2009 Annual School Report
Muswellbrook High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Messages

Principal’s message

In the area of achievement, Year 12 2009, continued the high achievements of the past HSC students. Students of Year 12 achieved 16 Band 6 results and 53 Band 5 results in their HSC for 2009. Of particular note was the achievement of students in Mathematics 2 Unit and General Mathematics, with 17% of the total candidature achieving a Band 6 grade. This was one of the highest results in Mathematics for a non selective public high school in the Hunter Central Coast region. More details about our achievements in the Higher School Certificate, School Certificate and NAPLAN can be found later in this Report.

The cultural highlight for the last 12 months was the school’s musical “Footloose”. This followed a similarly successful musical “Leader of the Pack” in 2008. The success of this musical and the increasing student interest in band, choir and visual arts have ensured that creative arts is one of the key curriculum areas of the school.

Along with Creative Arts, the Sports programs in the school, continue to attract increasing participation and levels of achievement in the representative area. Of particular note was the awarding of a NSW Sporting Blue and the Hunter Region’s Merv Cotterill Award for Sportsman of the Year to Cade Boney in Year 12, for his state and regional leadership and representation in Rugby League and Touch Football.

Muswellbrook High School presents many extra-curricular opportunities to all students, including the Stage 6 trip to the Snowy Mountains and a trip to China by a group of staff and students during 2009. A planned trip by students from Sayama Seiryo High School in Japan was cancelled due to the Swine Flu epidemic, however staff and students did a return trip in January 2010, when concerns about the flu had eased.

One of the most significant developments in 2009 was the granting of a Trade Training Centre to Muswellbrook High School. The Upper Hunter Trade Training Centre, includes Muswellbrook High School, Scone High School, Merriwa Central School and Scone Grammar School and was set up to improve the delivery of vocational courses in the area covered by the schools. Muswellbrook High School has been granted over $1.5 million to help build improved facilities in the areas of Hospitality, Metals and Engineering and Primary Industries.

With all NSW school students required to remain at school until they are 17 years of age, schools have to provide a relevant and diversified curriculum to meet the learning needs of all students. The Trade Training Centre will enable us to provide a quality vocational education in industry standard facilities. The Trade Training Centre will be ready for use at the beginning of 2010.

Mr Armstrong, Deputy Principal at Muswellbrook High School retired from the teaching service at the end of 2009. Mr Armstrong had been at Muswellbrook High School for 20 years as Head Teacher Mathematics and Deputy Principal. I would like to thank him for his contribution to the education and welfare of the students at Muswellbrook High School and wish him well in his retirement. I welcome Mr Brian Drewe, from Singleton High School, as Mr Armstrong’s replacement as Deputy Principal.

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 Crick
Principal

Excursion to China 2009
P&C message
During 2009 our P&C association has continued to work hard for the students and staff of our school. This symbiotic relationship enables Muswellbrook High School to provide our children with a solid, caring and fulfilling environment in which to pursue their academic goals.

The P&C were again able to contribute a substantial amount of money to the school in 2009 to enhance the educational and teaching resources that are requested by the various faculties each semester. These purchases are funded by the profits raised in our healthy canteen and without this assistance the school would not be able to supply these valuable resources for our children.

Once again Stasia, Marie and Vanessa have excelled themselves with the management and everyday running of our school canteen. Of course none of this would be possible without the dedicated canteen volunteers that allow us the opportunity to provide our children with the tools that enable them to transition from our little boys and girls into the young adults we know they can become.

Sadly 2009 saw our dedicated and talented treasurer, Mrs Bronwyn Anstee, relinquish the position of which she held for many years. Bronwyn was always an integral member of the P&C and she will be sorely missed. On behalf of the Muswellbrook High School P&C Association I’d like to sincerely thank Bronwyn for her friendship and dedication to our great school.

The P&C meet on a regular basis (second Thursday of the month, unless otherwise notified) to allow a forum to discuss the relevant issues that may concern the school. P&C representatives hold positions to assist the school in decision making through Curriculum, School Improvements, Budget Committee, Uniform, and where appropriate in the selection process for school personnel.

Parents and community members also assist by participating in the special programs and activities conducted at the school.

Jenny Bullivant
President – Muswellbrook HS P&C

Student representative’s message
The Student Representative Council (SRC) had a productive, enjoyable year in 2009 and has begun 2010 with a great start. They are an enthusiastic and hardworking group who will continue to work with the same energy and enthusiasm to achieve many goals and objectives that will be set for 2010.

The SRC is made up of two boys and two girls from each grade from years 7 – 10 elected by each year group. Three male and three female prefects elected from year 11 and two prefects, vice captains and captains elected from year 12.

These members are given many opportunities to represent the school and SRC at Regional, District and even State SRC meetings. There are also members who regularly attend P&C and School Improvement Committee meetings.

