Grafton High School
Annual School Report

2011
Our school at a glance

Students
Overall student enrolment in 2011 was only slightly increased from 2010. Increasing enrolments in year 7 and enrolment trends from local primary schools would seem to indicate that overall enrolment will increase slightly in the future. Student attendance rates are slightly below region and below state. However, retention rates from School Certificate to HSC are well above region and state.

Staff
The school had an entitlement of 69.7 teaching positions in 2011. All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools and regularly participate in professional learning activities.

Student achievement in 2011

NAPLAN Year 7
In all aspects of literacy and numeracy testing school mean scores were consistent with results for similar school groups and the state as a whole. Generally, the proportion of students in the bottom, middle and second top achievement bands was greater than that for the rest of the state with a corresponding lower proportion of students achieving in the top band. The exceptions to this were Reading and Writing where there were a lower proportion of students achieving in the top two bands.

NAPLAN Year 9
In all aspects of literacy and numeracy testing school mean scores were consistent with results for similar school groups. However, mean results were below state averages in all aspects. In particular, results indicated students experienced difficulties in the writing aspect of NAPLAN with 64.9% of students achieving at or above minimum standard in this aspect. In all aspects the subsequent proportion of students in the bottom and middle achievement bands was greater than that for the rest of the state with a corresponding lower proportion of students achieving in the top two bands. The school review into English and Mathematics key learning areas has recommended strategies to address these issues and these strategies have been incorporated into the 2012-2014 school plan.

ESSA
The change from a written test to an online test in 2011 has necessitated a change in the reporting scale for ESSA results. This means that 2011 data cannot be directly compared with data from previous years. In 2011, the mean performance of students was equivalent to the mean for the rest of the North Coast but was below the state mean overall. In the area of “Working Scientifically” student mean performance was equivalent to the state. Students appeared to generally have greater difficulty with extended response questions when compared to the rest of the state.

School Certificate
2011 was the final year for external testing for the School Certificate credential. In 2012, this process will be replaced by the Record of School Achievement (ROSA).

Average results in English, Mathematics, Science and Australian History, Civics and Citizenship were essentially consistent with state and similar school group results. However, results are clustered around the middle achievement bands with a reduced percentage of students achieving in top two bands in all areas.

Higher School Certificate
Results for 2011 were generally consistent with previous years. Average results for VET Primary Industries, Biology, Ancient History and History Extension were slightly above state average. The percentage of students achieving in the top two performance bands in VET Primary Industries, PDHPE and Ancient History were slightly above state average. The percentage of students achieving in the top two performance bands in Biology and History Extension were significantly above state average, with all of the ten students studying History Extension achieving in the top two bands.
Principal’s message

I started as Principal at Grafton High School at the start of term 2 in 2011. As such, I must acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the previous principal, Mr. Colin Lang, and the work done by Deputy Principal Mrs. Pauline Glasser, who relieved as principal prior to my arrival. Mrs. Glasser retired half way through the year with her contribution to public education acknowledged through her receiving a Regional Directors award. 2011 was also the final year of service for Mrs. Suzanne Campbell (English). Mrs. Campbell was instrumental in the running of the SRC during 2011.

During 2011 there have been numerous exceptional achievements within the Grafton High School community. The school has maintained a focus on classroom learning and high expectations. Our 2011 HSC results reflected this emphasis, with 80 bands 5 and 6 awarded across our students and 20 students scoring at least 85% in one or more courses. Notable high achievers were Emily Hansell (5 results at or above 85%), Honae Cuffe (4 results at or above 85%), and Tegan Morgan (3 results at or above 85%). Overall achievement was pleasing with a greater proportion of students receiving the top bands 5 and 6 results than compared to the rest of the state in History Extension, Biology, VET Primary Industries, PDHPE and Ancient History.

Whilst I am impressed with these results and acknowledge the work that has been put in by students, their parents and staff, I am also impressed with the way in which so many of our students have so keenly undertaken extracurricular activities and competition in academic, sporting and creative and performing arts.

