demand, the event will be back bigger and better next year.

At the conclusion of the year we held our annual school sports presentation where we recognised the effort, participation and skill of our students. Participants received trophies and certificates in recognition of their performance. This presentation assembly was well attended by parents, participants and their peers were also there to congratulate our sporting stars.

The changed sport days did not have a significant impact on the effectiveness of sport. Students still participated at similar levels to 2012.

The Wests League Cup competition was a great success for our students. We had over 40 students participate in this competition and demonstrate the expertise in the field of rugby league. After the round robin stage, we were placed into the second division, which was a fantastic effort.

**Future directions**

Next year we plan to increase our staff’s skill set and ability to effectively coach and produce highly skilled sports stars in a range of sports.

For the 2014 school year we aim to continually increase the amount of students participating in sports to increase their skills set, team work, communication skills, confidence, relationships and their overall health.

At AHS we aim to offer as many opportunities for our students to participate in a wide variety of sports and thus we have taken on more knockout sports and gala days than 2013.

We are planning to participate in many more gala days for our junior years and have our sporting teams partake in special events and round robin competitions.

Our sports organiser has taken on the role of the zone swimming carnival coordinator again for 2014. Preparation for this event has already begun and we anticipate that the event will be another success. They have also taken on the role of Fisher Zone secretary.

The PSCL in 2014 AHS will continue the management role for our COS which includes Appin, Rosemeadow, St Helens Park, Woodland Road and Ambarvale Public Schools along with AHS. This will involve the ‘learning with action’ students passing on their acquired skills and knowledge to students involved in the ‘learning to lead’ stage. A junior PSCL sports leadership workshop will be held during term one for the ‘learning to lead’ students which will be run by AHS students at the ‘leading with action’ stage. Students across Years 5 to 8 will learn the basic skills of modifying games, implementing skill drills and officiating games/sports. Students within our nine COS will join Years 7 to 8 students as participants and future leaders during the junior PSCL workshops.
Throughout 2014, students across Years 7 to 12 who are involved in the PSCL program will continue to support RPS during their gala days by organising and implementing the skills they learn through the running of a variety of activities. In addition they will be given the opportunity to officiate at the PSSA gala day sports. This will take place twice a term.

In Term 4 2014, students involved in the ‘leading with action’ program for 2014 will attend the PSCL workshops run by development officers of different sports. Year 8 students will learn about their new role within the program and students across Years 9 and 11 will continue to develop their skills within the sporting fields. It is aspired that Years 11 and 12 students will be part of the ‘leading through change’ program through which they will attend a three day camp to acquire skills that will equip them with sporting qualifications and additionally implement these skills into sports within the wider community.

For 2014 we hope to see this enthusiasm for competition between staff and students to increase. Due to the competitions demand from 2013 the events to be held should continue to attract the students during carnivals. It is also predicted we continue to see the presence of the leadership team to partake in the events and further their leadership capabilities in organising the teams from the student body.

The Wests League Cup was a great success amongst our 13 and 15 year old students and due to popular interest will be back again in 2014 providing new students with an opportunity to excel in rugby league in the school environment.

We look forward to the 2014 year and intend to continue to improve in all sporting areas. We hope to continue to be amazed by the talented students at AHS and the generosity and willingness of our student volunteers.

It is the place where many school events occur with the community and other guests. It is the base of the SRC. Most school meetings occur there – whole staff and committee.

Many staff are based in the library including Student Learning Advisers, Aboriginal Equity Learning Adviser, the Careers Adviser and the Technical Support Officer.

The library is a safe place for vulnerable students. It is also a much used time-out venue.

Senior students use the area for their study periods.

**Findings and conclusions**

Most students enjoy coming to the library. The room is usually filled with busy students at recess and at lunch.

The provision of two interactive whiteboards in the library has improved access to technology and improved both qualitative and quantitative use of it.

As a meeting place the library is the most attractive option in the school as it is welcoming and open.

As a safe area the library is very effective. Its open floor plan ensures very close supervision of large groups of students.

**Future directions**

In 2014 the library will run along the same lines as it has previously. Full use of the facilities will continue to be encouraged. Meetings will run out of the library and students will be encouraged to visit. A fuller implementation of senior information and study skills will be a key aim. Further teacher professional learning (TPL) will occur on TPL Monday.

**Careers/School to Work (STW)**

**Background**

School to Work, careers and transition programs at AHS are ever broadening, changing and adapting to meet the needs of each student, each cohort, the community and worldly influences. Each Years 10 to 12 student will continue to have a career action plan and will work on this in classes and individual counseling sessions with the Careers Adviser, Mrs Ellem. This addition has seen much improvement allowing each student to develop their own career action plan to
enhance a student’s skills to be self-sufficient in their career planning and future goals.

Careers lessons continued to be held for students in Years 9, 10 and 11 with regular meetings and counselling sessions for Year 12. Embedded in the careers program is the delivery of: ‘All My Own Work’ to Year 10; School to Work Program to Years 9 to 12; Work Readiness Training to Years 9 and 10; interview training, mock interviews and a variety of STW events utilising the community and local businesses for informative and mentoring roles. The opportunity for block work experience for Year 10 was again available for students in June with other work experience programs and opportunities available throughout the year when requested or needed. These embedded programs follow the Australian Blueprint for Career Development and are revised and edited each year to adapt to each cohort’s needs.

Outside of these embedded programs students continued to be invited to attend individual careers counseling. This extra time and assistance allows the student in conjunction with the Careers Adviser to delve deeper into their individual short and long term goals with regard to future career pathways, tertiary education applications, and allow for the revising of students’ individual careers action plans resulting in a smoother transition to tertiary education and/or the workforce.

In 2011 many changes were made to counteract the challenges of the New School Leaving Age (NSLA). These changes have continued to be developed for each cohort and their individual needs. Subject selection classes continued to be a success as well as additional hours in careers classes for Years 9 and 10.

**Findings and conclusions**

Implemented careers/STW events continue to be re-developed with the focus maintained to increase employer and business partnerships and their interaction with AHS students broadening students’ exposure to the ‘world of work’ and increasing their awareness of the many opportunities that are available. These events have proven to greatly build students’ confidence when discussing their aspirations and interacting with ‘employer’. Students are more able to communicate their employment skills in an interview and are more focused on their individual career action plans and what they need to do to reach their goals.

The importance of individualising a student’s/ cohort’s career counselling is becoming more evident as the ‘world of work’ and the labour market is dramatically changing.

Once again the business breakfast introduced more new faces of many businesses and past work experience employers that were keen to participate in our STW events, mentor and interact with the students. Maintaining these partnerships is becoming easier and employer participation is growing. The decision to join the business breakfast with the speed careering event was a success saving much needed funds and introducing new speakers to the event.

Year 10 interview day and work experience week were a great success with many students offered casual and full-time positions. Other successful noteworthy events included subject selection career classes and panel interviews, university discovery days, Macarthur Careers Expo, lunchtime apprenticeship group, ‘Get That Job’ day and etiquette day.

Early entry for universities was a great success this year as well as many of our students participating in university holiday programs at UOS, UNSW and UOW.

Technical and Further Education delivered vocational education and training again proved very successful for our students with many completing their qualification and one student receiving a regional award. School based apprentices and trainees (SBAT) are steady with many students signing up for SBATs in 2014. As a result industry based learning classes will be held in 2014 to support these students.

Technical and Further Education Participation Phase Initiative (PPI) courses were introduced to AHS in 2013 with a great success rate for our 15 to 17 year old disengaged students. Five students successfully completed the automotive spray painting course and will continue into TAFE Delivered Vocational Education and Training (TVET) next year.