SRC students have a number of roles to perform. Members of the SRC are elected to these roles, at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the beginning of each year. These roles include Chairperson, Secretary, Publicity Officer, Treasurer and Fundraising Coordinator. Each of these roles require a number of duties such as running the weekly SRC meetings, recording minutes at meetings, speaking on assembly, managing the SRC funds and organising fundraising events.

In 2009, the SRC had a coin line and a chocolate drive to raise money for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Appeal. They raised a total of $3600 which was presented to the Appeal coordinators, Margaret and Joe Mathews at the Black Coal Cup.

The SRC also participated in the 40 Hour Famine, Jeans for Gene’s day, Bandana Day, Dress Down Drug Free, and raised money to sponsor a child from World Vision in South America.

The SRC was also involved with helping out at Year 7 Orientation Days, ushering at important events such as at Presentation Night, catering at events and helping out with the 2009 Footloose Musical. Also members of the SRC marched proudly at the ANZAC ceremony in 2009, with captains laying a wreath.

The SRC also worked with the P&C to purchase notice boards to place on the walls outside the canteen which allows the SRC to publicise any updates within the SRC and P&C including fundraising events. It was a productive and rewarding year for the SRC in 2009.

Stephen Langley and Heidi Mainey
2010 School Captains/Prefects 2009

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student enrolments increased in 2009, reversing a trend of slight decreases since 2006. The number of student enrolments at the census date in February 2009 was 737 students which includes students enrolled in disability programs at the school.

Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school’s attendance monitoring procedures are extremely rigorous, and have indicated a trend of decreasing student attendance rate over the last 2 years. In 2010 the staff at Muswellbrook High School will be working with regional staff from the DET, on strategies, to increase the attendance rate of students at the school.

Management of non-attendance

The school writes to all families of students, who have not sent in a reason within 2 days of an absence. Attendance rolls are reviewed weekly and the school endeavours to contact students/families with a number of unexplained absences or unsatisfactory attendance rate. Each term the school writes to families of students’ whose attendance rates have fallen below departmental benchmarks. Students with significant attendance issues are referred to the Home School Liaison Officer, who coordinates with the school’s Aboriginal Education Officer, and Police Youth Liaison Officer, where appropriate, to support families with their child’s attendance.

Attendance monitoring programs and follow up procedures, as well as the effect of student welfare issues on attendance are being evaluated and further developed in consultation with specialist staff from DET Hunter Region, in Semester One 2010, and further procedures to support student attendance will be implemented throughout the year.

Retention to Year 12

Student Retention from Year 10 to Year 12 improved by 5% in 2009, compared to 2008, and was the best rate since 2006 and continued the trend of being above our comparative School Education Group (SEG). This increase in retention is partly due to the decreased opportunities for Year 10 school leavers because of the downturn in the local economy. Despite this student retention is still low compared to the state, reflecting the high level of jobs and training still available to early school leavers in the Upper Hunter compared to the rest of the state.

Post-school destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination Post School</th>
<th>Nos.</th>
<th>%Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Offers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE Certificate 3 level programs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma programs at Tafe/Private College</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni Bridging programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traineeships</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma and Degree Level Cadetships</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 63 students completing a mainstream HSC in 2009

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

In 2009, 46% of Year 12 students included at least one VET (vocational education and training) subject in their HSC pattern of courses.
Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

In 2009 100% of Year 12 students attained a HSC qualification at the completion of their HSC studies. 73% of students completed a HSC which qualified them for an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Assessment Rank). 27% of students completed a HSC, which did not qualify them for an ATAR, but qualified them to continue training through TAFE, private colleges and work. This percentage also includes those students who completed a Life Skills HSC.

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>Nos.</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>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mod. Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Severe Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itinerant Teacher Behaviour Disorder</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itinerant Teacher Hearing</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itinerant Teacher Vision</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Adviser</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mentor</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff (SASS)</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5% of the permanent staff at the school are from an indigenous background.

Teacher qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>460 585.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>409 135.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>517 798.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>397 099.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>20 200.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>33 639.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total income                 1 838 459.14

Expenditure

Teaching & learning

Key learning areas: 98 811.20
Excursions: 158 790.80
Extracurricular dissections: 123 216.33
Library: 11 445.27
Training & development: 967.00
Tied funds: 360 040.45
Casual relief teachers: 129 593.60
Administration & office: 123 235.12
School-operated canteen: 0.00
Utilities: 101 145.16
Maintenance: 57 835.07
Trust accounts: 33 974.08
Capital programs: 43 678.73
Total expenditure: 1 242 732.81

Balance carried forward: 595 726.33

A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2009

Achievements

Arts

Footloose – The Musical

The highlight for Performing Arts students was the Musical Production Footloose which boasted input from 200 students, staff and community members. Our lead and minor roles were supported by a chorus of 69 students, including 9 Specialised Dancers, 12 Specialised Choir Members and a
special appearance by our Muswellbrook High School Boys Open Basketball Team who play the Beaumont High School Basketball Team. Our Footloose Band consisted of 22 instrumentalists. Outstanding performances to be acknowledged were from Billie Scott, Kaeleigh Foster, Sam Hume, Gabrielle Fitzgerald, Brock Janssen and Sofia O’Hara. Outstanding contributions from staff were greatly appreciated. Four performances were held for our community in August 2009 which proved to be sell-outs, demonstrating the popularity of the Musicals held at this school.