For example, Fraser Hemphill, year 12, was selected to represent Australia at an International Science Forum in London. In the sporting arena we saw a number of students represent the school, our region, our state and even our country. Cameron Kitcher, Emily Durrington and Simon Pearce all received North Coast Combined High Schools Sports Association awards. Cameron received both a region and a state “Blue” for rowing and was also awarded the male sportsperson of the year for North Coast Region. We also had a number of state champion teams and finalists across a diverse range of sports. In the creative Arts, year 11 student Zac Bromell was one of only 16 finalists in the 2011 Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize, from a total of over 122,000 entries nationally.

One example of our collective success is the more than 150 Grafton High School students who participated in the CBA Maths Challenge. With 442,065 students competing we still managed to score 5th highest school in NSW and 9th highest in Australia! Ben Zietsch, year 8, was placed 1st in NSW and 7th in Australia. Our year 8 selective class was the 3rd highest in NSW and 7th in Australia.

A number of programs were introduced in 2011 to support our students. This included the employment of teacher mentors to support students across all years in completing their work and assignments, as well as the establishment of a “learning loft” in the library to support our senior students.

A student leadership group was also established during the year to foster and support leadership amongst our junior students. Twelve year 7 and 8 student leaders from Grafton High School attended the launch of the Grafton Community of Schools Student Leadership Forum, together with student leaders in years 5 – 8 from Westlawn PS, Grafton PS, South Grafton PS, Gillwinga PS and South Grafton HS.

Staff of Grafton High have also continued to take on leadership of many other valuable programs within the school: Premier’s Sporting Challenge, Premier’s Student Volunteering Awards,
RoadWhyz, SRC, Peer Tutoring, QuickSmart, Peer Support, GHS Centenary Planning, Sister Speak and Environment Committee are all examples of staff working to create better opportunities for students at Grafton High. The variety of educational initiatives that so many of the staff of Grafton High School have engaged in within our community of schools, at regional, state and even national level puts our school at the leading edge of teaching and learning. I thank all of those staff, parents and members of the community who have supported these initiatives, often going well beyond what is expected of them in order to maximize the opportunities and support available for our students.

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.

Peter South, Principal

P & C message

We, as the Grafton High School P & C Association are proud to reflect on the progress and achievements throughout the school over the last year.

The redevelopment of the canteen facilities has been carried out with a modern, clean area with electronic registers introduced which is an enhanced environment for all of our school community.

The canteen, under the supervision of Jenny Sneesby and Nolene Chevalley has introduced several new ideas which have been readily accepted by the school community. This is a credit to them and we, the P & C are thankful to them for their efforts.

The hard work and effort of the Debutante Ball committee must be acknowledged as they staged a memorable event, with the 2011 event held in the “Barn” at the Grafton Showground, all of the debutantes looked gorgeous and their partners very smart throughout the proceedings and with the staging of next year’s event well under way at the time of writing, another memorable event is anticipated.

On behalf of the P & C, I welcome Mr Peter South as the new Principal to Grafton High School, with fresh ideas and a vision for the future as well as family links to the school history, I feel that he will lead the school onwards into the future.

The School turns 100 years old next year and there will be Centenary Celebrations over the Easter weekend in 2012. This should be a great opportunity to reunite with old school friends and catch up and see how the school has developed and changed over the years.

I must thank the entire P & C Association for their support throughout the year and especially the executive for their dedication.

We are in need of fresh new faces to join our group on the P & C Association. This is a way of having your say in the school community and keeping up to date with the school community as a whole within a friendly group. Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month in the staff common room at the school. Contact the school office or any P & C member for more information or just come along, you’ll be more than welcome.

Don Morgan, P&C President

Student representative’s message

The Grafton High School Student Representative Council contains 35 students from Years 7 -12. SRC aims to enhance both the physical and social aspects of the school environment. We are involved in organising school Disco’s, fundraising ventures (which allowed us to sponsor a World Vision Child), the purchase of different things needed for our school community and providing support to students representing the school at a national and international level. In 2011 we supported Jeans for Genes Day, Crazy Hair and All Black Day (NZ earthquake victims). SRC assisted in maintaining a positive public image by involving themselves in community events such
as Anzac Day, school captains attending a Leadership Day at Parliament House and Relay for Life.