**Future directions**

School to Work events will continue to develop and adapt for each new cohort as an individualised approach to careers counselling is extremely successful. Continuous feedback is
needed from students and will provide information specific to each cohort therefore determining future events and opportunities.

Individual career action plans will continue to be developed and monitored for all students from Years 10 to 12. These plans give students a visual representation of their long term goals to keep them focused and engaged in their studies, but also help them set smaller steps and goals to achieve whilst completing their studies here at AHS.

There is a growing need to introduce more university days, mentoring days and TAFE days for Year 10 students. This would encourage and inspire earlier careers decisions and introduce students to the many possibilities in tertiary education. Excursions to include these are in the planning for 2014.

**Academic achievements**

**NAPLAN**

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)

Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

The *My School* website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

**NAPLAN Year 7 - Literacy** (including Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation)

Since 2011 there has been a significant growth in students’ performance in writing and since 2012 there has been a significant decrease in lower bands. Average growth for Year 7 students in reading was 52.7 points. School growth in Grammar and Punctuation showed female students in Year 7 sitting above both state and NSW DEC average growth.
Since 2011 we have seen a significant increase in students achieving Bands 7, 8 and 9 in Numeracy. In 2011 16.3% of students achieved in the top three bands but in 2013 40.5% achieved in the top three bands.

**NAPLAN Year 9 - Literacy** (including Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation)

Year 9 students showed outstanding growth in Grammar, Reading and Spelling. A whole school approach has been adopted in order to support growth in Writing for 2014.
NAPLAN Year 9 – Numeracy

Average growth was higher than both state and NSW DEC averages for Numeracy with 15.1% of students achieving in the top three bands.
**Higher School Certificate (HSC)**

In the Higher School Certificate, the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

In the HSC we followed last year’s pattern of achieving outstanding results. One student achieved an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) of 94.5.

In Standard English the school outperformed schools in similar school groups. One example of achievement in terms of growth can be seen in Standard English as it has steadily improved since 2010.

Strong performances in Modern History, Society and Culture, Ancient History and English Advanced saw students achieve top bands.
Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

It has been two years since the School Certificate was discontinued as a performance benchmark and was replaced by the RoSA.

In 2012 AHS had our first cohort of students who did not sit an external State-wide examination, namely the School Certificate. Teachers were well prepared for this change with Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) and staff information around changes being widely disseminated. As a result assessment tasks and curriculum delivery reflected the absence of the School Certificate and adjustments to the school calendar were made.

Year 10 students were engaged in rigorous assessment and internal examinations to collect data around their learning. Grades were allocated in each KLA which mirrored students’ achievement and academic progress. Staff also collected student work samples as evidence of the grades which were allocated.

A number of students also completed the online numeracy and literacy tests.

Teachers are confident in allocating grades due to the TPL that has been spent on consistency of teacher judgement in allocating grades and maintaining records.

Exiting students have been able to access their RoSA and to present it in order to take up apprenticeships or to enter TAFE.

Other school based assessments

Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA)

Summary of 2013 results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Achieved</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- No students have achieved a Level 6 from 2011-2013.
- There has been an increase in the number of students achieving a Level 5 in 2013 (from 2 in 2012).
- Compared to 2012 there has been a slight increase in the number of Level 1s but a decrease in the percentage of students achieving Levels 2-4.
- 2013 data shows that AHS Aboriginals outperformed Aboriginal students in the state.
• For the first time since pre-2009 boys have achieved an average result higher than girls at AHS.

Minimum Standards data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students excluded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students excluded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Student Learning Conferences

Background

Student Learning Conferences began as an equity initiative to replace the existing program of parent teacher evenings which were proving increasingly ineffective with only 20% of parents attending. Student Learning Conferences were premised on every student from Years 7 to 11 having a meaningful discussion around their learning across the curriculum with two expert teachers; at least one of whom currently taught the student. The objective was to give all students equal access to these discussions, not just those students whose parents turned up to parent teacher evenings.

The twenty minute conference process ensured every student had the opportunity to discuss their learning at school in a holistic way. Teachers were able to help each student unpack and understand all facets of their report in a meaningful and directed way. At the same time students were encouraged to reflect on how their behaviours and attitudes impacted on their learning at school. The final outcome of each SLC was the formulation of individual learning goals stemming from the analysis and discussion around each student’s report, designed to give purpose and direction for future learning.

The SLC were completed over three school weeks with each grade engaged over two consecutive days. The school advertised the event extensively. Parents were invited; however, if they were unable to attend each student still was engaged in a conference with two teachers. Staff were given a range of training sessions to prepare them for this new approach of explicitly addressing individual student’s learning.

Findings and conclusions

The SLC were designed to address two main equity issues; poor parent attendance at parent teacher nights and access by all students to teacher discourse about their learning. On both these counts the SLC were very successful. Every student was spoken to in a supportive and directed way about their learning, and parent attendance was 50%, a significant and pleasing increase.

Feedback from the SLC was vital. Parents, students and staff were informally questioned about their experiences and their level of satisfaction as the conferences progressed, and generally the feedback was very positive. However a more formalised survey of all these stakeholders was undertaken following the completion of the SLC.

All parents who attended were contacted by phone, and those who answered were asked five questions to ascertain how they valued this process and how they felt it impacted on their child. The feedback from these parents was overwhelmingly positive. Many reported that the conferences had opened the way to having conversations about school and that the learning goals were having noticeable and immediate effects in some measures at least. Many parents also commented on how they liked that the conference was directed to their child and that it was a positive and supportive forum to discuss learning.

Staff and students were asked to fill in paper surveys which were then collated.

Student responses were understandably far more diverse, however, apart from the ‘enjoyment level’; they almost unanimously reported back
that the SLC experience was a positive one in relation to their learning. Their major concerns were not having a say in the teachers they got to speak to and some indicated they would have liked to speak with their subject teachers. Most liked the personal approach, reported that they understood their report better, and felt empowered by setting learning goals.

Staff were asked whether they felt the SLC were a worthwhile school initiative in terms of developing student understanding and focus on their learning, and parent involvement in the process. The SLC were a significant change in culture and purpose from parent/teacher interviews, but the response from staff at AHS was predominantly supportive. Staff were eager to make suggestions to further improve the process and were generally impressed with the response from students and parents to the new format. Many commented that the learning goals were a really positive strategy that was impacting on student behaviours, attitudes and outcomes in their classrooms.

Future directions

Following the SLC and the positive feedback from all stakeholders, it was determined that all students should be supported in relation to their learning goals. In the beginning of Term 4 a group of staff re-interviewed (three to five minutes) students in relation to how their student learning goals were going. Individual goals were adjusted accordingly and students were reassured and refocused in these meetings. The feedback from students in relation to their progress in achieving their goals was 95% positive. They were able to evaluate their progress and articulate an improved understanding and sense of achievement in their learning. Those students who felt disparate from their learning goals were given positive feedback and suggested options for support.

We also undertook to give our Year 11 students another SLC when we handed out their final report. This informal SLC discussion was designed to compare their last report, cross reference their student learning goals and reiterate important and positive messages to the students. Again the feedback from this initiative was positive both from student and staff.

Clearly the SLC have been successful and the program is one worth pursuing. Fortunately our school has received more equity funding and this will help support the program into 2014. The main expense will always be relieving teachers from class, but to spread the load and make all teachers part of this learning discourse is the way of the future. The continued importance of student learning goals should be a powerful tool for both teachers and students in achieving the best possible learning outcomes for the students at AHS.