**Starstruck 2009**

Starstruck is a wonderful display of Performing Arts involving students from schools across the Hunter, Central Coast Region. 8 students from Muswellbrook High School were successful in their auditions to perform as part of this prestigious show.

Gabrielle Fitzgerald, Sarah Rodham, Brittany Phippen, Brittany Baker, Cassandra Pickham and Kayla Farrell were trained by Miss Amber Dean to learn three dances for the show. The girls were impressive in their performances, and were featured in the Newcastle Herald as part of a Starstruck special feature. The highlight of the experience for our six dancers was their promotion to perform as part of a contemporary style dance in a larger group including students from Hunter School of Performing Arts.

A bus load of 51 students and 4 staff travelled down to Newcastle Entertainment Centre to watch the show and support our 8 performing students.

**Hunter Symphonic Wind Ensemble**

Sophie and James Milwain have performed on numerous occasions as regular members of the Hunter Central Coast Symphonic Wind Ensemble playing alto saxophone and euphonium respectively.

They played an impressive, highly technical, instrumental piece with these instruments at the 2009 Starstruck performance in Newcastle in June 2009.

**Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Eisteddfod 2009**

Drama and Music students performed in the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Eisteddfod with great success.

Lucinda Hermon and Caitlin Matthews were placed first in the Junior Secondary Duologue in Costume, with Amanda Parker and Emma Dewhurst placed second in the same section.

Billie Scott placed first in Mime, Shakespeare and Senior Monologue

Also attaining places in the Senior Monologue were Anna Mills and Karli Anshaw.

Stephen Langley was placed first in the Australian Poetry Section.

Muswellbrook High School’s Yr 11 Drama Class was placed first in Drama One Act Play. These students were Ashleigh Garland, Ryan Hitch, Chris Pond, Billie Scott, Bryce Robertson, Lucinda Claydon, Sofia O’Hara, Kristina Matthews, Ashlee Bowditch, Tamika Bowditch, Breeanna Cottom
and they were directed by their teacher, Mrs Sokulsky.

The Senior Duologue in Costume resulted in Lucinda Claydon and Billie Scott being placed first and Tamika Bowditch, Ashlee Bowditch, Sofia O’Hara and Bryce Robertson also being acknowledged.

Our Senior Music students formed a Combined Vocal, Instrumental Ensemble and were placed second in this section.

Sport
Muswellbrook High School offers a variety of sporting opportunities for students in a range of recreational and competitive sports. The schools expanding sports program includes a diverse range of activities such as boxing, swimming, weights, badminton, golf, indoor soccer, squash, lawn bowls, mini tennis and girls fitness. The sports on offer are ever changing to provide students with the best and widest variety of opportunities to become passionate about health and physical activity. Integrated sport will be introduced in 2010 offering students in Years 7 and 8 the prospect of developing and exhibiting their sporting prowess in an enthusiastic environment that enhances teamwork and peer relationships. Muswellbrook High School has continued its strong participation in traditional sports such as rugby league, touch football, netball, cricket, soccer and basketball.

One student broke four school records in the annual Swimming Carnival – two of which had stood for over 20 years. Muswellbrook High School had nine Hunter representatives throughout the year in swimming, cross country, basketball, touch football, and hockey along with representatives in the NSW Special Olympics, AIS and Indigenous rugby league teams.

Four students represented NSW throughout the year in hockey, basketball, swimming and touch football. The school had improved results in CHS representative sports and the year 9/10 Boys Touch Football team was placed second at the All Schools competition held in Maitland. Muswellbrook High School Open Boys Hockey team progressed through their competition to be placed in the top 16 in the state, and were announced as team of the year.

Our most significant individual achievement was achieved by Cade Boney of year 12. Cade received a state sporting blue in December. This is a highly prestigious award presented to the best junior sports people in the state. The most prestigious award Cade received was the Hunter Region’s Merv Cotterill Memorial Award. This award is the equivalent of the Hunter Sportsperson of the Year and acknowledged Cade’s leadership and successful performance in his sport representation throughout 2009. Cade represented the AIS (Australian Institute of Sport) under 18’s Rugby League squad, in a tour of France and the UK in 2009. He also captained the Central Hunter Power Team to victory in the country championships.

Gifted and Talented Program
Muswellbrook High School organises the Gifted and Talented Program (GATS) Project each year. This project is designed to extend the skills and thinking of students who choose their own learning path. In 2009, the project was extended to include students from Years 5 to 8. The high profile project is offered to students from Muswellbrook High School and its local feeder schools. 12 Primary students completed 11 projects, with Stuart Googe from Muswellbrook Public School winning the most outstanding project.
Year 7 and 8 students from the Opportunity Classes were required to produce Learning Projects, with these projects being reported on the parents for the first time in 2009.