Above: SRC reps running Remembrance Day assembly

Helen Chivers, SRC Coordinator

School context

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

Overall student enrolment in 2011 was only slightly increased from 2010. Impacts from the raising of the school leaving age and increased enrolments in junior years moving through into senior years should see these figures increase slightly over the next few years. It should be noted that year 9 in 2011 was significantly smaller than other year groups at only 130 students and as this year group moves through senior years beyond 2012 this will impact on senior enrolment and enrolment overall.

Student attendance profile

Average student attendance rates for 2011 were slightly below rates for the North Coast and the state. Attendance rates for years 7 to 9 are similar to region and state, however, it must be noted that as the new school leaving age has been phased in over the last two years there has been a marked decrease in attendance rates for years 10, 11 and 12. These rates have skewed the school average attendance rate. This data must be analysed in the light of much greater retention rates from years 10 to 12 than the rest of the region and state, which may be partly attributed to local factors such as high unemployment. Under the legislation of the new school leaving age students without employment are required to stay at school until they are 17 years of age. In this context, the engagement of this group of students is a particular local issue impacting on attendance and academic performance which the school needs to continue to address.
Management of non-attendance

Systems have been put in place to routinely contact parents when students have unexplained absences. From term 3 of 2011 onwards SMS messaging was used to notify all parents of unexplained student absence each day. This replaced a partial messaging and paper-based letter system. Initial response indicates that this has resulted in greater contact back to the school to explain absences as well as the quick identification of any errors in attendance monitoring. Attendance is also included in all academic reports.

Student attendance is managed as a student welfare issue. Year Advisers and the Head Teachers (Student Welfare) follow up with individual students and provide appropriate support. Referrals are also made to the Home School Liaison Officer where necessary. A number of welfare programs are used to assist this process, such as the federal government’s “No School – No Play” initiative, which the school participated in throughout 2011.

Retention to Year 12

The retention rate of students from years 10 to 12 has continued to increase at a greater rate than other Clarence valley schools and the rest of the state. This can be attributed to a number of factors as the impacts of the new school leaving age start to take effect. The economic downturn and higher unemployment has contributed overall to a greater number of students staying on to complete year 12. In addition, the school has also continued to provide a broad range of relevant vocational education options for all students, including CareerLink and the highly successful Pathways program. Through a shared senior curriculum with South Grafton High School and a flexible timetable that allows students to study units at TAFE, the school has been able to maintain a very broad curriculum offering that caters for a number of educational and vocational pathways to meet the diverse needs of students. In 2011, every year 10 student was specially interviewed and counseled as part of the year 11 subject selection process.

Post-school destinations

With the new school leaving age of 17 the majority of students completing Year 10 in 2011 returned to continue enrolment at Grafton High School with a view to completing the Higher School Certificate.

Of the 123 students who completed their HSC in 2011, 44 students were offered university placements in NSW and approximately 25 students went on to TAFE and other training providers. The majority of the remainder of students have since gained significant employment.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

In 2011, 41 students completed a vocational course at Grafton High School and 26 students completed a vocational course through TAFE. In total, 67 of the 127 students (53%) enrolled in year 12 studied at least one vocational course.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

Of the 127 students enrolled in year 12 in 2011, 123 (97%) met requirements for the award of the High School Certificate. In addition, 4 students have elected to undertake their HSC over more
than one year and are back in 2012 to complete their studies.

**Staff information**

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

**Staff establishment**

<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>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Moderate Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Severe Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Multi-categorical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Adviser</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>91.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.

At Grafton High School a full time Aboriginal Education Officer provides additional support for our indigenous students. As a result of participation in an affirmative action program the school has an Aboriginal person employed as a full time member of the administration team. In addition, a number of Indigenous persons were employed as tutors on a temporary basis as part of the Norta Norta program to support Indigenous students.

**Staff retention**

The retention rate of staff at Grafton High School remains high. In 2011 there was one transfer of a non-teaching position and three teacher retirements.

**Teacher qualifications**

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

**Qualifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
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**Financial summary**

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

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<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>509845.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>372318.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>56731.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>56869.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>2105008.07</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher &amp; learning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>139537.42</td>
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<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>13496.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
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<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
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<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>67295.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>1478383.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td>626624.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Included in tied funds is a grant from the NSW government to be matched by funds raised within the school community to construct a gym facility for use by PDHPE and sport programs.

