Emerald State High School

Executive Summary

School Improvement Unit

Queensland Government
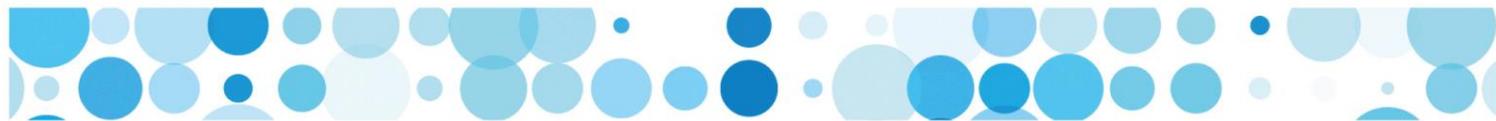
Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.
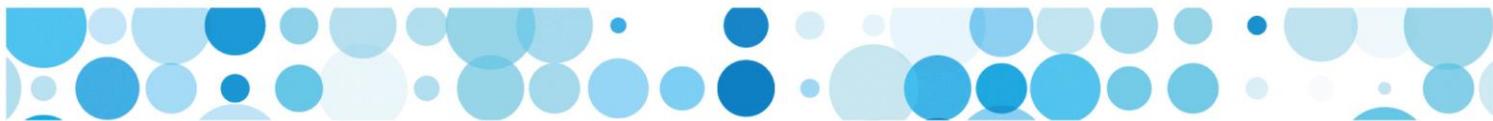
A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation. This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.

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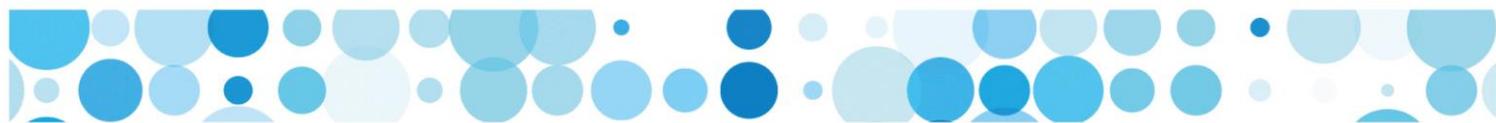
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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Emerald State High School** from **27** to **29 August 2019**.

The report presents an evaluation of the school's performance against the nine domains of the *National School Improvement Tool*. It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

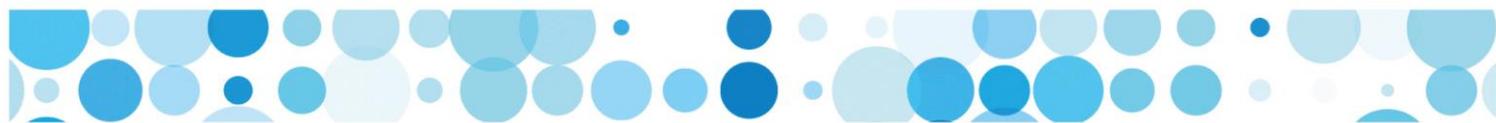For more information regarding the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU website.

1.1 Review team

Lee Goossens	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Julie-Ann McCullough	Peer reviewer
Trevor Gordon	External reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Old Airport Drive, Emerald
Education region:	Central Queensland Region
Year opened:	1969
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Enrolment:	760
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	8 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	16.7 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	964
Year principal appointed:	2019 – acting
Day 8 staffing teacher full-time equivalent (FTE):	63.08
Significant partner schools:	Emerald State School, Emerald North State School, Denison State School, Blackwater State High School, Capella State School, Clermont State High School, Springsure State School, Anakie State School, Gindie State School, Comet State School, Centre for Learning and Wellbeing (CLAW)
Significant community partnerships:	Emerald Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) Sub Branch, Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA), Emerald Hospital, Central Highlands Regional Council, Ontrack – alternate school, Japanese sister school, Emerald Neighbourhood Centre, Anglicare Central Queensland, Central Queensland Indigenous Development, CQUniversity (CQUni), Emerald Agricultural College, Scripture Union - chaplaincy, Queensland Health, Centacare, Department of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), Queensland Police Service (QPS), Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), Regional Indigenous Pathways and Partnerships Coordinator, Central Highlands Capricornia School Sport, Central Highlands Vocational

