



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education Services**

John Tonkin College Education Support Centre

2017

Review Findings



**Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools**

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Natasha Hawkins
Board Chair:	Ms Susan Hill
School Address:	Education Drive, Greenfields WA 6310
Number of Students:	31
Reviewers:	Ms Audrey Jackson AM (Lead) Mr Tom Campbell Ms Eirlys Ingram
Review Dates:	11 and 12 May 2017
Initial Review Year	2014

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the Department of Education Services' independent review is to provide assurance to the principal and school community, the board and the Director General of the Department of Education of the extent to which the school staff and board have met the commitments of the Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA). The review verifies the degree to which there are effective processes in place bringing about improved student learning.

Review Methodology

Underpinning the review methodology is the understanding that the principal is required to ensure the roles and responsibilities of the DPA are met; school performance and student improvement targets and priorities, as detailed in the school's business plan, are assessed, reviewed annually and an annual report made publicly available. The review seeks to determine the extent to which these commitments have been met.

The principal forwarded the school's self-review conclusions to the Department of Education Services one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The Department of Education Services' reviewers supplemented the information provided by the principal with information on the school's achievements, its processes and its student performance data from a number of sources which included:

- the *My School*® website
- the Department of Education's School Performance Monitoring
- Schools Online reports
- School Curriculum and Standards Authority Year 12 Student Achievement data. (secondary schools only).

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school's self-review documentation to verify achievement of the DPA and business plan commitments, and developed lines of inquiry where further in-school verification was required.

An agenda for the site visit was negotiated with the principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made in the school's self-review statements. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students where required. Where the school belongs to an Independent Public School (IPS) cluster of schools the review considers whether the purpose of the cluster has been met and the benefits to the school.

The evidence provided by the principal, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visit, was used as the basis for judgements made in verifying how well the school staff and board have met the commitments of the DPA and business plan.

Business Plan

How effective was the business plan in responding to the school's context and improving student learning (progress, achievement and engagement)?

John Tonkin College Education Support Centre, formerly Career Enterprise Centre, is an education support centre that provides educational opportunities for students in Year 11 and Year 12 with intellectual, physical, psychological and social disabilities.

The centre is co-located on the Peel Education and Training Campus with John Tonkin College, South Metropolitan Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Murdoch University Peel Campus. This provides students with ongoing opportunities in training, employment and future community access opportunities. The facilities are purpose-built and students are well catered for.

Student numbers have ranged between 29 and 34 over the past four years, with 32 students currently enrolled. The centre works in partnership with parents, students, the community and a range of outside agencies. There is no set local-intake area.

In July 2015 the then substantive principal accepted a position at another school resulting in the appointment of an acting principal who in March 2017 became the substantive principal. The centre has been through a significant period of uncertainty relating to the roles of the leadership team.

Findings

- The business plan was reviewed and rewritten in 2016 as it did not reflect a long-term strategic approach for the centre and its students. The ethos of 'Engage Educate Enrich Empower' was developed and this is viewed as a powerful belief system reflected in the new business plan and well known by staff, the board and members of the centre's community. The development of the new plan was collaborative and is genuinely owned by all; it clearly links targets, strategies and evidence to the key focus areas of:
 - success for every student through individual pathways and developing quality teaching and learning programs
 - social and emotional health and wellbeing
 - strong and effective partnerships
 - meaningful accountability.
- Student targets are focused on key educational areas and were strategised collaboratively to reflect meaningful student achievements and outcomes. Within

an education support setting, the formulation of appropriate targets is challenging. The principal and leadership team acknowledged that there is a need to further refine and develop this area of the business plan. The 2014 independent review highlighted that targets be refined in the business plan to ensure school improvement. To this end the reviewers determined there had been significant improvement in this area and the centre is well aware that the development of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited (SMART) targets is the next phase.