A full copy of the school’s 2011 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the P&C. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2011**

Grafton High School strives to challenge students to excel across a broad range of curriculum areas as well as through extra-curricular activities.
Achievements

Arts

In the visual arts we were lucky enough to be involved in the “Towards the Stratosphere” program. With the support of artists and gallery staff, more than 100 students from across the 6 participating schools worked on a collaborative art project which then went on special exhibition at the Grafton Regional Gallery.

![Students working on the “Towards the Stratosphere” artwork.](image)

The school hosted Grafton Artsfest for the final time and our students were awarded scholarships to attend workshops where highly qualified tutors shared their knowledge and skills.

In the area of performing arts students were successfully involved in a number of competitions and performances. A dedicated team of staff and students worked tirelessly to present the musical The Min Min, in collaboration with staff and students from South Grafton High School. The standard of the production was a tribute to the talent and commitment of all involved.

![Students performing in the Education Week Flash Mob at Grafton Shopping World.](image)

Our students were part of the outstanding Education Week Flash Mob performance at shopping world, involving students from across the Grafton Community of Schools. Grafton High School students also participated in the Schools Spectacular Aboriginal Dance Ensemble.

In the literary arts, community support for student excellence is fostered through the annual Sheila Mears scholarship and this year saw a high standard of competition in both short story writing and poetry.

Sport

CHS Sport

Grafton High School has an exceptional record in North Coast sport and is arguably one of the strongest sporting schools in the State. The schools results in 2011 include:

- Squash – Boys (State Champions)
- Squash – Girls (State runners up)
- Tennis – Girls (State runners up)

![Our state champion squash team and coach Mr. Butcher.](image)

North Coast Champions

- Open Rugby League
- Tennis – Boys
- Open Hockey - Boys
- Open Hockey – Girls
- U15s Rugby Union

![Above: Students performing in the Education Week Flash Mob at Grafton Shopping World.](image)

Additionally, we performed extremely well in a number of other sports. Most notably, we were Northern NSW champions in the Vikings Fusal
titles and 13 GHS students were selected to play for the Northern NSW Vikings under 15s and under 19s Boys squads.

Grafton High School also competed in the Interschool Equestrian Challenge with over 200 riders from 50 different schools. We were the highest point score secondary school with Harley Brown receiving highest point score senior student, Leah Kilner receiving Champion rider.

These results do not include the outstanding performances of individual athletes in Swimming, Athletics, Cross Country and Rowing.

Of particular note is the individual Success of Cameron Kitcher, Emily Durrington and Simon Pearce, who all received North Coast Combined High Schools Sports Association awards. Emily received a recognition award for netball and Simon received a special “Citation” award for ten pin bowling. Cameron received both a region and a state “Blue” for rowing and was also awarded the male sportsperson of the year for North Coast Region.

Above: Our champion equestrian team.

School Sport

Sport is a mandatory component of the School Certificate. It is not formally assessed, however, active participation is required. Years 9 and 10 participate in a common sporting program on Wednesday afternoons and years 7 and 8 participate in a scattered sport program. Each year 7 and 8 cohort is divided into two groups and each half of the year attends sport at different times during the week. This organisation makes best use of the teaching staff and the facilities. Each sport group has a specific sport program that takes into account student preferences, available facilities and the expertise of the staff.

Debating and Public Speaking

In 2011 Grafton High School commenced the year with four teams in the Premiers Debating challenge, a state wide competition for public school students. All teams performed well with varying degrees of success. An outstanding performance overall by the experienced year 8, red team saw them make it through, undefeated, to the North Coast zone finals.

We also had some keen public speakers commit to the NAIDOC week competition held at Grafton Primary School, part of the Community of Schools program. Both group and individual speakers performed well taking out awards in both sections.

Above: NAIDOC week public speaking competition.

Grafton High School was also successful with students winning awards in the Lions Youth of the Year public speaking competition.

Academic

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.