Aboriginal education

Background

Aboriginal education is an important focus area for our school staff and the programs, events and activities conducted throughout the year were coordinated by a dedicated group of staff from various faculty areas. Aboriginal education has been a whole school focus with classroom teachers implementing cultural and historical elements into their teaching and a strong emphasis has been made to the eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning, allowing teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives by using Aboriginal learning techniques. The mixtures of programs provided to our students at AHS allowed the students to embrace their cultural identity and bring back their newly learned knowledge to share with fellow students.

Findings and conclusions

This year we continued many existing programs from previous years and introduced a few new initiatives. The Aboriginal education school team met continuously throughout the year and has grown to include new selected staff members that have embraced the opportunity to join the dynamic team. The participation of our Aboriginal students in the variety of programs have strengthened our ongoing relationships with the local Indigenous community and increased the opportunities for more Aboriginal community members coming into the school to support and offer new beneficial programs. The school has seen an increase in the enrolments of students who identify as Aboriginal and this is proof that AHS is seen in the community as a school that has inclusive practices in place to support Indigenous students.

The highlights of our year included:

University of Western Sydney Pathways to Dreaming Student Mentoring Program – this program entered its fifth year with a committed year of students from Years 9 to 12. For the first
time this year, the program has allowed for Year 8 students to join and we now have a further six devoted students participating in the school mentoring sessions, various workshop days and fantastic educational excursions.

The students finished the year with their end of year project where they attended a discovery school excursion to Kamay Botany Bay National Park. The students immersed themselves in the history of the Aboriginal people and Captain Cook at Botany Bay. They engaged in a fascinating discussion about native preserved animals, Aboriginal artifacts and their uses. They also took part in traditional face dot painting and all of them attempted traditional spear and boomerang throwing.

Individual education plans were further developed and revised for our Aboriginal students. During Term 4, all Aboriginal students took part in the Indigenous learning conferences and we are still in the process of finalising student profiles to provide to their individual teachers at the beginning of next year.

Students applied for and were supported by a variety of scholarships and awards. This year, six senior AHS students successfully secured 2013 KARI School Scholarships for Senior Study.

Meanwhile, two of our students, Ben Baxter from Year 7 and Ethan Kinchela from Year 12 successfully obtained the South Western Sydney Region (SWSR) Aboriginal Student Achievement Awards.

Our relationship with UWS, TAFE and various Aboriginal employment groups has encouraged many senior students to either remain at school to complete their HSC or transition into TAFE or apprenticeships. Multiple Aboriginal students participated in the Hands On Program, organised through South Western Sydney (SWS) TAFE and Rachel Allen from Mission Australia has been mentoring and assisting Year 10 students to secure a School Based Apprenticeship Traineeship (SBAT) for next year.

We also had our fourth successful year of Norta Norta tutoring. This is a program for our junior Indigenous students to improve their literacy and numeracy through access to a qualified tutor during school hours and for our senior students to receive tutoring after school.

Some of our Indigenous male students aged between 11 and 17 years of age participated in the Break Away Program made possible by Koori Youth Boys, Rock and Water, MTC Solutions and Campbelltown Family Support.

Finally, AHS was the first to participate in a pilot program, Fishing for Solutions Program, developed by Allen Knight the ACLO Campbelltown Local Area Command (LAC) and supported by Campbelltown Police and Tharawal. Some selected boys attended a cultural fishing excursion that was developed to target Aboriginal youth to divert them from crime and anti-social behaviours. These excursions allow the boys to embrace fishing as a hobby, communicate with elders and fellow Indigenous community members and ultimately breaking down barriers between police and Aboriginal youth.

Future directions

We will maintain our focus on individualised education plans for our Aboriginal students, increase awareness and encourage participation of our students in all of the educational, cultural and training/employment opportunities in particular, our connection with the UWS Pathways to Dreaming and Fishing for Solutions Programs. All staff will be encouraged to continue utilising the eight Ways of Aboriginal Learning in program building and lesson planning across all curriculum areas.

Multicultural education

Background

AHS continues to build on and enhance multicultural perspectives, inclusivity and engagement throughout school programs and events. Students are very tolerant toward those from a wide variety of other cultural backgrounds and embrace the cultural richness they bring to peer relationships and school. The largest cultures represented are Arabic, South Pacific Islander, Hindi and European.

Our school has an active multicultural team that is led by a member of the school executive in addition to an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher one day per week and a trained Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO).

Findings and conclusions

In 2012 we participated in a multicultural action research project conducted by the UWS. The school’s action research project sought to answer the question: ‘How does the explicit teaching of the unit of work enhance students’
understanding, empathy and respect for cultural diversity, in particular, the plight of refugees coming to live in Australia?’ Due to the success of this project we were given an extra grant of $3500 in 2013 in order to build upon our studies and expand our teachings. This year we expanded our delivery to Year 8 where they studied the South East Asian country of Laos with a focus on conditions, refugee-ism and the settled Laotian society in Australia.

Multicultural Day was a huge success. The day consisted of two multicultural shows that highlighted student cultural dance talent, visiting guest artists and a presentation on the Helping Hands charity that is currently being supported by the school to enhance education opportunities for those less fortunate than us. The refugee tent was staffed by Macarthur Diversity Services throughout the day. At lunchtime there were magnificent food stalls from around the globe, with all proceeds raised going to charity. The multicultural parade was a big hit. Staff and students alike joyfully paraded down the red carpet in colourful national costume to display the wonderfully diverse backgrounds that we come from.

Future directions
In 2014 the multicultural portfolio will continue to build upon the study of refugees who have settled in Australia and also embrace future initiatives and events.

Respect and responsibility

Positive Behaviour and Intervention Supports

Background
The TRREC team has operated at AHS since 2008. The team is comprised of staff employed at a senior executive, executive and classroom teacher level. The majority of the team is year advisers or assistant year advisers for various grades.

The year 2013 was a year of change for the TRREC team. Due to changes in staff, a person from outside of the TRREC team became the new coordinator and a few active members of the team in the past limited their participation (but not their support) due to the demanding nature of new professional roles within the school.

The focus for the team this year was to reinvigorate the message of TRREC through emphasising the importance of our school values both in school, but also in the everyday lives of our students.

Findings and conclusions

TRREC Re-Focus Day
On Friday 21 June all teaching members of staff and students in Years 7 to 11 participated in a TRREC re-focus day branded as ‘TRREC for Life’. The purpose of this day was to highlight for students the role that our schools values of trust, respect, responsibility, excellence and cooperation play in their daily lives inside and outside of school.

Some of the activities students engaged in were:

- Team building activities that focused on positive communication and problem solving ability.
- Audio-visual workshops that focused on developing positive verbal interaction between students and staff, as well as students and students.
- Guest speakers were invited to the school to speak with students. Female guest speakers spoke with our female students and male guest speakers spoke with our male students. The focus of these sessions was to emphasise the importance of self-respect.
- Senior students participated in study and time management workshops to prepare them for the responsibilities of senior study.
- Visual arts program where students created their own TRREC signage which reflected their own personal thoughts on our school’s values.

Due to the overwhelming level of commitment shown by the TRREC team, the positive support of the staff and the positive behaviour and enthusiasm of the students, the day was a resounding success.

TRREC’s Amazing Race
Students who were part of the Ambarvale Ambassadors program and students who best embodied the school’s values were invited to participate in an ‘Amazing Race’ style excursion on 5 December at Taronga Zoo. The purpose of this program was to reward students for their
demonstration of positive behaviour throughout the year, but to also encourage students who are not currently ambassadors to consider joining the program in 2014.

Students were required to work in teams of four or five to complete a series of challenges around the zoo together. This required them to trust their team members. Students were required to work cooperatively with staff and each other and show respect for the members of the wider community present at the zoo.