- The 2014 independent review commended a range of areas relating to community partnerships, credit-based courses, the environment and culture, the commitment of staff especially in the areas of social emotional learning and the virtues program. The areas of improvement highlighted for attention including embedding the business plan into school practice and developing the board's ownership of the business plan. These have been achieved with the centre's reflection on student performance embedded and sustainable.
- As part of the centre's self-review an evaluation matrix was developed. This well-developed document links all areas of the review with:
 - 2014 independent review findings
 - targets
 - measures and sources of evidence
 - future planning.
- The reviewers were confident that all aspects of the DPA were met. It was also noted that staff and the board were familiar with the DPA and its relationship with the business plan.
- The business plan is not widely available to the community; however, it is available on request. The development of an improved online method for publication is being pursued.

Areas of strength

- The reviewers noted a critical culture of self-assessment, review and analysis of individual student performance. Of particular note is the well-developed matrix that aligns all areas and has a strong improvement focus.
- The leadership team has strategically focused on ensuring that the self-reflection and review process has been collaborative. All staff have ownership of the strategic direction of the centre.

Areas for improvement

- Review and develop SMART targets for the next business planning cycle.
- Ensure the business plan is more accessible to the community.

Teaching and Learning

How has the quality of teaching improved and sustained student learning (progress, achievement and engagement)?

Findings

- All students have a well-designed individual program specifically selected to meet their educational needs, covering the areas of academic learning, life skills, social emotional wellbeing, physical health, mental health including resiliency, community connectivity and work related learning. The planning related to each child is comprehensive and adjusted as required, given the requirements of each student. Parents or caregivers are a critical part of this process and it is evident they are in partnership with the centre.
- The use of evidence-based pedagogical practice and instructional methodologies were visible in all areas to the reviewers. Teachers collaborate on a daily basis and regular meeting times are established for more formalised planning. The principal and teachers highly regard the expertise of the teaching assistants and they 'value add' to the range of teaching and learning opportunities provided for students. The centre operates three multi-age group classes differentiated on the ability of the students. This has ensured greater pastoral care and stability for the young people as they are predominantly connected to one teacher. Of particular note was the engagement of the students within the classroom in all aspects of learning.
- All students are enrolled in a variety of courses including endorsed Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) units, preliminary units and, for selected students, foundation units. The centre determined that all students would be enrolled in the newly released preliminary units developed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) for both English and mathematics. Year 13 students are also enrolled in workplace learning. Students have the opportunity to engage in teaching and learning programs that are tailored to individual need such as retail, construction, cadets, workshop, art and life skills.
- Literacy and numeracy testing is conducted in both Semester 1 and Semester 2, with learning adjustment made for individual students. There was growth in the achievement of both literacy and numeracy targets between Semester 1 and Semester 2 in both Year 11 and Year 12 cohorts. Teacher records, anecdotal notes and observation are utilised as data check points.

- The centre has established a range of data sources to determine the progress of individual students. Student individual transition plans (ITPs) are regularly reviewed as are individual behaviour management plans. Alongside this, the centre monitors individual student progress through its Social and Emotional Profile Tool Assessment (SEPTA), student participation in art therapy, student attendance through the School Information System and student progress in ASDAN.
- The centre has a strong transition program; to this end the centre has structured flexible timetables to accommodate the varied and individual needs of each student. A number of students continue to Year 13 and throughout this year additional workplace learning occurs and post-school transition is planned. There is a collaborative involvement with the Local Area Coordinator from the Disability Services Commission.
- Performance management is in place for all staff. For teachers it is intended to align this process more closely with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The centre identified its plans to make more extensive use of peer observation and classroom walkthroughs to strengthen teaching practice and to also draw upon the specialised expertise of outstanding teachers. The principal is a visible leader and regularly observes teachers' performance and their interactions with students; she provides regular feedback to staff.

Area of strength

- The reviewers were confident that strategies and structures already in place and the future planning outlined by the centre will ensure the sustainability of a high level of teaching and learning.

Area for improvement

- Embed the use of peer observation, peer coaching and mentoring for both teachers and teacher assistants.

Student Performance Monitoring

How well established are the school's self-assessment practices in accounting for school improvement?