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

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

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

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7**

In 2011 the average for the school in all aspects of Literacy was significantly better than similar schools. Our school had a lower percentage of students achieving the highest band (band 9) when compared to the state but had a significantly higher percentage of students achieving bands 8-9 than similar schools. The overall pattern of student achievement in 2011 for our school was superior to the similar school group in all test aspects.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7
In 2011 the average for the school in Numeracy was significantly better than similar schools. Our school had a significantly higher percentage of students achieving the highest bands (bands 8 and 9) when compared to similar school and a higher proportion of students achieving band 8 compared to the state.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9
In 2011 the average for the school in Writing and Spelling was less than similar schools and in Reading and Grammar & Punctuation equivalent or slightly better than similar schools. In all test aspects average student performance was below the state mean. Our school had a higher percentage of students achieving the highest band (band 10) when compared to similar schools in Reading and Grammar & Punctuation. Writing was the weakest area of overall performance when compared to state and similar schools.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

In 2011 the average for the school in Numeracy was equivalent to similar schools. Our school had a similar percentage of students achieving in the top two bands in Numeracy when compared to similar schools.

School Certificate

School Certificate achievement in 2011 continued the very positive trend from previous years with all areas achieving mean results approximately equivalent to both similar schools and the rest of the state.

The percentage of our students achieving in the top 2 bands (bands 5-6) is higher than or equivalent to similar schools in all academic subject areas. When compared to state averages our students are under-represented in band 6 in all subjects except History in which the percentage of students in bands 5 and 6 is similar to state. Mathematics and Computing Skills had a significantly lower percentage of students achieving the top band when compared to state. No student achieved a band 6 in English in 2011.
Percentage of students in performance bands:

- **School Certificate English**
- **School Certificate Mathematics**
- **School Certificate Science**
- **Australian History, Civics and Citizenship**

**School Average 2007-2011**
- SSG % in Band 2011
- State DEC % in Band 2011
School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

The value added performance for the 2011 cohort is better than similar schools in Science and History. Value added data shows that performance in English, Mathematics and Computing Skills for this cohort of students was worse than previous years and similar school groups. It should be noted that the school underwent a review in English and Mathematics in 2011 and the recommendations from this review have been incorporated into future planning.

Higher School Certificate

The charts below show average student achievement in the 2011 Higher School Certificate exams for courses with larger numbers of students. Results for 2010 generally compare favourably with the school average for the past five years and state average results. In 2011 our HSC students achieved results above state average in VET Primary Industries, Biology, Ancient History and History Extension.

The percentage of students achieving in the top two performance bands in VET Primary Industries, PDHPE and Ancient History were slightly above state average. The percentage of students achieving in the top two performance bands in Biology and History Extension were significantly above state average, with all of the ten students studying History Extension achieving in the top two bands.

Results in English (Standard), Food Technology, Industrial Technology, Legal Studies, General Mathematics and Mathematics were below state average and below the school’s five year average.
Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

The pattern of value-added performance in 2011 was disappointing for bottom and middle performance groups. However, there was improvement in value-added data for higher band students when compared to the school average for the last 5 years.
Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Year 7 Percentage</th>
<th>Year 9 Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual learning plans and intensive support is provided for those Year 7 students not achieving at minimum standards. The Quicksmart program provides effective targeted support in numeracy. The Multilit program provides effective targeted support in Literacy.

The number of students achieving at or above minimum standards in Writing and Grammar & Punctuation was significantly less than previous years and has been addressed in the 2012 – 2014 school plan based on recommendations from the 2011 school review.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

In 2011 the school undertook a number of initiatives in support of Aboriginal education.

Seventeen tutors were employed through the Norta Norta program to give individual support for twenty five year 11 and eight year 12 students. Two School Learning Support Officers were employed to work with eight year 8 and three year 10 students.

A number of students participated in the highly successful “Fresh Start” program, participating in a number of enterprise learning events throughout the year. Grafton High School won the “Local Food Challenge” and were featured in the summer edition of “Sample Magazine”.

A group of Aboriginal students also performed to great acclaim at the Schools Spectacular in Sydney as part of an Aboriginal dance ensemble.

Working within the Grafton Community of Schools, students participated in a number of special activities during NAIDOC week including a smoking ceremony, art and public speaking competitions and a traditional sports day. Students also participated in a number of other programs during the year, including “Deadly
Days”, “V-Tracks” and “It’s Your Choice, Have a Voice”.

The senior Aboriginal Studies class also participated in a special project that involved engaging with local Aboriginal community members and culminated in a special forum held at the school in which students were able to hear from and ask questions of a variety of community members.

Multicultural education

Year 7 students are explicitly taught values of tolerance and acceptance of individual differences through the Thinking Skills program which is taught for two hours per week. In addition all Year 7 and 8 students are immersed in cultural understanding as part of the Language program, which involves an introduction to languages in Year 7 followed by the study of a single language in Year 8. The school has an anti-racism contact officer to provide counsel and support to students in specific cases.

In 2011, Healthy Living – Healthy Lifestyles students were involved in research of different cultures and religions. Students participated in the Harmony Day poster competition. In 2012 students will be able to select the “Cultural Discoveries” course as part of their studies.

Connected Learning

In 2011 Grafton High School continued to enhance learning through the use of technology. Through Digital Education Revolution funding students in Years 9, 10 and 11 had individually allocated notebook computers. The school has wireless network facilities to allow network access throughout the school. A further 7 interactive whiteboards were purchased for use in classrooms and the library along with additional computers and hardware to support their use. Teachers received training in a number of technologies and further training will be a key feature of school planning from 2012 onwards.

Progress on 2011 targets

Target 1

Increase the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to completion of Year 12 from 65% to 70%

Our achievements include:

- Students who commenced Year 11 in 2010 achieved a retention rate of 75% by the end of Year 12 in 2011
- In the last 2 years the retention rate in Year 11 has risen from 81% to 85% and in year 12 from 88% to 93%.
- Notably in 2011 substantially less senior students have left on attaining 17 years of age.

Target 2

Increase the retention and engagement of Aboriginal students from Year 8 to Year 12

Our achievements include:

- Aboriginal enrolments within the school have increased from 9% in 2010 to 12% in 2011. It is encouraging to note that Year 11 has attained the school average for Aboriginal students
- Years 7 and 12 Aboriginal students have greater than the average school attendance rate. However, attendance rates for years 9, 10 and 11 were below school average.
- Aboriginal Students in Year 9 achieved better than average school growth for Grammar & Punctuation and Number, Patterns & Algebra in NAPLAN testing.

Target 3

Raise staff and student expectations of learning outcomes across Years 7-12

Our achievements include:

- School evaluation indicated that most teachers and many students are aware of the need for higher expectations of learning outcomes, explicit teaching of higher order skills and the modeling of high achievement. However, review findings indicated a lack of a whole school policy and implementation framework to ensure higher expectations. This will be addressed in future planning and review.

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2011 our
school carried out evaluations of Anti-Bullying policy and procedures and a school review into the Mathematics and English curriculum areas.

Educational and management practice

A current Educational Policy and practices evaluation was conducted for the area of Anti-bullying at Grafton High School at the conclusion of 2011. This evaluation was conducted by Welfare team personnel.

Background

Grafton High School has, throughout 2011, experienced an increase in bullying-related behaviours. Student disciplinary action as a result of these behaviours was a concern for teaching staff, students and carers. The links between bullying and the use of social media by the student population is also an identified issue.

Findings and conclusions

Direct links drawn with student interaction at school and related social media is high. Bullying actions using this social media was found to be of an increasing nature. The impact of bullying behaviours on individuals is anecdotally concluded to be greater. Based on RISC and suspension data, student disciplinary action resulting from bullying behaviours has increased significantly.

Future directions

An Anti-bullying Policy restructure is to occur in early 2012 to focus on student behaviours relating to the use of social media and associated bullying of individuals. Staff training is to occur on management of student bullying using social media.

Curriculum

In August of 2011 Grafton High School participated in a school program review in the curriculum areas of English and Mathematics. This review involved an external review team reviewing school policies and procedures, observing classroom practice and interviewing staff, students and parents. An extensive report was produced which is presented in summary form below.

Background

While it is acknowledged that the school has investigated and trialed a range of initiatives to improve the performance of students, State and National literacy and numeracy tests in recent years have highlighted some areas in which the school was underperforming. In particular, the growth or value adding from Years 7 to 9 in both literacy and numeracy and Years 10 to 12 in English and Mathematics subjects were causing concern.

The terms of reference for the review were to review, report on and make recommendations about:

- the implementation of relevant and meaningful curriculum in English and Mathematics based on NSW Board of Studies syllabus requirements
- the regular use of data as a basis for planning English and mathematics teaching, learning and assessment for Years 7-12
- the use of quality teaching principles in teaching and learning programs with a focus on planning, programming and registration processes
- teaching and learning practice to cater for and support higher achieving students

Findings and conclusions

The review team found that:

- while there is a genuine willingness among staff to deliver curriculum which is relevant and meaningful, there is a need to develop programming and registration which better reflects a progression of student understanding.
- the school is making genuine progress in terms of providing clear and appropriate pathways to senior study.
- While assessment tasks are well-managed in the sense of efficient co-ordination and record-keeping, key assessment structures were lacking in purpose and efficiency.
- the current system of determining levels of achievement in reports is not reflective of external standards and outcome indicators.
- faculties were not using data analysis as a tool to develop specific focus areas which
could then be used to adjust programs for teaching and assessment practices.

- although some use of data is being accessed by members of the executive, this is being used mostly to report on faculty results and not to reflect on individual student results. Individual teachers are not using data to analyse the results of students in their classes and therefore data is not used to drive teaching programs.

- There is a general level of satisfaction by students and parents with the teaching and learning at Grafton High School. The school provides a caring and supportive learning environment, and fosters strong relationships between students and staff.

- While it is evident that both faculties put a lot of time and effort into programming, it does not link to the school plan, or to the Quality Teaching framework.

- There are some attempts being made to provide students with a variety of teaching approaches and strategies, including the use of technology, however the approach is not consistent and sustained.

- The faculties do not implement a consistent approach to providing homework. There is a disconnection between homework and class work and some parents want to see homework tasks consolidate and extend their child’s skill development.

- Differentiated programs and teaching strategies which foster high expectations of all students, particularly for the selective students, are not evident.

- Explicit teaching and modeling of excellence to motivate, engage and challenge students to achieve their potential is not consistently applied across the faculties.

- Student absenteeism and lateness to class is a key concern, especially in Stage 6, and this has significantly impacted on both the teaching and learning sequence.

- It is evident that the school is supporting higher achieving students through its selective classes in Years 7 and 8 and through the Gold and Silver streamed classes in Years 7 to 10. There is, however, an inconsistent application of the DEC Gifted and Talented policy across the school, where current procedures and implementation guidelines are not explicitly stated within its own policy.

- There was a lack of clear understanding about the selection procedures and processes for the self-select classes by parents and teachers.

- The success of the selective class program relies on the skill of individual teachers rather than a coordinated program.

- A lack of ongoing whole school professional learning has led to inconsistent practices in identification, planning, programming and the uses of engaging classroom strategies to cater for high achieving students.

**Future directions**

Review Team recommendations:

- That both the English and Mathematics faculties, in collaboration with regional consultancy personnel, evaluate their scope and sequence and program documents so that topics are current, engaging and include a schedule of high quality assessment tasks directly linked to NSW Board of Studies syllabus outcomes.

- That faculties and the executive work collaboratively to revise assessment procedures in order to provide clear and meaningful feedback to students and parents, and to ensure more appropriate scheduling of tasks.

- That the executive team, in consultation with faculties, develops a more appropriate system for determining levels of achievement in student assessments and reports. This should be reflective of Board of Studies course descriptors.

- That each faculty, with the support of regional personnel, engage in a program of professional learning that focuses on the use of NAPLAN, School Certificate and Higher School Certificate data to guide teaching, learning and assessment processes. Each faculty then uses these data sets, as well as in-school data, to inform both faculty and individual staff planning, programming, assessment and evaluation and ensure all are clearly evident in documentation.
• That both the English and Mathematics faculties actively incorporate a variety of approaches to teaching and learning to more consistently engage and challenge students.

• That English and Mathematics teachers more consistently and explicitly teach the skills necessary for Band 5 and 6 School Certificate and HSC achievement in order to develop a consistent expectation of excellence in their students.

• That the school identify a member of the school executive to lead the development of a whole school Gifted and Talented policy to guide processes of identification, placements and program differentiation for full faculty implementation.

• That each faculty engages in a program of professional learning, supported by members of the regional consultancy team, to develop teachers’ skills and knowledge in identification, acceleration, enrichment and extension of gifted, talented and higher achieving students.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2010 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are represented in both of the major evaluations reported above.

Professional learning

Through school development days, faculty groups and individual mentoring all teaching staff participated in training and development activities focused on quality teaching in the classroom. Features of professional learning in 2011 were shared development activities with all staff from our community of schools.

All staff received training in Occupational Health and Safety, Child Protection Procedures and the Staff Code of Conduct.

New executive staff also participated in regional and state induction courses and 2 support staff participated in the “Emerging SAM toolkit” training program for aspiring School Administrative Managers.

The average expenditure per staff member on professional learning in 2010 was $912.

School planning 2012—2014

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents. Note that strategies listed below are in summary form. Please see the full school plan for further detail.

Curriculum and Assessment

Outcome for 2012–2014

All teaching programs, assessment and reporting practice consistently meet the needs of all students.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• Increase in the percentage of teachers who indicate on the “Quality Teaching Staff Survey” that they “mostly” or “always” demonstrate quality teaching practice from 73% to 77%.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Targeted professional learning.

• Use the Quality Teaching Framework to develop quality differentiated programs and associated assessment tasks aligned to 7 – 12 Syllabuses

• Develop whole-school policies and standards for programming, lesson planning and assessment.

• Develop a single school policy and procedures for consistently reporting levels of achievement reflective of achievement rather than distribution of scores.

• Undertake a faculty evaluation of curriculum planning and delivery using the Educational Support Team (EST) process to support the process of continual school improvement in this area.

Engagement and Attainment

Outcome for 2012–2014
All students are engaged in a broad and differentiated curriculum that maximises their achievement through the use of quality teaching.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- Increase the percentage of HSC courses performing at or above state average from 47% to 59%.
- Increase the percentage of students who achieve a band 5 or 6 in the HSC from 18% to 21%.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Targeted professional learning.
- Expand participation in Rock and Water and other programs to support student behaviour and personal development.
- Implement the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program.
- Maintain and enhance merit, performance and recognition opportunities for all students.
- Revise and maintain processes for attendance monitoring and referral through liaison with DEC support personnel and outside agencies.
- Review school Gifted and Talented policy and procedures.
- Promote the use of explicit higher order tasks and modeling to promote high expectations and support student achievement.
- Participate in a number of initiatives and programs to support and further develop higher achieving students.
- Further develop and implement programs and procedures to support senior students.

Literacy and Numeracy

Outcome for 2012–2014
Individual growth in the development of literacy and numeracy skills is maximised so that all students can achieve their potential.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- Increase the percentage of students achieving greater than or equal to expected growth in Year 9 NAPLAN Grammar and Punctuation from 34% to 39%.
- Increase the percentage of students achieving greater than or equal to expected growth in Year 9 NAPLAN Numeracy from 41% to 45%.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Targeted professional learning.
- Formalise teams across to create, implement and regularly evaluate a relevant scope and sequence that demonstrates Literacy and Numeracy skill and knowledge building.
- Continue implementation of targeted programs to support student literacy and numeracy skill development including “QuickSmart” and “Multilit”.

Aboriginal Education

Outcome for 2012–2014
Through improved attendance at school all Aboriginal students are able to engage in meaningful learning experiences to maximise their achievement.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- Increase the percentage of Aboriginal students with greater than 85% attendance from 24% to 32%.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Targeted professional learning.
- Engage both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students in cultural experiences and excursions such as gala and sports days, visits to local sites, etc.
- Targeted program to engage with Aboriginal students, parents and community members with a focus on improving student attendance.
- Provide targeted support for Aboriginal students through maintenance of personalised learning plans and mentoring and tutorial support.

Leadership and Management

Outcome for 2012–2014
Increase the leadership capacity and density of staff at all levels

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Increase in the percentage of teachers who indicate on the “Leadership Development Questionnaire” that they “usually” or “always” demonstrate key leadership capabilities from 73% to 77%.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Targeted professional learning and induction.
- Establish and implement consistent procedures to ensure that all staff develop and maintain their own personalised professional learning plan.
- Develop and maintain induction and support programs for casual staff, new scheme teachers, executive and support staff – incorporating regional and state support and induction programs.

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.

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