The day was thoroughly enjoyable for students, with many of those who participated directly thanking staff for a “really memorable” day.

TRREC Orientation Workshops
The transition year advisers, with the assistance of additional members of staff, facilitated a series of workshops with Year 6 students from our primary feeder schools that focused explicitly on TRREC. These workshops introduced our school’s PBIS program to the students and made links between the PBIS programs currently in place in those primary schools and our TRREC program. Ensuring that students coming into our school have a sense of familiarity with our values is of great importance.

Merit system
Changes were made to the merit system this year through the implementation of orange merits. At an executive level, members of staff recognised the increasing level of inequity of students who consistently engage in negative behaviours being awarded a disproportionate amount of blue merit cards and consequently achieving the higher levels of the merit system, for example, topaz and sapphire. The orange merit is worth one-quarter of a blue merit and is to be given as a reward for positive or improved behaviour.

Future directions
Trust, Respect, Responsibility, Excellence and Cooperation is an ongoing program which continues to grow on a yearly basis at AHS. In 2014, TRREC will continue to:

- Continue to embed TRREC in lesson planning and execution.
- Maintain and improve TRREC signage within the school to ensure its continued visible presence for students and staff. A renewed focus on staff shirts that include the TRREC logo and values will be necessary.

Other programs
Gifted and Talented (GAT)

Background
In 2013 the GAT emphasis was on teacher professional training in line with the 2012-2015 school plan priority teacher quality. Thirty staff completed the Gifted, Education Research and Information Centre (GERRIC) Mini Certificate of Gifted Education. A new class allocation policy states as a requirement of teacher allocation staff must have undergone GAT training or willingness to do so if they are taking a GAT class.

Findings and conclusions
Extension classes and rich activities for our GAT students are embedded into all faculty programs. Gifted and talented students are presented with a vast array of curriculum and extra curriculum activities.

Leadership building across all years is central to building social justice and citizenship.

The Leo Club has provided a solid foundation for student leadership as it has provided invaluable leadership opportunities for our students. All of our current captains, vice-captains and prefects are Leos.

Our senior students have been able to access UOW summer programs through In2uni. Ten students will be attending in January after gaining entry into the program. This was an extremely competitive process as there were 140 applications.

Students in Years 7 to 10 have also been enrolled into vacation programs at UOW. Twelve of our GAT students attended workshops in the learning labs program. Ambarvale has been involved with the Fast Forward Program for targeted Year 9. This program supports students who have been identified as having the potential to complete a university education but due to significant barriers may not actualise this potential. The
students commence the program in Year 9 and are mentored through to Year 12.

The Mind Marathon GAT program at East Hills Boys High School saw a record number of participants from AHS in 2012. Thirty students from Years 7 and 9 attended the program.

Future directions

Exciting opportunities are afoot in 2014 with a GAT camp and a film festival. Gifted and talented students will be involved in project based learning and extension classes will continue as will our links with UOW and UWS.

Student Welfare

Background

Welfare initiatives and programs at AHS are vast and dynamic to ensure they meet the needs of our students and community.

Throughout 2013, we targeted students for specific and individualised programs such as Stewart House, Links to Learning, Burnside programs as well as many others. We also ran many whole school based programs such as Motivational Media and programs targeting year groups such as Brainstorm Productions.

The Ambarvale Ambassador program continues to grow and be an excellent program to reward our consistently well-behaved students. In 2013 our ambassadors attended multiple excursions including a trip to Sydney Aquarium and Wildlife World and an amazing race through Taronga Zoo. Fifty of our ambassadors also enjoyed a three day camp to the snow fields, where new skills were learnt and much fun was had by all.

Our school also engages in many community based programs around current issues in society. Camp Quality presented programs around supporting people living with cancer while we had the Police School Liaison Officer work with students around crime prevention. We also had weekly groups running targeting students’ resilience, bullying, self-esteem and developing social skills.

Ambarvale High School has an exceptionally strong transition program to ease students from primary to high school. The transition program includes taster lessons, transition days, as well as specialised social skills lessons and gifted and talented programs. We also incorporate peer support into the transition process where we train Year 10 students to run weekly sessions around values and cooperation.

Student leadership has continued to grow within our school and we continuously aim to give students as many opportunities to experience and develop their leadership potential. In 2013 our leadership committee moved ahead with contributing to our TRREC day and being involved in many fundraising activities. We also had a large jump in the number of students engaging in the Leo Club and donating many hours to volunteer agencies.

In 2013 we also took steps to collect more detailed and current medical data for all students. This includes doctor developed plans and current medications. This will allow our school to ensure that all students’ needs are met and to ensure a safe and successful learning environment.

Findings and conclusions

Many of our programs are embedded into our school calendar and therefore accepted as a part of the school program. Our wide variety of programs caters for our diverse student body and we continue to source programs from outside agencies that increased students’ engagement under the umbrella of welfare.

Future directions

We consistently strive to develop new and engaging programs as well as re-implementing successful past programs. In 2014 we will engage in a re-vamp of our ambassadors program to engage more students in the program and lift its profile within the school and community. We will also provide these students with more rewards, and there will be a new application and review process.

We will also revisit our pastoral care roll call program looking at new activities to increase its effectiveness.

We will continue to focus on student leadership including participation in leadership forums, public speaking engagements and increase the senior leader’s role within the school.

Gender Equity

Background

The gender education portfolio is a whole school program that is designed to engage students with their learning, both on an academic level and on
a welfare level with a strong focus on supporting student connectedness. A variety of activities took place in 2013.

Findings and conclusions

The role of Girls Supervisor was created and this position was filled by Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teacher and Year 11 Year Adviser Jessica Wira. This position has been an important addition to the range of welfare roles in our school. Ms Wira is responsible for working with all of our female students, in particular those who are experiencing difficulty with school. In 2014 she will have a Girls Group camp planned for those students in senior years that she has been working with over the past two years which aims at both rewarding and supporting these students in their final years of school.

Specific training in boys’ education for staff: These workshops were structured around the headings of ‘literacy’, ‘classroom management’ and ‘behaviour modification’. Teachers who attended were then able to share their professional learning and training at a faculty level, as well as implement new strategies in the classroom.

Implementation of the ‘Rock and Water’ program as an elective sport: For the first half of 2013, Years 10 and 11 students were trained in the philosophies and the drills associated with the ‘Rock and Water’ program. This program specifically targets areas of anger management, violence and confidence, and develops strategies amongst the participants where they learn to either stand like a ‘rock’ or move like ‘water’. The sports group had both males and females and was a popular addition to the sport electives.

‘Transitions Camp’ at Yarramundi: During Term 2, 40 students from Years 7 to 10 were selected to take part in an extra-curricular camp designed to support ‘students at risk’ and encourage leadership skills. These students were identified through a lengthy process involving key stakeholders, i.e. the Deputy Principals, Head Teacher Welfare and Year Advisers. The students then undertook extensive fundraising as the cost of the excursion was subsidised through Transitional Equity Funding and Gender Education. Unfortunately, after all of the work put in by the students and staff, severe bushfires in the Blue Mountains region made it too dangerous for us to attend the planned site.

Good fortune prevailed and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) was able to accommodate us at a site in Newington, on the Parramatta River. Here students were able to engage in activities like swimming, archery, bike riding and initiative games. They even got a guided tour of ANZ Stadium. The YMCA staff were extremely impressed by the behaviour of our students and remarked that they have been some of the best students they have worked with. Since the camp we have seen a decrease in suspension for the students involved and increased attendance for students who were previously regarded as ‘non-attenders’.

Through this portfolio we targetted specific programs that aimed at improving student learning outcomes and contributed partial subsidies of excursions to Year 12 HSC lectures, the GAT Mind Marathon, the SWS Eco-tour and the Transitions – Yarramundi Camp.