In Year 7, outstanding projects were produced by Josh Ingold - Most Creative, Renae Hirst – Most Academic, Lachlan Watts – Most Diligent and Travis Merrett - Best Presented.

In Year 8, outstanding projects were produced by Mathew Merrett - Best Presented, Grace Rodham – Most Diligent, Kimberley Douglas – Most Creative and Brendan Apps - Most Academic.

Opportunity Class
Muswellbrook High School runs a self-appointed Opportunity Class in Years 7 and 8. Placement for this class is through a Placement Test, interview and Year 6 teacher recommendation. In 2009, students from local primary schools applied for 29 places.

2009 is the seventh year of the operation for the Opportunity Class, with the second group of students completing Year 12 after entering high school in the Opportunity Class in Year 7. The 2009 HSC continued the run of excellent HSC results for Muswellbrook High School, with students attaining 16 Band 6’s across the school. Using these results as evidence, it appears that the Opportunity Class has been a resounding success, ensuring a focus on recognising student talent and potential, and the implementation of differentiated curriculum across the school to maximise student potential.

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 understanding demonstrated in the 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
Year 7 NAPLAN tests are conducted in May each year. The results are very important for the school to be able to analyse and construct support programs. Due to the fact that these tests are given after the commencement of the Year 7 students’ secondary education, diagnostic assessments are done on student literacy needs, in Term 1, so that support, if required, can be put in place at the beginning of their secondary education. NAPLAN test data is not generally available until Term 3, and serves to update the literacy programs already operating in the school.

As part of the Muswellbrook Community of Schools, Muswellbrook High School and its partner primary schools, work closely in providing support to students transitioning from Year 6, and ensuring that learning support plans are put in place for literacy and other learning/welfare requirements.

The following graphs outline the Literacy and NAPLAN achievements for both Year 7 and 9 students for 2009.

The graphs present a number of ways of comparing the school's achievement data with data from other sources, enabling a comparison with these sources.

State data is for all DET schools in the state, and includes all selective schools. School average data is for Muswellbrook High School and is the average data for literacy and numeracy tests from 2007 to 2009.

Like School Group (LSG), includes schools with a similar ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage) to Muswellbrook High School. The school’s literacy and numeracy scores are compared with the scores of other schools from the Like School Groups that have a similar ICSEA rating. This enables the school to more accurately benchmark how its students are achieving in literacy and numeracy, by comparing students from schools of a similar socio-economic background.
In Literacy the Year 7 students outperformed the Like School Group, and the performance of Year 7 students at Muswellbrook High School from 2007 to 2009, in all areas, however extensive support is provided for those students who are achieving in the lower band areas.

As with Literacy, Year 7 students have performed well, in Numeracy, compared with the Like School Group of schools, and our schools own performance from 2007 to 2009.

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9**

Following are the Year 9 NAPLAN averages for Muswellbrook High School, compared with the State average and the students from the Like School Group.
Students performed above the LSG, in both reading and writing and performed well in spelling, except for some anomalies in Band 6 and Band 10. Muswellbrook HS has evaluated the lower than expected achievements in Grammar and Punctuation, and has been adapting programs to concentrate on improving student proficiency in this area.

Year 9 students outperformed the Year 9 students in the Like School Group of schools in NAPLAN Numeracy achievements.

School Certificate
School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

School Certificate achievement in 2009 and the value adding that has occurred between Year 5 and Year 10, indicates high achievement in Mathematics and Science when compared with the Like School Group of schools and the performance of the school between 2005 and 2009. Results show that our students in English, Australian History and Australian Geography performed below expectation, at the School Certificate. The HSIE faculty has been reviewing their curriculum and processes in 2010.

Higher School Certificate

This table summarises the average course marks achieved by Muswellbrook High School students in all courses at the 2009 HSC, compared with average scores from our Like School Group and students across the state, as well as the HSC scores achieved by students of Muswellbrook High School between 2005 to 2009.
The Higher School Certificate demonstrated continued high achievement in 2009. Year 12 students accomplished fourteen (14) Band 6 and two (2) E4 scores, an outstanding result for the 2009 Year 12 students. (E4 scores are the one unit equivalent of a Band 6, for courses such as Extension English and Extension Mathematics.)

Of note were the scores attained by the students of Mathematics 2 Unit and General Mathematics. These results were well above the state averages and the Like School Group average marks.

Other courses in which the student achievement outperformed state average scores included English Extension 1, Food Technology, Music 1, PDHPE, Senior Science, Visual Arts and Hospitality.

Courses where student attainment outperformed comparable schools in the Like School Group included Ancient History, Biology, Community and Family Studies, Drama, English Standard, English Advanced, Information Processes and Technology and Physics.