	Education and Training (VET) Network, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
Significant school programs:	Standards of Practice (SOPs), High Performing Teams (HPT), Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), Working to link Industry Schools and Enterprise (WISE) Program – School Based Traineeships (SBT) Program), careers expo, Rock and Water, RAGE, Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI), Human Powered Vehicles (HPV), debating, Glee Club, school musical, instrumental music, 'Emerald Shines' talent show, Spirit Week, Book Week, International Competition and Assessment for Schools (ICAS) tests, Queensland Association of Mathematics Teachers (QAMT) competitions, Australian Mathematics Competition, honours program, 'Elevate' Study Skills, 'Brainstorm' anti-bullying workshops, Author in Residence Program (honours students), LiteracyPlanet – honours students
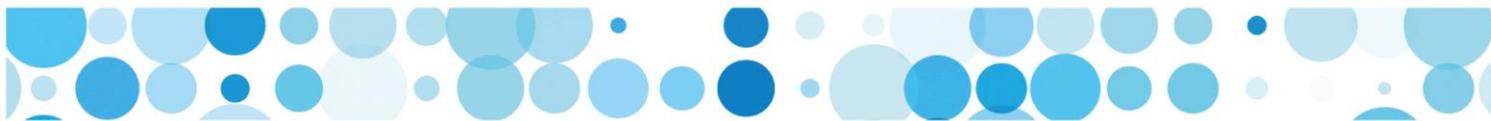
1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, four deputy principals, eight Heads of Department (HOD), Head of Special Educational Services (HOSES), Business Manager (BM), guidance officer, six heads of years, Youth Support Coordinator (YSC), School-Based Youth Health Nurse (SBYHN), chaplain, 24 teachers, scientific officer, Community Education Counsellor (CEC), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) assistant, four administration officers, four teacher aides, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, vice president and committee member, three tuckshop employees, 51 students and nine parents.

Community and business groups:

- Community representative Emerald Agricultural College, Youth Support Worker Anglicare, community Elder and PCYC Officer-in-Charge.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal Denison State School and Principal Emerald North State School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Gregory, Local Councillor Central Highlands Regional Council and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2019	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2019
Investing for Success 2019	Strategic Plan 2016-2019
Headline Indicators (April 2019 release)	School Data Profile 2019 Semester 1
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2019	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School differentiation plan or flowchart
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School data plan 2018	School newsletters and website
School Opinion Survey	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	New and Beginning Teacher Support Program

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The school promotes a positive learning culture with caring and orderly learning environments in classrooms.

Staff members demonstrate a deep understanding of the importance of positive and supportive relationships for successful learning, and work actively to build partnerships with students, parents and the community. Students state that teachers care for them. There is a concerted effort to advance the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) ethos of '*Being Prepared, Being Polite and Participating (3Ps)'.*

There is a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program in the school with all students able to participate.

The school intentionally uses targeted resources to systematically support the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) to respond to the learning and wellbeing needs of students. The leadership team places a high priority on ensuring clear alignment between school priorities and the allocation of human and financial resources to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for students.

A clear desire to advance unifying whole-school initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is apparent.

School leaders are united, committed and explicit regarding their core objective to improve learning outcomes for all students. The school clearly communicates that it is committed to driving an EIA. This commitment is supported by staff members who strive to deliver the school's vision *'Every Student Has Success'.* At target meetings with school leaders a concerted effort is made to understand current achievement levels and how these have changed over time. School leaders and teachers indicate that using this information as a learning opportunity to inform further successes, identify areas of concern and actions for continued improvement is an emerging practice.

There is a belief by staff members that every student can learn successfully.

Differentiation is viewed as an essential aspect of what teachers do in their classrooms. There is an expectation by school leaders that all teachers will plan and document differentiation strategies informed by data. Structural differentiation is apparent including student withdrawal and extension. Broad curriculum offerings in the senior school enable students to differentiate their pathway. The school has established an honours program for Year 7 to Year 12 in which the students are offered a variety of extension activities within the curriculum. Some parents and community members express concern regarding the level and extent of curriculum offerings for students who are not selected for the program.
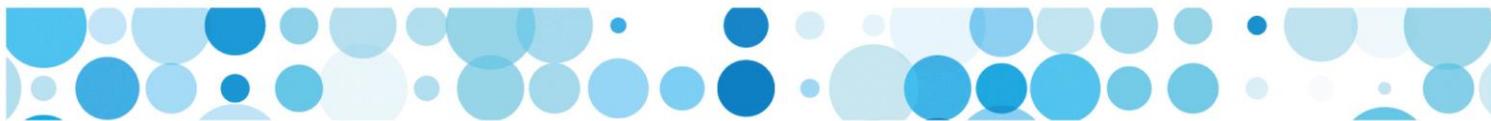
The school has developed a whole-school curriculum and assessment plan.