Mind Marathon: On 30 August 2013, 48 students travelled to East Hills Boys High School to take part in the annual ‘Mind Marathon’. This is a day focused on challenging groups of GAT students in a variety of disciplines and academic challenges. Our students performed well in all categories, and went very close to winning the building challenge. The Gender Education portfolio subsidised the cost of the excursion in order to ensure that all students had the opportunity to attend and take part.

Future directions

Ongoing development of specific programs designed to support both student welfare and engagement with learning. Examples include resource identification and distribution, outdoor education opportunities and teacher professional learning.

Transitional Equity Funding

In 2013 our school received additional funding to address equity issues and support teachers and students to engage in effective and life changing teaching and learning programs.

The additional funding of $97,000, known as Transitional Equity Funding, was carefully budgeted to address the most pertinent equity needs identified by the school community and in alignment with our school plan.
The following is a list of significant programs and initiatives funded by our Transition Equity Funding.

- Gifted and Talented Certification Course for Staff
- Science Outdoor Learning Space
- Wilderness Programs for Disengaged Students
- Drama class program Years 7 to 10
- Equine Psychotherapy Program *
- One day per week Support Unit Learning Adviser
- One day per week Indigenous Learning Adviser
- One day per week Speech Therapist *

Note: The Equine Psychotherapy Program and the Speech Therapist have been carried over into the 2014 school year due to organisational difficulties that delayed their implementation in 2013.

National partnerships and significant Commonwealth initiatives (participating schools only)

Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnerships (ILNNP)

Background

The objective of the ILNNP is to improve the performance of students who are falling behind in literacy and/or numeracy, including targeted groups such as students from disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students in participating schools. The aim of the ILNNP is to contribute to the effective use of evidence-based approaches in participating schools to lift the performance of these students.

Our focus for the ILNNP was numeracy. In 2013 the school used resources proved by the ILNNP to implement the numeracy continuum in an effort to lift numeracy performance of the bottom 24% of all students in Years 7 and 8. The numeracy continuum was a focus for intense professional development to improve teacher capacity and to develop meaningful assessments and programs.

We developed a whole school approach to numeracy, implemented across KLAs by a team of teachers and led by the Head Teacher Maths and the Head Teacher Science. We also implemented a support program for the students at risk of falling behind in numeracy. These students were identified as those ‘well below’ and ‘below’ in the baseline data collection for numeracy in May 2013.

Findings and conclusions

Approximately 60 students across Years 7 and 8 were identified as our ‘target group’. They were initially identified from previous NAPLAN results and class assessments. The students were individually tested and their outcomes were mapped to the appropriate level on the numeracy continuum.

Key staff also explored a range of professional development opportunities including external and internal workshops, conferences, community of schools events and team teaching models. The aim was to engage staff in active research and focus discussions of goals on what actions were required to ensure the success of all students.

Teachers were able to develop a collective sense of responsibility and adopt a team approach with the scope to build capacity, provide resources and effective communication about student achievement. They worked collaboratively to identify measurable milestones for learners, discussed and analysed instructional practices that were working and not working and offered structured feedback and ideas for overcoming limitations and for making improvements.

Team teaching provided an opportunity to develop and implement innovative pedagogical approaches to improve student engagement and achievement. Teacher reflective practice also improved alongside the development of explicit pedagogical approaches. Structured lessons provided an opportunity to identify students ready to move through the levels on the continuum and a summative assessment was provided at the end of the lesson sequences with the results used to measure growth from earlier tasks.
Future directions

Ongoing rich professional discussion and reflection focusing on using and understanding all aspects of the numeracy continuum K-10. Ongoing professional learning about the continuum leading to significant whole school improvements in teaching practice and resulting in improved student numeracy outcomes. A continuous cycle of review and implementation of the continuum based on the professional learning needs of the teachers.

The continuum will be used to guide teaching programs across KLAs to effectively cater for student differences. Continuous assessment of students’ progress along the numeracy continuum K-10 will be tracked through observational and formal assessment and used in planning and programming.

Parents/carers and school community will be provided with information and presentations to develop their understanding of the importance of tracking student progress on the numeracy continuum K-10. Students will learn to track their progress on the continuum, set goals for improving numeracy and work towards achievement of those goals in collaboration with teachers and parents/carers.

We will aim to ensure quality numeracy teaching across each KLA is explicit, integrated and differentiated to support student learning. There will be ongoing reflection leading to classroom numeracy practice being constantly challenged and refined. Professional learning will result in shared numeracy knowledge and expertise.

School planning and evaluation

2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan.

Our school has a culture of evaluation to measure progress and inform planning. To this end, various models of evaluation are built into all initiatives, activities programs, committees and meetings. In 2013 we engaged in a range of whole school evaluations to measure success and progress.

Detailed reports on each of these are contained in this document.

- Science Faculty Evaluation.
  - An evaluation team developed a range of tools to gauge the efficacy of the science faculty within our school.

- Tell them From Me Survey
  - A national pilot survey to collect and analyse ‘student voice’ regarding school life.

- Student Learning Conference Evaluation
  - Parents, students and staff were surveyed by the Student Learning Advisers to measure the success of this new initiative and gather data around strengths and weaknesses.

- National Data Collection on Students with a Disability
  - Our school was one of the pilot schools to first trial this tool for collecting and assessing supports for students with disabilities. A team of staff were trained in the system, which required completion of online surveys. This program will be rolled out nationally in 2015.

- Other less formal evaluations were also conducted including:
  - Staff, parent and student multicultural focus group.
— School values: Trust, Respect, Responsibility, Excellence and Cooperation survey.
— Post School Destination Survey.
— Project Friday survey.
— Teacher Professional Learning survey.

School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

School priority 1 – Literacy and numeracy

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Increased levels of literacy and numeracy achievement for every student

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Year 7 female students were above state average in grammar and punctuation in NAPLAN.
- Forty point five per cent of Year 7 students achieved in the top three bands for numeracy.
- Average growth in Year 9 numeracy was greater than the state average.
- A dedicated team of teachers including Student Learning Advisers created Individualised Literacy and Numeracy Growth Plans that targeted Year 8 students’ areas for development from their Year 7 NAPLAN results.
- During 2013, our school was included in the ILNNP. This saw an intense focus on the teaching of numeracy and included the employment of two temporary teachers to support a personalised learning approach.
- All staff were trained in the numeracy continuum and provided with resource packages.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- The ILNNP will continue throughout Semester 1 2014.
- Training in innovated and 21st Century teaching strategies will be rolled out to staff across the year including the Flipped Classroom and Project-based Learning.

School priority 2 – Leadership and management

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Strengthen leadership and management capacity of school staff to drive school improvement

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Teacher Professional Learning Mondays as a management strategy to allocate teacher learning time for fortnight professional learning was established and evaluated as successful.
- Teacher Professional Learning had an ongoing focus on developing teacher understanding of National Standards and evidence to support their practice.
- The executive team engaged in a six week, externally provided, intensive program that developed conflict resolution and mediation skills.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Executive conference with a focus on educational leadership. From the conference, a practical living document The Executive Leadership Guide will be produced. This document will articulate the actions, skills and values of successful educational leaders in our school context.
- To support enhanced teacher performance and development, Teacher and Executive Work Plans will be devised and trialled.
- A National Standards Audit and Evidence Collection tool will be developed.