Increasing retention of students in Stage 6, will present challenges to the curriculum offerings at Muswellbrook High School. With the compulsory leaving age rising to 17, we are evaluating our curriculum and its implementation and presentation to students, to ensure an adaptable and relevant curriculum is presented to Stage 5 and 6 students.
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>Percentage of Year 7 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009</th>
<th>Minimum Standard Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at and above minimum standard</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 9 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at and above minimum standard</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

The strong growth in Aboriginal enrolments continued in 2009 with the student numbers reaching 83. Fourteen Aboriginal students completed their School Certificate and two students successfully completed their HSC.

After considerable research and consultation the school enhanced the format of the Personal Learning Plans (PLP’s) to a document which would track student progress from years 7 to 12 including attendance data, NAPLAN and School Certificate results to help better inform the goal setting process and the school recorded its highest number of PLP’s completed to date.

NAIDOC week was celebrated with a student led concert involving traditional dance, story-telling, and musical performances. The school held its inaugural flag raising ceremony as well as student and staff representatives attending to two local ceremonies.

Two members of staff were trained in Stronger, Smarter Leadership and began to implement the ethos into Aboriginal education practices and management. Three staff members regularly attended meetings of the newly reformed and constituted Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG).

Twenty three members of staff travelled to Kurri Kurri TAFE to attend a presentation on Raising Aboriginal Achievement and Engagement. Presentations included research conducted into Quality Teaching and its significance for Indigenous students, learning strategies and school-based approaches to improve learning outcomes.

Success in the strategic use of Norta Norta funding for student tuition was evident in the considerable number of Aboriginal students achieving at or above the National benchmarks in their NAPLAN results.

Further strengthening of school and community linkages and student educational and welfare support was fostered by the continued employment of an Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO).

Aboriginal students were again fortunate to receive financial support from the Coal & Allied Aboriginal Community Consultative Committee. Recipients used their $500 grants to help defray the significant costs of their educational, cultural and sporting pursuits.

Ian Neubauer from the Dare to Lead organisation was a guest presenter at a term three Staff Development Day focusing on the ‘What Works’ approach to programming and planning.

The school held discussions with the Dare to Lead and the Polly Farmer Organisations to implement a substantive program to help improve Aboriginal Learning outcomes in the school with DET and corporate support. The Polly Farmer Foundation was chosen as the favoured model and the program will be implemented in 2010 targeting and supporting aspirational students to achieve their educational and vocational goals.

Multicultural education

The school hosted the Regional Harmony Day celebrations with students from High Schools and Primary schools, from across the Upper Hunter, joining in the celebration. The event was coordinated by Head Teacher Creative and
Performing Arts. Nicole Hunt, who skilfully orchestrated a series of workshops, presentations and performances.

Cultural diversity continued to develop with a number of students joining the school from Zimbabwe, with members of their families employed in the local mining industry. A highly effective ESL program was coordinated by teachers from the school who were able to quickly accelerate the student's academic performance and develop their cultural understanding.

As a result of the 2009 Global Influenza Pandemic, the annual visit by our Japanese sister school, Sayama Seiryo was cancelled. However, language students were still able to maintain their cultural links by communicating with their overseas peers through the e-pals email system.

Mr Andrew Roberts was appointed School Anti-Racism Contact Officer. He accepted responsibility for implementing the Anti-Racism Policy and advising staff and students on matters related to racism.

Mr Bruce James was the school's guest for Public Education Day in 2009. Mr James is a former member of the staff at Muswellbrook High School. He is a prominent local historian and was Muswellbrook Citizen of the Year for 2009.

**Progress on 2009 targets**

**Target 1:** Literacy and Numeracy outcomes for students are enhanced through emphasis on quality teaching practices.

**Target 2:** Student access to a range of digital technology will enable an improvement in teaching and learning outcomes.

**Target 3:** To improve the learning and career outcomes for Aboriginal students at Muswellbrook High School

**Respect and responsibility To Be Done**

Muswellbrook High School hosted the Hunter Central Coast Regional Harmony Day in 2009. A variety of schools attended this day, with Muswellbrook High School Year 9 students voted as having produced the most successful Harmony Day Presentation.

Our students supported the activities of local service clubs. Participating in the Lion’s Youth of the Year exposes students to the good work done by these clubs, including the Rotary public speaking programs.

Respect for Aboriginal people was demonstrated by the celebration of the National Apology to the Stolen Generation by the Prime Minister in February of 2008

An ANZAC Commemoration Observance was held at the school with visiting returned servicemen attending.

Our students participated in the town’s ANZAC Day Ceremony by marching, assisting with the service, laying a wreath on behalf of the school community and contributing by singing of the hymns.

SRC fundraising activities featured support for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Appeal, with our school raising a record amount for another year.

The success of the Benefactor’s Morning Tea during Education Week and the Special Guests for Public Education Day further endorsed the respect for the school community held by our student body.

**Our achievements include:**

1. The continued high achievements of the HSC cohort in 2009 indicates improved literacy reflected in the achievements of aspirational student.

2. Year 9 NAPLAN results indicated an improvement in Numeracy results and slight fall in Literacy achievement compared to the 2008 Year 9 NAPLAN.