Finding

- It was evident to the reviewers that the uncertainty of the leadership position at the centre had implications for the effective ongoing implementation of the self-review process. However, during 2016 a diligent effort on the part of the leadership group and staff has resulted in some positive outcomes. This has included whole staff involvement in a detailed preparation for the current review. The reviewers were satisfied that the intention of the centre is to ensure this will be ongoing during the forthcoming cycle.
- The 2016 Annual Report provides a thorough overview of the business plan and the achievement of the targets with additional information related to classroom and whole-school activities. The annual reports are included in Schools Online and will be uploaded to the centre website once this has been redeveloped.
- Because of the context, the centre's in-class monitoring is varied with an emphasis on tools such as checklists, self-reflection tasks, anecdotal and other written records. It is detailed. The teachers make use of this information in developing an ITP for each student. This process has been enhanced with professional learning for staff focusing on developing SMART objectives for the ITP making the expectations more explicit and relevant to the individual student. The centre reported that this has had a positive impact on teacher judgements.
- Staff implement a variety of other diagnostic assessments including several reading tests (e.g. Waddington, Schonell and Burt), the South Australian Spelling Test, Simple Code Phonics Assessment, the Alpha and Beta mathematics tests and the Sena numeracy tests. Staff commented on the difficulty of selecting appropriate assessment tasks suitable to the complex needs of their students. The centre is in the process, through research analysis and networking with other centres, of addressing this dilemma. It is also investigating strategies for enhancing its data collection and collation methods.
- Staff holding the position of trainer assessor are also diligent in their assessment of the students. Typically, they rely on checklists which indicate the students' achievement of particular outcomes.

- The centre has begun trialling the Abilities Based Learning Education for Western Australia tool. Staff are confident that this will provide additional information and strategies in the effort to accurately monitor student progress.
- Students with the capacity to sit the Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment are provided the opportunity in both year levels. The results validate teacher judgements and assessments. Through this and other activities it was confirmed that staff are making every effort to challenge the students to reach their full potential.
- In addressing the non-academic targets in the business plan, with the help of additional information and communications technology expertise, the staff have developed the SEPTA, which provides an opportunity for all staff to regularly monitor the students' development in this area and report to parents. It has also resulted in discussion among staff on how to best manage students. SEPTA is now available on a secure website which can be accessed offsite. There is scope to enhance this tool and broaden its application to include other data sources.
- Students on completion of their education receive their Western Australian Statement of Student Achievement, which outlines the courses and qualifications they have completed during their schooling.
- The 2014 independent review was uploaded to Schools Online and the centre's website.
- Within the self-review process the centre has focused on future planning. The intention to continue to develop more effective monitoring documents and data collection strategies is indicative of the aim to have an effective and efficient system in place, which is sustainable.

Areas of strength

- The centre has acknowledged the need for improvement in the self-review process and is actively pursuing the way forward.
- A focus is placed on the progress and achievement of each individual student.
- A commitment by staff ensures that all students have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

Areas for improvement

- Effective self-review processes to be put in place in the initial stages of the new cycle.
- The enhancement of data collection, collation and analysis strategies.

Program Delivery

How well has the centre performed in providing education programs that promote learning and wellbeing for all students?

Findings

- Each student at the centre has an ITP 'My Life, My Plan' which supports both their learning and post-school transition. The transition and workplace learning coordinator liaises with students, families, teachers and external agencies to develop effective post-school pathway plans. These plans incorporate SCSA endorsed Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) programs foundation mathematics, mathematics preliminary units 1–4, English, health and physical education, visual arts and design and technology (woodwork and metalwork). In addition students are able to undertake SCSA endorsed ASDAN assessed units and workplace learning, Department of Fire and Emergency Services cadets and art therapy and to access a range of Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate I courses through South Metropolitan TAFE. Programs are designed to meet the educational needs of students and cover academic development, life skills, socio-emotional wellbeing, physical health and work related learning and incorporate the Department of Education's Special Education Needs (SEN) curriculum. ITP documents are created at the start of each semester and reported on at the end of the semester using the SEN reporting to parents tool through the Department of Education online portal.
- The SEPTA is central to managing student development. It supports the principle that to have an effective and engaging school environment that delivers quality educational programs, it is necessary to support and nurture the students as a whole. Consequently it is pivotal in meeting the targets of the centre's business plan. Utilising SEPTA to document student behaviours, both positive and negative supports the centre's ability to assess the safety and welfare of students in an objective manner. This tool has also been aligned to inform the Department of Education issued personal development and learning behaviours checklist, included on each student's end of semester report.
- The program offered at the centre is diverse using both the centre and community environments. The centre's facilities include a purpose-built workshop for the delivery of woodwork and metalwork, which meets required safety standards. The transition and workplace learning coordinator and the workplace learning education assistant regularly visit students in their workplaces to ensure the smooth functioning of the program. The reviewers visited two of the workplace sites and the collaboration between the personnel on site and the centre staff to ensure meaningful experience in a safe environment was evident.