School priority 3 – Engagement and obtainment

Outcomes from 2012–2014
Students experience challenging, flexible, personalised and safe learning environments that recognise achievement
Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Student Learning Advisers were sought and successfully enhanced teaching and learning.
- Students were enrolled in a range of gifted and talented opportunities including In2Uni and Learning Labs at UOW.
- Continued and expanded involvement in the UWS Fast Forward program.
- Thirty five staff received Post Graduate Certification in Gifted and Talented Education.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Employment of a speech therapist one day per week.
- Employment of a Head Teacher Teaching and Learning.
- Enrichment Camp for high achievers in Stage 4 English.

School priority 4 – Curriculum and assessment

Outcomes for 2012-2014

New National Curriculum delivered in a timely manner through innovative inclusive and relevant programs underpinned by Quality Teaching

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Careful and strategic allocation of National Curriculum Professional Learning funds to support staff preparedness for 2014 implementation. This included funds to attend workshops, plan and develop programs and resources and engage with other schools.
- Whole school focus on the value of ‘feedback’ to student learning. This included updating teacher knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Developed and implemented a school/Board of Studies audit to ensure all staff align their practices with assessment requirements.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Consolidate VET programs to align with changing requirements.
- Evaluate and enhance Stage 4 curriculum balance.
- Evaluate and enhance subject selections Stage 6 to align with student need.
- Continue to harness other educational opportunities to meet the learning needs of Stage 6 students, such as TAFE, SBAT, traineeships and apprenticeships.

School Priority 5 – Aboriginal Education

Outcomes for 2012-2014

To maintain and strengthen personalised learning for all ATSI students

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Aboriginal Learning Adviser, one day per week, was obtained to support the development and implementation of personalised learning plans and to coordinate a wide range of external opportunities offered to our students.
- Norta Norta funds utilised in a targeted and strategic manner to meet individual ATSI student needs.
- Continued and enhanced involvement in the UWS Student Mentoring Program: Pathways to Dreaming.
- Successfully sought placements for indigenous students in the ATSI specific, TAFE-based Hands-On program.
- All staff trained in Eight Ways of Learning.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Aboriginal Equity Funds will be used to employ a teacher two days per week to create and implement increasingly detailed personalised learning plans.
- Continued involvement in Pathways to Dreaming program.
- Student involvement in Aboriginal talented sporting opportunities.
- Continued involvement in Fishing For Solutions, an elders and police initiative to develop positive relationships.
- Aboriginal Parent Morning Tea.
Professional learning

In 2013 professional learning involved all staff both teaching and SASS in a variety of initiatives from in-school events to regional projects. These activities were diverse and designed to reflect the priorities of the School Management Plan and the mandatory training associated with duty of care obligations.

Professional Learning (PL) is conducted at school using the expertise of existing teaching staff and off site using educational experts trained to facilitate teacher professional learning. Staff also engaged in PL at a variety of external locations with participation in workshops, conferences and meetings that were regularly held after school and on weekends.

An important area of PL continued to be student welfare initiatives. The school has a very strong and enthusiastic welfare team who meet regularly before school and participate in external PL. Members of the welfare team also facilitate and lead in-school opportunities for the whole staff. In 2013 some of the activities our staff completed include, Boys and Literacy Workshops, Anti- Bullying programs, Mental Health and Wellbeing seminars, and Accidental Counsellor training.

PL is an integral part of the development of our new scheme teachers. Approximately 35% of our current teaching staff is new scheme teachers working extensively with the Head Teacher Mentor as required by the NSW Institute of Teachers, to complete 100 hours of professional learning every five years. There are also funds allocated to each new scheme teacher for professional learning activities. The types of professional learning activities available to staff include lesson observation of colleagues, development of best practice in regard to teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, understanding of DET policies and procedures and curriculum based activities as well as training in DEC mandatory training requirements. Unfortunately the Head Teacher Mentor Program finished in 2013 and this resource will no longer be available.

Also in 2013 our staff attended a variety of curriculum-based conferences and workshops outside of school hours coordinated by KLA specific professional learning associations.

A PL initiative in 2013 was the introduction of TPL Monday which is a program where all teaching staff is allocated one period each fortnight to participate in a one hour workshop led by a member of the school Executive or experts engaged by the school. Topics covered during TPL Monday in 2013 included differentiating literacy in the curriculum, the DEC online classroom teacher program, Australian Teaching Standards and teacher preparation for Student learning Conferences.

Staff also attended many after school PL events including: approximately 25 staff participated in PART (Predict, Assess and Respond to Challenging & Aggressive Behaviour Training), 15 staff members completed INTERMediate, and 35 teachers engaged in UNSW Gifted & Talented Post Graduate Training. Each of these programs were conducted outside school hours, over a number of weeks with each session an average of three hours duration.

Another highlight of PL in 2013 was preparation for the implementation of the National Curriculum. This involved teaching staff in Professional Learning activities including creation of programs, development of lesson plans and sharing teaching resources. The Term 2 School Development Day in 2013 was a combined event involving the staff of Campbelltown Performing Arts HS, Leumeah HS and Ambarvale HS. It was a successful day where teachers in KLA groups exchanged knowledge, resources and expertise around National Curriculum for implementation in 2014.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

Throughout the year a range of tools are used to measure school community satisfaction. In addition, care is taken to put in place long term structures to ensure parent, student and teacher ‘voices’ are heard in terms of planning, decision-making and funding. Specific tools used to measure satisfaction in 2013 included our school’s involvement in the Tell Them From Me (TTFM) student surveys; a national tool that was piloted in a number of volunteer schools. This provided the school with an extensive overview of student opinions and perceptions. A detailed account of the TTFM survey is contained within this report.
Parent opinion was actively sought in a qualitative evaluation of the SLC. Surveys, structured phone calls and other forms of feedback were gathered, collated, analysed and reported on as part of the overall evaluation of the program. Again, a thorough overview of these results is available within this report.

Program evaluations

Science

Background

In 2013 the AHS science staff had one head teacher and four classroom teachers. They additionally had one and a half science trained teachers employed under a National Partnership with Literacy and Numeracy Program who assisted with delivering intensive numeracy support. The faculty also delivered preliminary and HSC classes in biology, chemistry, physics and senior science. In 2013 there were no junior agriculture classes.

In 2012 we had a science laboratory upgrade, with all six science laboratories and one preparation room being upgraded. Two classrooms contain interactive whiteboards.

During 2013 two extracurricular groups ran every week for students to participate in learning experiences outside the classroom and these groups were run by science teaching staff. The groups included: the AHS Science Club and the AHS Tree Shepherds. There has been increased emphasis on providing students with alternative learning opportunities and a number of field trips were undertaken in 2013 including: Year 11 biology on an overnight field trip to Wooglemai Environmental Education Centre, Years 11 and 12 physics to study days at both UOW and UWS, Years 11 and 12 chemistry to Sydney water treatment plant, Year 11 chemistry to the Nuclear Reactor and Year 12 chemistry to study days at the UWS. Science Week was celebrated with various demonstrations and lessons taught within the school by experienced scientists and organisations, including Questacon and the CSIRO. Our Year 8 gifted and talented students also attended a study day at the UOW and participated in the UOW Science Fair.

During 2013 the science faculty worked extensively with the mathematics faculty to improve numeracy in Years 7 and 8 under the National Partnerships focus.

The science faculty also spent significant time in 2013 refining the new teaching programs under the National Curriculum for implementation in 2014.

In 2013 an evaluation team was formed to evaluate the teaching and learning of science. The evaluation team consisted of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head Teacher Science, Head Teacher TAS and a science classroom teacher. The evaluation aimed to identify the strengths and areas of improvement across the faculty using a variety of evaluation tools including staff, parent, student and teacher surveys and student forums. Of particular interest to the team was analysing decreasing interest in senior science subjects and developing academic rigour in assessment.