The document is comprehensive and includes school and systemic priorities and outlines strategies to improve teaching and learning, to build the capacity of staff, to manage resources effectively and to continue to engage parents and the community. The document further outlines details of all topics taught, and assessment conducted across all subjects from Year 7 to Year 12. Most teachers use the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) documents as the primary resource to guide their implementation of the Year 7 to Year 10 Australian Curriculum (AC). Some teachers rely on the C2C resources or a textbook as the link between AC content descriptors and classroom learning experiences.

School leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning and engagement.

School leaders support teachers in striving to enact school-wide curriculum expectations through consistent teaching and learning practices across all classrooms and the monitoring of learning across year levels. They are using an evidence-based approach to determine pedagogical strategies and have underpinned the pedagogical practice of the school by utilising the work of Hollingsworth, Ybarra[1] and Archer[2]. The extension of individual student learning is yet to be consistent across the school and is determined by individual teachers with varying degrees of expectation. Developing big concepts over time that support deep learning by students is yet to be fully established. School leaders identify these areas for further development.

The school leadership team recognises the importance of building an expert teaching team as a prerequisite for delivering high quality learning outcomes.

The school has developed a Professional Development (PD) plan with a focus on engagement and pedagogy. The plan provides details of the whole of school PD agenda and there is alignment to the EIA. Teachers report they would greatly value the opportunity to visit each others classes and to learn from each other. School leaders support the implementation of a peer coaching program.

Teachers and leaders indicate that the data culture of the school has grown significantly over recent times.

The school has a strong focus on the collection and analysis of student outcomes data including academic, attendance and behavioural outcomes and student wellbeing. The leadership team articulates a belief that reliable and timely data regarding student outcomes is crucial to the school's improvement agenda and to classroom planning for effective learning.

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[1] Hollingsworth, J. R., & Ybarra, S. E. (2008). *Explicit direct instruction (EDI): The power of the well-crafted, well-taught lesson.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

[2] Anita L. Archer, PhD. (2018). Retrieved from https://explicitinstruction.org/anita-l-archer-phd/
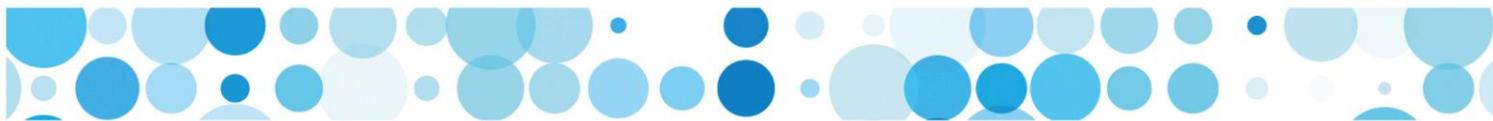
A number of networks are established with organisations to provide skills, educational opportunities, support programs and alternate pathways for the full range of students.

The school has established strong partnerships with parents, education and training organisations, community organisations and local business groups. This is apparent in the range of partnerships that the school has established over a long period of time.
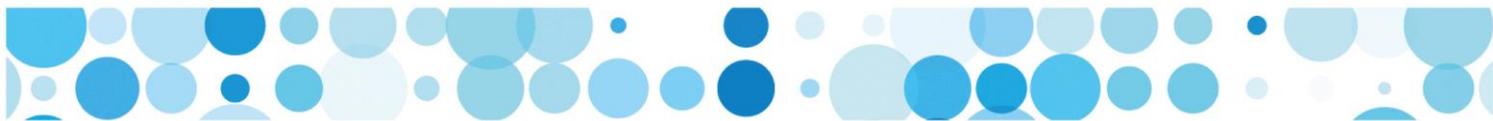
2.2 Key improvement strategies

Systematically develop ambitious class targets, aligned to the EIA, taking into account the previous achievement of students to further identify areas for continued improvement in teaching practice and student learning and performance.

Collaboratively review differentiation and inclusion in the school to cater for the needs of all learners.

Collaboratively review the implementation of curriculum and assessment in Years 7 to 10 with the aim of aligning learning experiences to the content descriptors and the standards from the AC.

Collaboratively build on the whole-school Standards of Practice (SOPs) to create classrooms and applied learning environments with high expectations for all students to be engaged, challenged and take risks.

Embed peer coaching and mentoring as key drivers to build and align the professional skills of all staff to the EIA.