3. More students have received access to Literacy assistance through an increase in school’s allocation to the Support Teacher Learning Assistance program. This includes students from Stage 4 to 6, and has continued into 2010.

4. Literacy and numeracy NAPLAN results for the Year 9 students were well above those schools that are part of the Like School Group to which Muswellbrook High School is allocated.

5. Continued staff development programs have better equipped staff to integrate literacy in their teaching programs and practice.
**Target 2**

**Student access to a range of digital technology will enable an improvement in teaching and learning outcomes**

Our achievements include:

1. The implementation of the roll out of laptops to Year 9 students which has ensured students will have access to a high level of technology for their learning, as more students gain access to laptops under this program.

2. The establishment of interactive whiteboards within the school, will ensure that students will be able to learn using a range of technological platforms to enhance access to a variety of online resources.

3. Improvements in the network infrastructure within the school and to the network administration has ensured that the staff and students will have access to a reliable, robust and sustainable network system that will enable all users to access a wide range of resources and programs in a secure location.

4. Training staff and providing resources that assist teachers to be able to integrate technological perspectives into their programming and teaching.

**Target 3**

**To improve the learning and career outcomes for Aboriginal students at Muswellbrook High School**

Our achievements include:

1. The number of students who enrolled and who identified as indigenous increased from 70 to 84 from 2008 to 2009.

2. 84% of indigenous students in Year 9, achieved at or above the minimum national benchmark in writing at the NAPLAN tests in 2009 compared with 62% in 2008.

3. 78% of indigenous students in Year 9, achieved at or above the minimum national benchmark in reading at the NAPLAN tests in 2009 compared with 68% in 2008.

4. 100% of indigenous students who commenced Year 11 in 2008 and 2009, received a HSC in Year 12 or a Preliminary HSC in Year 11 in 2009.

5. The commencement of the Polly Farmer program at the end of 2009, will ensure that aspirational indigenous students will be supported in achieving their educational and post school goals.

**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 2009 our school carried out evaluations of the school’s disciplinary systems and the support structures in place to assist the HSC students in achieving to their potential at the HSC.

**Educational and management practice**

Review and evaluation of the school’s disciplinary systems

**Background**

In 2009 a review of the student discipline system at Muswellbrook High School was conducted through the analysis of the school disciplinary database, staff presentations, surveys, consultations and a review of historical suspension data

**Findings and conclusions**

This review found that:

1. Approximately 66% of disciplinary issues and suspensions were generated by only 7% students in each year group (Years 7-11)

2. Boys accounted for 67% and Girls 33% of suspensions within the school

3. 23% of students suspended had been enrolled from other schools in the last 2 years.

4. 50.4% of students who received a suspension did not receive any further suspensions, while at this school.

5. The school card behaviour monitoring system was an effective deterrent to suspension with 50% of students monitored, not being suspended.

Conclusions drawn from this review include:

Earlier intervention was required through Head Teacher monitoring.

Data is used to better inform disciplinary management.

Teachers will continue to be supported to achieve improved learning outcomes through better management of disciplinary issues resulting in a more settled learning environment.
Future directions
* Improved transparency in disciplinary matters through weekly reports distributed to all staff outlining statistics of reports on student misbehaviour, disciplinary cards, time-out room referrals, student defaulting with homework, assignments and assessments and suspension data

* The creation of a further ‘tier’ in the school disciplinary system with the addition of a time-out room for students who regularly breach school rules and/or at risk of suspension.

* Greater consultation and involvement of staff and school welfare committees in disciplinary processes and policy making.

* A more equitable use of the school card behaviour monitoring system.

* Further emphasis and support for ensuring that students who qualify for Awards under the school’s Merit Award system are rewarded for their achievements and positive contribution to the school.

Curriculum
Review the effectiveness of the support structures in place to assist the HSC students in achieving to their potential at the HSC.

Background
Muswellbrook High School has experienced considerable success in the HSC, outperforming all other public schools in the Upper Hunter in at least two of the previous three years as evidenced through Band 6 results reported in the Sydney Morning Herald. A key factor in this success is the annual review and analysis by Head Teachers of the teaching and learning practices that have led to these achievements. This information is subsequently used to identify and model outstanding teaching ‘best practice’, and highlight strategies that can be incorporated by other faculties and teachers to emulate their success.

Findings and conclusions
- Student motivation was identified as a critical factor for success. Faculties experiencing success identified high teacher expectations of students, teacher passion for their subject area and challenging students with higher order work as factors that fostered student motivation.

- Increased use of technology, relating learning to student interest areas, along with the incorporation of a variety of teaching methods and resources helped enhance student engagement.

- The years of experience in teaching HSC subjects were identified as a reason for success. Conversely, a number of teachers with limited HSC experience were still able to achieve outstanding results.

- Student tuition by teachers, the incorporation of a student mentoring program, holiday study workshops and accessing individual feedback were commonly identified for their value in setting and maintaining high levels of student achievement.

- Strong results were achieved in specialist, extension subjects with flow-on effects identified for students in related 2 unit subjects.