Staff – findings and conclusions

Staff opinions and perspectives were gathered using a survey tool. A decision was made to differentiate between science staff and non-science staff: specifically designed surveys were given to these two groups. Forty nine staff responded to the non-science staff survey, this represents approximately 88% of the staff. Survey results were very self-affirming for the science faculty. Ninety four per cent report that the science faculty almost always/usually has strong and effective leadership. Sixty seven per cent indicated that the science faculty contributes positively to whole programs and events and 55% felt that the science faculty is well-organised and reliable. Further, 47% indicated that science has a high profile across the school. Forty nine per cent felt that the science faculty was collaborative and professional when working across other faculty areas.

The science faculty survey asked questions that were particularly pertinent to staff working within the faculty. Nine staff participated in the survey, representing 100% of the science teaching staff. Areas of strength revealed by the survey include the leadership and management of the faculty with almost 100% responses scoring in the top two options (almost always/usually) for each question. Areas that require further consideration included adequate resourcing, student responsibility for learning and staff perceptions of the currency of their professional learning. The general tone of the science faculty survey is encapsulated in the following comment included at the bottom of
one survey “science faculty and staff have been doing extremely well throughout the year. I thoroughly enjoyed each day and know that the students are receiving a quality education.”

Future directions

Based on this information the science faculty is determined to ensure that we are adequately resourced, hence we have established shared hard copy and digital folders for shared best practice teaching and learning activities. Faculty budgeting and spending will have an increased focus on transparency, through more frequently planned discussions at faculty and head teacher meetings regarding resourcing needs. The faculty is committed to increasing their professional learning and a focus on ensuring that this learning is tailored to individual need will continue in 2014. The sharing of best practice ideas at faculty meetings will continue, with an emphasis on strategies that enforce and teach student responsibility for their learning.

Students – findings and conclusions

Student opinions and perspectives regarding science at AHS were sought in a variety of ways. Students were surveyed in stage four and five cohorts. Surveys were completed in PDHPE and maths lessons to avoid bias. The surveys were completed online through Survey Monkey in order to ensure student anonymity and encourage authentic responses. While the surveys completed in different key learning areas (KLAs) and online were used to ensure student anonymity and remove any bias, student forums were utilised as an evaluation tool to provide detailed and specific qualitative feedback from specific cohorts. Student forums were conducted with three distinct groups of students in Years 7 to 9, Year 10 and Year 11. Specific students were selected for student forums to provide data across years, ability and engagement levels.

In the survey it was encouraging to note that 73% of students in Years 7 and 8 identified that they like science. Of concern however, was that by Years 9 and 10 this had dropped to 42%. Clearly, this requires further analysis and investigation to reverse this trend. In Years 7 and 8 63% of students report that they are either always or mostly confident that they have the ability to understand the ideas taught in science. This may be connected to the results regarding the learning links by teachers between lessons. Pleasingly, 76% of Years 7 and 8 students also report that they find science easier or of the same level of difficulty as the other subjects they study. Seventy per cent of Years 9 and 10 students report regular use of laptops during learning activities in the classroom. Within the surveys students were offered an open-ended question in which they were able to respond to “If you could change one thing in science what would it be?” The overwhelming response from all students was a request for more hands on learning opportunities, including opportunities to work outside the classroom.

At the Years 7 to 9 student forum, students were asked a range of questions including, “What does a good classroom look like?” It was interesting to note that student responses aligned with what we know to be best practice, with a focus on student engagement, creativity and variety in learning tasks, a teacher who is passionate about their subject area and appropriate classroom management. A majority of students identified that they thought their science teacher was passionate about their subject. They also reported a high level of lesson preparation and organisation from the science staff and that lessons were usually productive. Student responses to the question “Does your science teacher give any feedback?” revealed an area that requires strengthening. Students indicated that feedback was often focused on behaviour rather than learning and when feedback was focused on learning it was often informal and lacked detail.

A range of students were selected for participation in the Year 10 student forum. Students who had selected to study a science subject for 2014 and students who had not chosen a science subject were included. Students were asked a range of questions including, “Did you choose senior science subjects? Why? Why not?” Responses from students who had selected science for 2014 included a general enjoyment of the subject and a need to complete a subject to enrol in a chosen university degree. Students who had not chosen science identified that they didn’t like the subject, they didn’t feel confident in the subject or that there were just other subjects that they felt were more interesting. When asked about the preparation given for their student research project there was a divide amongst students based on their class. Some students were given detailed explanation of the task requirements and others felt they were not given
enough feedback to complete all parts of the task well.

A Year 11 student forum was conducted with a range of students who studied at least one senior science subject. A number of students however, study more than one senior science subject. Students overwhelmingly identified that they felt well-prepared for assessment tasks and received appropriate feedback from their teachers. When asked to comment on the connectedness of lessons, students commented that this aspect of teaching was done well, particularly in physics. Students identified that they enjoy the use of Edmodo as a communication tool with teachers. They particularly enjoyed the ability to message a teacher with individual questions.

Future directions

Due to student feedback we have utilised a range of strategies to increase the engagement of students in Year 9. This has included strategically placing students in classes, including the creation of single-gendered classes. The faculty has made a commitment to strategies to increase the frequency within which books are marked and meaningful feedback given to students regarding their day to day learning. In regards to assessment feedback strategies will be developed within the faculty to increase feedback given to students before, during and after assessment, particularly regarding the student research projects. Year group coordinators will focus their attention to develop substantial marking criteria and feedback documents to be used by staff to record assessment results. The student survey revealed that students wanted more hands-on learning and learning outside the classroom. As a result, the faculty is committed to further developing and accessing the existing outdoor learning space and agriculture area. Excursions are also planned to excite and interest students regarding their learning in science. Science Week will also continue to be celebrated and an increased number of students will be targeted to be involved.

Parents – findings and conclusions

A phone survey was conducted amongst a group of randomly selected parents across Years 7 to 10. Questions were designed to offer parents an opportunity to share their perceptions about science and their child’s learning at AHS. Of those surveyed, a vast majority reported that their child liked science. Interestingly, these results were higher than those in the student survey. Less than 50% of parents had looked through their child’s work book. A very low percentage knew their child’s science teacher’s name. A majority of parents reported that their child’s science teacher encouraged their child to achieve their best. The majority of parents indicated that they had a reasonable understanding of how their child is assessed in science.

Future directions

As a result of the review, it is planned to further promote science at AHS through an increase in updates to the school website showing students working in class. The faculty will also ensure that all assessment schedules are placed on the website for students and their families to access. Science teachers will continue to provide students with feedback regarding their bookwork but will make an increased attempt to provide feedback to students regarding student bookwork through parent phone calls and interviews when necessary.

Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)

Background

The HSIE faculty at AHS was formed in 2009. It encompasses the widest spread of curriculum in the school. In Stage 4 we deliver History, Geography and Languages. In Stage 5 we again teach History and Geography, but also offer electives such as Commerce, History Elective, Work Education and Big History. Stage 6 offers our largest range of subjects, Ancient History, Business Studies, Geography, History Extension, Legal Studies, Modern History, Retail Services and Society and Culture.

Findings and conclusions

In 2013, the HSIE faculty undertook an early engagement with the National Curriculum in History. This decision was made in order to support teaching staff in their delivery of new content and give them the opportunity to engage students ‘ahead of the curve’. In 2013, students in Years 7, 9 and 10 studied what is now mandatory for Australian students. Three HSIE staff – Mr Weber, Mr Owen and Ms Simpson – saw the online publication of an original unit of work that they designed for the History National Curriculum Syllabus. Teachers from all over Australia will be able to access this unit as a means of supporting the implementation of the new course.
The year 2013 saw the successful introduction of the Big History course by Mr Weber (HSIE) and Mrs Perry (Science). We were also graced with a visit to the school by the creator of the International Big History course – David Christian, the Australian Big History Coordinator Tracy Sullivan and two guest South Korean Big History Professors. This visit was followed by a visit to Macquarie University by AHS History Extension students and Mr Weber in order to sit in on university lectures taught by David Christian.