- Excursions are used to provide opportunities for skill development in real life situations. A detailed briefing on the scope of the excursion and its purpose is sent to parents/caregivers. Teachers are required to complete a detailed checklist for the excursion, which includes an excursion risk management and response plan, and an emergency response flowchart together with a travel plan/itinerary for approval, by the principal.
- The centre has a well-structured program to develop ITPs which engages parents and caregivers with the staff who work with each student. Programs are established during first term and reviewed at the end of the semester by the principal, teachers and education assistants. An amended program is then prepared for second semester.
- It was evident during the visit that classes were well organised and purposeful with all staff aware of their roles and responsibilities. There is a comprehensive duty roster to ensure appropriate supervision from student arrival to departure.
- To ensure the sustainability of program delivery the principal ensures that all staff are engaged in strategic decision-making and supported through appropriate professional learning. Staff have engaged with the development and refining of the SEPTA tool and in the integration of SMART targets into ITPs. While the principal provides strong leadership it was evident during discussions with staff that they are empowered to contribute to the decision-making process and to setting strategic goals for the centre.

Areas of strength

- Strong leadership that empowers staff and parents to participate fully in the delivery of an education that meets student needs.
- The development and integration of SEPTA as an innovative tool for the collection and analysis of data in order to inform practice.

Resourcing and Support

How well has the centre established systems to monitor and review the allocation of resources to meet strategic and operational priorities?

Findings

- The original 2015–2017 Business Plan was revised in 2016 to address changes in the student cohort and more clearly define the future direction for the centre. An annual review of the plan has been established as a priority to ensure its continued relevance and to assess the programs against its goals.
- The evaluation of the revised plan prepared for the review linked priorities to the requirements of the DPA and the recommendations of the 2014 independent review. Measures of achievement and sources of evidence have been identified for each component with the outcome of the evaluation linked to future planning. An annual operational plan links targets and strategies to financial resources and staffing profiles.
- The appointment of a transition and workplace learning coordinator during 2016 provided support to students through focused transition planning. A workplace learning assistant was also appointed to provide additional support in site management.
- Workforce deployment is critical to the delivery of the teaching and learning program. This can present challenges for the centre as its enrolment covers only Year 11 and Year 12 together with a limited number of students who qualify for Year 13. Staffing at the centre is based on supporting teachers with Level 3 teaching assistants to facilitate the differentiation essential within the classroom. To enhance program delivery teachers have completed the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The centre has also accessed the mechanism of applying to the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia for a Limited Authority to Teach for two Education Assistants with VET responsibilities to strengthen the staffing profile.
- The centre has established an effective mechanism to plan programs to meet the needs of each student. Long-term partnerships have been developed with local businesses and government agencies to ensure that the workplace learning essential to transition from the centre is available for all students. The transition and workplace learning coordinator and the workplace learning assistant are mindful of the need to support existing employers and to engage additional local businesses in order to increase the availability of appropriate placements.

- The centre's finances are prudently managed and have supported the development of the art room, which incorporates facilities for art therapy and the workshop. Areas identified for ongoing development include the creation of a sensory room, appropriate storage for centre vehicles and equipment used in the cadet program. Ongoing professional learning for staff continues to be a priority as are partnerships to deliver quality programs.

Areas of strength

- The relationships with workplace providers and the community which ensure effective workplace and community-based learning opportunities for students.
- The effective use of resources, both human and financial, to enhance the teaching and learning opportunities on and off campus.

School Board

How effective has the board been in carrying out its functions, roles and responsibilities?

Findings

- The board comprises nine community members, four staff including the principal and one parent. An increase in parents is being actively sought though this has been difficult in part because a significant number of families live some distance from the centre.
- Minutes of the board confirmed that meetings were well organised and included a wide range of discussion topics. Recently it has been decided to increase the number of meetings from termly to monthly to allow for more in-depth discussion on important issues.
- The principal has reported on centre performance to the board with the intention that this will become more regular in the future. Endorsements of the DPA, business plan, budget and annual report have been completed. In the self-review documentation, it has been acknowledged that there is room for improvement in keeping the board informed of centre performance. The substantive appointment of the acting principal is likely to facilitate this.
- Board members confirmed that in recent times more attention has been given to progress towards the business plan targets and requirements of the DPA. The intention of the board is to become more focused on meeting these responsibilities in the future.
- It was clear to the reviewers that the board members support the initiative to continue to investigate strategies for developing an enhanced information system thereby facilitating informed decisions on school improvement. It is the intention of the board to develop an effective annual reporting schedule to ensure its contribution to the self-review process is rigorous. This will include a greater involvement in the development of an effective 2018–2020 Business Plan.
- The board has considered the recommendations of the previous review and promoted change. It has been acknowledged in reflections that there is still some progress to be made in ensuring that everyone is aware of the responsibilities of a board member.
- Board members have made use of the induction package which is available and a new member has attended the required training. The board recognised that this

was an area for improvement as was the need to provide informal opportunities for members to get to know each other.

- The board is seeking a more reliable tool to gauge its effectiveness. To date a self-review of the board's operations has not been completed; however, the intention is to do this once a more suitable measure is available.
- The board will continue the effort to raise its profile within the centre and community. While opportunities to do this have been taken (e.g. classroom visits) it is acknowledged that this could be increased.
- Board members are committed to their role and keen to fulfil the required responsibilities. The reviewers are confident that with this and a greater understanding of the DPA and involvement in developing the new business plan, governance procedures will be enhanced.

Area of strength

- The board consists of a committed group of members who are keen to play an important role in the centre's intention to implement further improvements to enhance the opportunities for the students.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the awareness of the board within the community.
- Increasing the involvement of the board in the analysis of the centre's progress.
- Ensuring greater involvement in the development of the new business plan.
- Enhancing members' understanding and awareness of the board's governance responsibilities.
- Proactively encouraging more parents to become members.

Conclusion

John Tonkin College Education Support Centre provides educational opportunities for students in Year 11 and Year 12 with intellectual, physical, psychological and social disabilities.

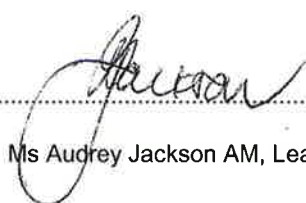
The centre has established programs to support its goal of empowering students in their transition from school to further learning, the workplace and the community. The ITP for each student is developed through a cooperative process which engages parents and caregivers.

Key to the ITPs are structured learning programs in the workplace and the community. It is evident that the links the centre has established with local businesses and community organisations are both well established and strongly supported.

Declaration

We confirm the information provided is, to the best of our knowledge, true and correct, based on the verification of the evidence provided by John Tonkin College Education Support Centre for the Department of Education Services' Independent review.

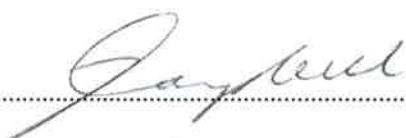
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Ms Audrey Jackson AM, Lead Reviewer

13 June 2017

Date



Mr Tom Campbell, Reviewer

13 June 2017

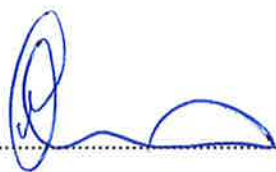
Date



Ms Eirlys Ingram, Reviewer

13 June 2017

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

20/6/17

Date