- Accessing additional educational opportunities including subject specific excursions, performances, HSC seminars, study days and workshops

- Student absenteeism, a ‘minimalist’ approach to completing class-work, homework and assessment tasks, excessive work hours and inappropriate subject choices were identified as contributing factors to student underperformance.

Future directions
- Continued identification and modelling of best practice through the HSC review process

- Mentoring of less experienced teachers by successful teachers

- Continuation of rigorous HSC monitoring and the support of teachers and students, provided through Principal, Career Advisor and Deputy Principal interviews.

- Further emphasis on the Teacher-Student mentoring program and student tuition.

- Maintenance of the ‘culture of success’ developed in the school through the acknowledgment and reward of student achievement.

- Ongoing evaluation of the teaching of senior syllabuses and the support provided to students to help them maximise their achievements at the HSC.

Other evaluations
Evaluation of the Year 6 to 7 Transition processes, used in 2009, in conjunction with our partner primary schools, Muswellbrook Primary School, Muswellbrook South Public School, Denman Public School and Martindale Public School, to assist students to transition successfully to high school.
Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

A survey was sent out to all Year 7 parents to evaluate the 2009/10 Transition process.

The results indicated most parents were very pleased with the transition process and believed their child was well prepared for high school.

1.) Parents were asked to identify how useful they felt the May Open Day and November Orientation Day were.

2) Parents were asked whether the combination of Orientation Days and visits to and from the high school were adequate in preparing their child for High School.

88% of parents indicated this was adequate, with 12% indicating a few more sessions would have been beneficial in further familiarising their child with High School.

3) Parents were asked to state how well their child has adjusted to High School. The results are below.

4 and 5) Parents were also asked if there was anything extra we could have done to help their child’s transition more.

96% of parents responded with a no; there was nothing else we could have done, with 4% suggesting 1 or 2 more sessions may have been beneficial in further preparing them for High School.

7) Parents were asked how prepared they thought their child was to start High School.

Additional positive comments that were given regarding the 2009/10 transition process were:

“Overall it was great and all teachers and students that were involved with welcoming my daughter and all of Year 7 ought to congratulate themselves”

“I believe the whole program is terrific”

“Keep up the good work”

“My child was scared of High School, after these days she could not wait to start”

“How it was done was great, it didn’t push them in fast, it gave them time to adjust to High School”

Student Surveys on Transition activities from Year 6 to 7.

All current students in Year 7 were surveyed on their thoughts on the transition program. The majority of the students who completed the survey had experienced the full transition process, however, some of the students were new to the
school in 2010 and therefore had not participated in the 2009 transition program.

1) The students were asked how valuable they felt the two Open/Orientation Days in May/November were.

Some suggestions that students gave to improve the Open Days were to have longer sessions at each subject area, spend some time with current Year 7 students, see more classrooms, have the days run longer or over 2 days, and to have more “hands on” fun activities.

2) The students were then asked how valuable the visits from high school teachers to their primary schools and visits to the high school for sample lessons were.

Some suggestions given were that the sample lessons should run for a longer period of time and there should be a greater number of sample lessons throughout the year.

3) The students were asked whether they felt the orientation activities during Year 6 were adequate in preparing them for High School. 92% of respondents indicate the activities were adequate in preparing them for High School. The remaining 8% believed more could have been done with the main suggestion being more visits to the High School and more assistance in finding classrooms.

4) The students were asked how well they felt they had adjusted to the transition from primary school to high school.

Almost half the respondents indicated an excellent adjustment with a further 33% indicating they had adjusted quite well.

5) The students were asked if they felt there was anything more that could have been done while they were in Year 6 to assist their transition to High School. 72% of students indicated there was nothing else that could have been done. Suggestions from the further 28% were more visits to the High School, more help in reading timetables and finding their way around the school, spend time in actual classes and with current Year 7 students, having older students helping them out more and greater information regarding school work, homework and assignments.

6) The students were also asked if there was more that could have been done to assist their transition after they started High School. 86% of students indicated there was nothing else they needed after they began High School. Suggestions from the other 14% included more help in finding way around school, and more assistance from older students eg. A buddy system.

Professional learning

In 2009 staff showed tremendous initiative and resourcefulness in actively seeking opportunities to support the school focus areas and their own professional development. As in previous years a significant proportion of Professional Learning resources were allocated to VET teacher training and Beginning Teacher training and support. Teacher Network Meetings and assessment workshops became increasingly popular and new
and diverse areas of training accessed included the Australian Meat Judging Workshop for Agriculture and Primary Industries and Pro Desktop and Moodle for technology.

To augment the school focus on literacy and numeracy, regional literacy and numeracy consultants were invited to the school to work with whole faculty groups to develop teaching strategies and resources. Teachers from other schools in the area were also invited to attend these workshops.

Twenty staff undertook their Senior First Aid Certificate to enhance school-based responses to emergencies and to help address the requirements of excursion planning.