We saw the ongoing development of the Eco Club and vegetable patch in G Block. In 2013, the club sold produce to staff in order to be financially sustainable. In 2014, we plan to make a connection with the school canteen and we will be supplying fresh produce to students through the canteen menu. Several of the Eco Club students also represented AHS at the annual SWS Youth Environmental Network Eco-camp.

Excursions: HSIE participated actively in a number of excursions across all subject areas in 2013. Some examples of these were:

- Year 12 Geography Snow Camp in collaboration with Ambassadors to study the economic impact of tourism.
- Year 12 HSC History Lectures that were held at Sydney University.
- Regular visits to the NSW State Library to assist HSC students in accessing resources for their major research projects in Society and Culture and History Extension.
- Year 10 Geography Port Kembla beach trip to study the coastal dunes.
- Year 11 Geography Camp to Killalea State Park to view the coastal ecosystem.
- Year 11 Ancient History ventured into the Rocks region and did a walking tour of sites that are linked to early European settlement. They also took part in an archaeology workshop at the ‘Big Dig’ site in the Rocks.
- Year 8 Geography Mt Keira excursion while researching mountain ecosystems.
- Big History’s visit to the Australian Museum to study early life on planet Earth and an IMAX excursion to watch a film about the deep space telescopes that are studying the edges of our universe.

The HSIE faculty entered students into a number of competitions:

- Years 11 and 12 Business Studies students were entered into the University of Newcastle Business Plan Competition. Year 11 student Jessica Boujean gained a top ten result and received a new iPad.
- A number of AHS students have successfully entered the Arthur Phillip Geography Awards for Senior Geography Projects. Josh Thompson and Monica Sawiris gained top placing in the final results.
- Australian Geography Competition – five high distinctions were awarded including Caitlyn Robertson (Year 12) who achieved in the top 1% in the country.
- Ten Years 10 and 11 current and future Business Studies students took part in the Campbelltown Youth Forum to discuss the future economic and social issues and needs that will be affecting these students’ generation.

Future directions

Ongoing support of whole school and regional goals, ongoing professional development of teacher expertise in delivery of Stage 6 subjects and engagement with extracurricular opportunities.

Tell Them From Me Evaluation

Background

Ambarvale High School was selected by the DEC as one of 100 schools to pilot the TTFM student survey in mid-August 2013. Designed by The Learning Bar, the TTFM student survey was chosen by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) as a reliable and valid tool to provide data to support school improvement planning for learning leaders and school administrators.

The survey aims to help improve student learning outcomes by measuring and collating factors that are known to affect academic achievement and other student outcomes. The focus of the NSW pilot project was student wellbeing, engagement and effective teaching practices (social, institutional and intellectual engagement). The 30
minute voluntary survey was conducted online during school hours and students' anonymity was a guaranteed feature. Eighty six per cent of our Years 7 to 11 students completed the survey.

The results are available to school administrators online and have many interactive features to enable deeper analysis by drilling down through the data. State and replica school comparison lines can be accessed to further put data into context enabling schools to make evidence-based decisions.

Findings and conclusions

The Learning Bar provided extensive feedback and graphical information based on our students’ responses to the TTFM survey. There are a number of functions within the system to enable results to be tailored to explore different relationships within the data. Most specific are the comparisons that can be made between certain measures and the state average and, most importantly, between replica schools.

Significantly most of our students enjoy positive relationships and highly value school outcomes. On both these measures we fare above state average and replica schools. Similarly our students report a sense of belonging which is at comparable levels to state and replica schools. Notably, our boys are visibly above, whilst our girls are somewhat below.

Most students demonstrate good behaviour, although the figures are lower than state average and replica schools. Girls report better behaviour, especially our Year 11 girls, than boys, but the boys have a higher sense of belonging to our school.

Sixty per cent of students reported that they are trying hard to succeed, with our Year 7s excelling and our Years 8s and 11s comparable to both state average and replica schools. Concerning is the lower levels for our Years 9 and 10 respondents.

Of concern is some of the feedback on intellectual engagement, with only 46% of students feeling they were fully engaged, however these figures are in context of our students reporting back above state average and replica schools for Rigour, Relevance, Positive Learning Climate and Effective Learning Time. It is worth noting that our boys responded significantly more positively than our girls.

Only 70% of girls and 56% of boys currently plan to complete their HSC; however this matched state average and replica school responses. It is reassuring how many of our students planned to go on to university with our girls having higher aspirations than our boys – particularly those in Years 9 and 11. Our students also indicated a higher than state average and replica school response in terms of their aspirations to complete a TAFE or VET course across all years (except our Year 10 girls).

Sixteen per cent of students reported being bullied regularly. Verbal bullying is by far the worst form of bullying reported. This bullying behaviour seems to be focused around the Years 7 to 9 students and was higher than state average and replica schools. There is however, a significant drop once students are more senior. Whilst these statistics are concerning, on all measures our school is below replica schools in relation to levels of anxiety and depression, with only our Year 9 girls notably above state average. The trend across our school is that girls tend to be twice as anxious as boys.

Students report that they aren’t good at homework.

Our truant rates are of concern, with about one quarter of students reporting some level of truancy. This is higher than the state average and much higher than replica schools. Our Year 11 boys are worst, with approximately 15% higher truancy rate than boys in the same year in replica schools.

Future directions

Student responses from the TTFM survey seemed to indicate that generally they want to do well and work hard – but they need the support of teachers to do so.

The message the student body sent via the survey was:

- The verbal bullying that happens at school needs to continue to be addressed, as does the issue of truancy and lateness to class.
- Students at AHS need to continue to receive interesting and challenging work in class and this will improve results, and the level of motivation and sense of achievement at school.
• The many opportunities that are offered at AHS gives students a good sense of belonging and consequently generally our student population values school outcomes.

The executive in consultation with staff and students, and working in conjunction with the welfare and TRREC teams, will be working on devising programs and strategies to incorporate these findings into the learning and cultural structures within the school.

Further, the TTFM initiative is an ongoing opportunity for schools to collect and compare data to evaluate how new initiatives are running. The next survey has been flagged by the DEC for Term 1 in 2014, and it is the school’s intention to survey students from Years 7 to 12 to better understand the full breadth of the student body at AHS.

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school’s practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school’s future development.

L Barnott-Clement, Principal
S McMahon, Deputy Principal
M McKenzie, Deputy Principal
C Barnes, Head Teacher Administration
J Perry, Head Teacher Science
M Degning, Head Teacher Mathematics
K Weber, Head Teacher HSIE
D Olsen, Head Teacher CAPA
J Yee, Relieving Head Teacher PDHPE
K McGregor, Relieving Head Teacher Welfare
K Flanagan, Student Learning Adviser
N Milanovic, Student Learning Adviser
J Ellem, Careers Adviser
E Bridle, SRC Co-ordinator
H Picone, School Administrative Manager
J Loveday, School Captain

C Heathcote-Heller, School Captain
C Trembath, School Vice-Captain
A Buksh, School Vice-Captain

School contact information

Ambarvale High School
PO Box 90, Campbelltown NSW 2560
Thomas Rose Drive, Rosemeadow NSW 2560
Phone: 4627 1800
Fax: 4628 5289
Email: ambarvale-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.ambarvale-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 8570

Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at: