

Peer Review Report Summary

Executive Summary

School Context

Boort District P-12 School is located in Boort, a small town in Victoria approximately 100 kilometres north of Bendigo. Agriculture is the major industry and employer in the region along with retail, olive processing and tourism.

The school has existed since 2012 when the local primary and secondary schools amalgamated and a new school was built on the secondary school site. The new buildings are clustered together and include four separate units that house classrooms, administration areas and areas for arts-technology and science. Learning spaces are designed to allow flexibility for learning and opportunities for students to work together in a series of open and closed spaces. The school also retains responsibility for a building adjacent to the school that was previously used as a community centre. School grounds are expansive with several active and passive play areas suited for students of different ages. Gardens are attractive and provide a welcoming entry to the school.

Students are drawn from the Boort township and surrounding areas. The current enrolment is 223 with slightly more primary age students than secondary. Enrolments have been reasonably stable over the past four years. In most years a few students enrol at Year 7 from other settings and a similar number usually enter Year 11 after completing their education at Pyramid Hill P-10 College.

The school has had a leadership profile of a principal, two assistant principals and two leading teachers. Since opening in 2012, the school has had four principals, the first and current principals being substantive and others acting in the role. There are 28 staff members including four education support staff and six staff members on part-time work fractions. The school has a chaplain, a computer technician and an information computer technology (ICT) trainee who is shared with Charlton College. Senior students attend the trade training centre in Charlton for Year 9/10 technology, VCAL personal development and work related skills and VET subjects.

Students participate in a range of academic, cultural, and sporting events including visiting performances, drama workshops, school productions, camps and excursions, public speaking and inter-school sport. There is extensive support and resources available to the school from parents and the local community. Parents are involved in the school in a variety of ways as part of the parents association, school council and its sub-committees, as parent helpers in classrooms and the development and maintenance of school gardens. Boort organisations and businesses as well as local farmers provide placements for work experience, voluntary work programs and visits from students.

Summary of the School's Performance

2.2.1 Summary of the School's Performance against the Previous Strategic Plan

Performance is reported against the goals and targets in the School Strategic Plan 2013 -2016.

Student achievement

The school sought to improve learning for all students. Targets were partially achieved. The target to achieve 8% VCE 40+ study scores has been achieved. The school achieved 9.2% VCE 40+

scores. The second target to have 50% of students in the top two NAPLAN bands for reading and 40% for numeracy has been achieved in part. It was not achieved for NAPLAN reading (42.9%) but was achieved for NAPLAN numeracy (42.9%).

Factors that contributed to improved outcomes included the strong focus on preparing students for VCE; professional development that has focused on teacher practice as a means to improve performance in reading and writing in particular and a greater focus on data analysis to inform planning for teaching and learning.

Student engagement and wellbeing

The school strategic plan had a single goal for engagement and wellbeing. The school sought to improve student engagement and wellbeing across all levels of the school. The target for the parent survey approachability variable to be 5.34 was not achieved with the school mean at 4.6 in 2015. Similarly, the second target for the student motivation variable in the Student Attitudes to School Survey to be 4.35 was not achieved with 4.16 for Years 5-6 and 4.31 for Years 7-12 in 2015. However, the 2016 Student Attitudes to School Survey data released at the time of the review shows improved student motivation at Years 5-6 but a drop in student motivation across years 7-12.

Factors that contributed to improved student engagement and wellbeing included students working in new open plan learning spaces conducive to 21st century teaching and learning; a whole school focus on student leadership development with student roles as school captains, house captains, student council representatives and captains for sporting events from both primary and secondary; and students having had direct input into negotiating their learning, leading assemblies and taking an active role in whole school celebratory events.

Student pathways and transitions

The school sought to provide all students with successful transition and pathways into, through and beyond the school to positive post school options. The real retention target of 90% retention for Years 10-11 was achieved in 2013-2014 and in 2014-2015. It was not achieved for Years 11-12 with retention rates over that time close to 80%. The second target for the parent survey transitions variable to be at least 5.50 was not achieved. The 2015 score was 4.9.

Factors that have contributed to improved pathways and transitions included the provision of VET and VCAL programs in conjunction with the North Central Trade Training Centre in Charlton; the provision of a Managed Individual Pathways and careers program providing senior students with opportunities for work experience placements; and a well established comprehensive entry to school program for students starting Foundation.

2.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

Student achievement

The panel agreed that while there was strong performance at VCE, overall school performance could have been stronger over the strategic plan period as student outcomes were not as robust as in schools with similar enrolment characteristics. Learning growth has been above the state in reading and speaking and listening but not in writing and numeracy. Learning in numeracy, reading and spelling at Year 5-7 has shown learning growth above the state although writing and grammar and punctuation are below. At Years 7 to 9 in 2016, high learning growth was above the state in all domains apart from reading, which was at the state benchmark. In 2016, with the exception of numeracy, the NAPLAN data indicates 10-30% of students at and below the NMS in other subject areas.

In this next period of time the panel recommends the focus be on maximizing the learning growth and achievement of every student from Foundation to Year 12. Three key areas of focus were suggested. Firstly, to develop a shared understanding of best practice teaching and learning and

build teacher capacity through structured professional learning, coaching, peer observation, feedback and reflection. Secondly, to develop and implement a consistent whole school approach to teaching and learning based on accurate assessment of student ability to inform the delivery of a differentiated curriculum. And thirdly, to develop a whole school culture of open communication and provide opportunities for distributed leadership across the school.

The panel also suggested there was further work to do in developing a shared vision and whole school understanding of best practice teaching and learning that underpins all curriculum planning and developing an agreed model of pedagogy to be used in all classes. An immediate consideration will be the auditing and developing of curriculum aligned to the Victorian Curriculum.

Student engagement

The review panel found that the school had not met the shared targets for student engagement and wellbeing and that there was scope to strengthen engagement. Parents expressed concerns regarding the need for greater enrichment and stretch for some students and specialized intervention for some. Students expressed pride in their school, a desire to do well and satisfaction that their opinions were heard. They showed maturity in understanding the complexities of their school following amalgamation.

In this next period of time the recommended focus is on maximizing student engagement in learning from Foundation to Year 12. Three key areas of focus were suggested. Firstly, providing a differentiated learning program that engages and motivates students and promotes student voice as they transition from Foundation to Year 12. Secondly, planning, documenting and implementing coordinated strategies to engage students and parents as partners in learning; and thirdly, reviewing, developing and implementing strategies to improve attendance.

The panel agreed that strengthening transition programs particularly as students move from one level to the next was also an area for improvement. Along with this, the regular review and monitoring of student behaviour management protocols and agreements at a whole staff level to ensure greater consistency of teacher management is suggested.

Student wellbeing

The 2016 Year 5-6 Attitudes to School Survey results indicate an upward trend in the wellbeing variables of student distress and morale. Year 7-12 survey results indicate high satisfaction with wellbeing variables above the 80th percentile.

In this next period of time the recommended focus is on building a positive and inclusive learning environment that nurtures the wellbeing of every student. Two key areas of focus were suggested. Firstly, enhancing connections between home and school by strengthening communication and secondly, exploring and developing broader community partnerships to enhance student wellbeing.

While parent involvement in the school is a feature, strengthening communication with parents and building clear protocols for parent and community involvement in school activities, is an area for improvement.

2.2.3 Next steps

Boort District P-12 School is well positioned to strengthen student learning growth, to achieve greater student engagement in learning along with connectedness to school and to improve the wellbeing of students over this next strategic plan period. Foremost will be an opportunity to develop a renewed and shared school vision and values and to build greater cohesiveness as a F-12 school community.