Two staff were trained in the second phase of the Stronger, Smarter program to assist in developing leadership capacity in the area of Aboriginal Education.

A large number of staff from each faculty attended training in technology allowing a smooth transition for the Laptops for Learning program and the arrival of interactive Smartboard technology at the school.

School development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2010

Target 1: To evaluate and implement strategies to engage students in an education that will require most students to participate in a secondary education for 6 years.

Target 2: To improve the school attendance rates of students at Muswellbrook High School.

Target 3: To continue developing strategies and resources that improve the learning outcomes and engagement of Aboriginal students in their schooling.

Target 1

Target 1: To evaluate and implement strategies to engage students in an education that will require most students to participate in a secondary education for 6 years.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Formation of a team of highly proficient leaders and teachers, in 2010, to identify Best Practice procedures that successfully engage students at all levels of their education.
- Evaluation of the available Stage 5 and 6 curriculum to identify areas of the curriculum that may need to be changed or introduced in order to ensure that students engage with their education.
- Evaluate the Merit Award system to ensure that the importance of achievement and setting high standards, is an expectation that all students set of themselves in gaining an education.
- Continue the successful support strategies, identified for HSC students and expand them to further develop student learning skills in Stage 4 and 5.

Our success will be measured by:

- Improvement in teaching and learning outcomes through the adoption, by teachers, of the Best Practice findings of the exemplar teachers.
- The availability of highly engaging Stage 5 and 6 curriculum in 2011, ensuring that the engagement and retention of students through to the completion of the HSC is increased by 10% by the end of 2011.
- More students will receive Merit Awards as a result of the greater achievements and recognition of these achievements by the school.
- More emphasis on the support for students with their Literacy, Numeracy, use of technology in learning and the presentation of their submitted work, will ensure students will become more highly engaged and successful learners.
- Through this support, it is intended that the number of students who will obtain a Band 8, 9 or 10 in the NAPLAN Literacy and Numeracy tests in 2010 will increase by 2%.

Target 2

Target 2: To improve the school attendance rates of students at Muswellbrook High School.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The further development of technology to assist with the monitoring and informing of parents when their children are absent from school eg text messaging.
- Evaluation of current procedures of identification of full and part time absences and truancies, to ensure student absentee records are accurate.
- Construction of a plan to assist students and parents of poorly attending students to ensure that this identified group, are supported and encouraged to attend and stay at school. This will involve the executive led by the Deputy Principal (Organisation), Head Teacher Administration, Home School Liaison Officer and selected staff.
- Continue the strategies that provide for students with welfare issues to reduce the number of suspensions in 2010. Suspensions add to the official absentee rate of the school.
- The Transition Program with the Stage 3 students of Muswellbrook High School’s partner
primary schools will emphasise the importance of the student’s secondary education and the need for a smooth transition to high school.

Our success will be measured by:

- The use of technology resulting in quicker and more efficient identification of attendance issues and notification of parents on the day that the absence is identified.
- The accuracy of attendance records which will be as close to 100% as possible, enabling more rapid remediation of attendance and truancy issues.
- The support and attention to the welfare issues of poorly attending students, particularly those with long term attendance concerns, will help improve attendance by more effectively dealing with their welfare and learning issues.
- The reduction of student suspension rates by 10% in 2010 due to improved monitoring and support of at-risk students.
- An improvement in the attendance of students in Stage 5 and 6 of 2% by the end 2011.

Target 3

Target 3: To continue developing strategies and resources that improve the learning outcomes and engagement of Aboriginal students in their schooling.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Implementing programs for Tutoring Students in class and with individual assistance, using resources from the Norta Norta program.
- Using the principles of the Smarter Stronger leadership program to further develop the engagement and retention of aboriginal students, by providing an environment of high expectations for all indigenous students.
- Extending Personalised Learning Plans to all indigenous students.
- Implementation of the “Polly Farmer Program”, which will enable aspirational indigenous students to be supported at school and at an after-school learning centre with access to tutors and a full time teacher to increase retention and achievement to the HSC and post school educational and vocational opportunities.

Our success will be measured by:

- Attendance rates of Aboriginal students which will improve by 3% by the end of 2011.
- The retention of indigenous students to the HSC which will increase by 15% by the end of 2011.
- The support of indigenous students which will result in all indigenous students, in Year 9 achieving at or above the minimum standard in literacy and numeracy.
- Greater engagement with the Aboriginal community, and strong links, developed through and with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal Support Workers and the work of the Polly Farmer Foundation with the staff and students at the school.

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.

Peter Crick  Principal
Gareth Erskine  Deputy Principal
Brian Drewe  Deputy Principal
Greg Morris  Head Teacher Admin(rel)
Grant Herbert  Head Teacher PDHPE
Nicole Hunt  Head Teacher CAPA
Tracey Henderson  Teacher
Tony Borg  Careers Advisor
Beth Halsted  School Admin Manager
Jenny Bullivant  P&C President
Graeme Whitehead  P&C
Vanessa Smith  P&C
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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: