Pennant Hills High School
Annual School Report 2011
Principal's Message

The 2011 academic year was very successful, marked by the many outstanding achievements by a large proportion of our students. One of the great strengths of Pennant Hills High School continues to be the comprehensive nature of the education we provide to our large student population who come from a range of cultural backgrounds, and who mostly live in our local area.

As a school community, we continue to foster an environment which is happy, safe, encouraging, stimulating and rich, in which all students are given every opportunity to reach their potential. Our students receive outstanding support and encouragement from our highly experienced and dedicated school staff, from their parents and the wider community. The strong sense of community which is evident at Pennant Hills High School is a hallmark of our organisation, and is an area upon which we focus a great deal of effort. This enables students to be supported by others and to feel happy and safe in a harmonious environment. One of the most commendable aspects of this school in 2011 was the continuing commitment from our young people to work cooperatively; to be conscious of the needs of fellow students when they are faced with adversity; and to support them in appropriate ways. Members of our school community take great pride in being part of this organisation, and the clear and palpable emphasis on student wellbeing is recognised and applauded by many. This is something of which we can be very proud, but which should never be taken for granted.

Our cohesive school community, which is characterised by harmony, productivity, success, encouragement, support, cooperation, care and trust, is a result of the efforts of many people. I acknowledge and thank students, staff and parents for their wonderful contributions to our school this year.

This annual report provides a detailed overview of our programs, achievements and successes. It is with pleasure that I present the Annual School Report for the 2011 academic year.
P & C Message

The Pennant Hills High School Parents and Citizens (P & C) Association is a vibrant and diverse group of parents, carers and teaching staff whose aim is to enhance the learning of students by providing funding through voluntary contributions, fund-raising and canteen contributions for resources not otherwise available.

In 2011, the P & C funded the purchase of sewing machines, data projectors, interactive whiteboards, band instruments, digital cameras and laptops, totalling approximately $60,000. All faculties were encouraged to apply for funding and we were pleased to be able to meet all faculty requests. The P & C also provides funding for students who are selected to represent in sport and curriculum enrichment activities at a national level. All students who attain this level of selection are encouraged to apply for funding.

The P & C provides a monthly forum for open, lively discussion with regard to all educational matters affecting not only Pennant Hills High School but education in general. Members of staff and community specialty groups are also invited to make presentations to the meetings which are relevant and informative.

The school canteen, run by the P & C, provides nutritious meals and snacks for students and staff and also provides funds to the P & C for general revenue. The canteen is staffed by four paid personnel ably assisted by parent volunteers and some students during recess and lunch breaks, and is a vital part of the school.

All parents and caregivers are encouraged to play an active, involved role in the P & C.

Fearnie Fisher
P & C President

Student Representative Council

The Student Representative Council (SRC) at Pennant Hills High School had a successful year in student advocacy and government. District SRC attendees for this year included Jessica Beard, Paul Bonjour, Luke Chapman and Kasia Czarnota, all of whom benefited from this leadership opportunity both personally and in their capacity to contribute to SRC activities.

Our SRC members took part in the Northern Sydney Region Harmony Day, and served the school community as front-of-house volunteers for the musical, Little Shop of Horrors.

A great deal of fund-raising produced the resources necessary to carry out a landscaping project in the main quadrangle. Work began in November under the leadership of Roger Niccol, Head Teacher History. The majority of the structural work was completed by the end of the year, and students will be able to make use of this attractive facility from early 2012.

The SRC has continued its support of various charities through raising funds and community awareness. Bandana Day and Shades 4 AIDS Day were features of the SRC program. Our Wrap with Love campaign was a great success again and we extend our thanks to the students, teachers and families who knitted, crocheted and sewed.

Spirit Week was a very popular event which included competitions, games and sales. It remains a focal point of the SRC calendar.

Talented students in sport and other curriculum enrichment have benefited from SRC funding subsidies to assist them to attend competitions. The SRC is proud to support Pennant Hills High School students and will continue to do so.
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

Management of Non-attendance

Pennant Hills High School has developed a rigorous set of procedures to minimise student non-attendance. In Term 4 SMS notification of absence to parents was introduced, which has proved to be highly effective in ensuring that parents and caregivers are well-informed and able to assist in managing any unsatisfactory attendance patterns. Class rolls are marked online every lesson, and the system identifies attendance conflicts instantly, enabling swift corrective action from executive staff. Fractional truancy in Stage 6 has fallen significantly following the implementation in October of a system of restorative justice, where students are required to liaise with teachers to collect missed work and complete it after school for the relevant period of time. Any student who establishes a frequent pattern of non-attendance is monitored personally by the Head Teacher Administration with support from the Home School Liaison Officer where necessary.

Retention to Year 12

Post-school Destinations

Year 12 students selected a variety of post-school pathways depending on their vocational interests. From this cohort, 122 students (63.87%) received university offers. A further 38 students (19.89%) enrolled at TAFE colleges studying courses including information technology, business and hospitality. Twenty students (10.47%) enrolled in other colleges, studying courses such as early childhood education, media studies and makeup design. An additional three students gained apprenticeships, three moved into full-time employment and two joined the armed forces.
Year 12 Students Undertaking Vocational or Trade Training

A total of 22 Year 12 2011 students undertook vocational courses, which equates to 11.51% of the cohort. These students selected a variety of courses at TAFE colleges in our area. Other students who studied courses such as beauty therapy and electrotechnology have continued these courses post-school to gain additional qualifications.

Year 12 Students Attaining HSC or Equivalent Vocational Educational Qualification

The cohort comprised 191 mainstream students and 12 students from the Special Education Unit. The entire cohort received the HSC. Some chose to pursue a non-ATAR curriculum.

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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principals</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>59.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Moderate Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
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<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
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<td>Counsellor</td>
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<td>Careers Adviser</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
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The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on the Indigenous composition of their workforce.

No member of the school’s permanent teaching staff has identified as having Indigenous heritage.

Staff Retention

The staff at Pennant Hills High School comprises a wealth of experienced and long-serving teachers and SASS complemented by several new scheme teachers and newly appointed SASS. During 2011 two teachers and three support staff retired from the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and three teachers accepted transfers to other schools within DEC.

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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
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<td>Postgraduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
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Professional Learning

In 2011, total funding for professional learning activities was $49,980. This sum was allocated to a variety of professional learning activities, with 38% of the funds spent on quality teaching, 27% on syllabus implementation and the balance of 35% spent across the remaining five teacher professional learning (TPL) areas, including welfare and equity, career development and literacy and numeracy. Priority project funding will be set aside in 2012 for the Positive Behaviour Engaging Learners (PBEL) program and literacy and numeracy initiatives.
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>
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<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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<td>Tied funds</td>
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<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
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<td>Canteen</td>
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<td>Total income</td>
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**Expenditure**

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<tr>
<th>Teaching &amp; learning</th>
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<td>Key learning areas</td>
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<td>Excursions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
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A full copy of the school’s 2011 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the P & C Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Significant Programs and Initiatives

**Director-General for a Day**

Four of our Year 11 students were honoured by selection for the Director-General for a Day program, which is a central focus each year of Education Week celebrations. Successful students are matched with the most senior departmental directors to shadow them for a day in order to learn more about their roles. Selection panels from all ten education regions in NSW considered written applications from a large number of students, with a state selection panel ultimately choosing the winner of this prestigious award from secondary schools throughout NSW.

We were delighted to learn that Luke Chapman had been selected to be Director-General of DEC for a day. Luke stepped into the shoes of the Acting Director-General, Pam Christie, shadowing the Department’s most senior officer as she carried out her daily duties. This allowed him to experience first-hand what is involved in running a NSW Government department which is responsible for 27% of the state budget, some 742 141 full-time students and 2231 schools.

Luke is a fine young man who possesses outstanding personal and leadership qualities. He is a passionate supporter of public education and his representation of our school brought us great credit and praise. We were delighted to witness how skilfully he handled the many media interviews he was required to do and the manner in which he dealt with the people with whom he came into contact.
The three other Year 11 students selected to be part of the program were Kasia Czarnota, Paul Bonjour and Stephanie Corish. Kasia assumed the position of Regional Director, Northern Sydney, shadowing Mr Dean White, Relieving Regional Director. The Hills Network School Education Director, Mrs Janet Wasson, hosted Paul and Stephanie for the day. It is rare to have four students from the one school honoured in such a way. Congratulations to all of these fine ambassadors of Pennant Hills High School.

National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program

The Australian Government has committed funding of $62.15 million over four years (2008–09 to 2011–12) for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP). The aim of the program is to increase opportunities for school students to become familiar with the languages and cultures of Australia’s key regional neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

In response to the NALSSP Pennant Hills High School participated in a pilot program in 2011. Fourteen students from the school’s Year 7 extension class took part in a four-week program where they were exposed to the Mandarin language and culture via the school’s connected classroom.

As a follow-up to the pilot, the school hosted a tour group from the Tianjin Middle School, Tianjin, China, comprising 41 students and four staff, who participated in a range of educational and cultural activities during the first week in August.

The Learning to Lead and Leading with Action Programs

The Learning to Lead and Leading with Action Programs are co-ordinated in conjunction with the Premier’s Sporting Challenge. The Learning to Lead program is for students in the middle years of schooling (Years 5–8), and aims to give them the skills to set up, manage, and officiate sports and physical activity. The Leading with Action Program is for students who have completed the Learning to Lead aspect and who are enrolled in the subject, physical activity and sports studies (PASS). The Leading with Action Program gives these students additional opportunities to put their leadership skills into action.

Both aspects of the program have been run in a co-ordinated effort with our partner primary schools. There have been a number of training days, where students were taught coaching and leadership techniques by sports professionals.

The Lions Youth of the Year Quest

The aims of the Lions Youth of the Year Quest are to encourage an interest in leadership and to identify young people with a high level of academic, leadership, sporting, public speaking and citizenship to provide role models for youth in Australia.

The Lions Club of West Pennant Hills–Cherrybrook invited nominations from Pennant Hills High School. Two Year 11 students, Madeleine Wensley and Luke Chapman, were selected to compete against candidates from Cherrybrook Technology High School and Normanhurst Boys High School. Each student underwent an interview and, at the Lions Club Dinner, spoke for two minutes on two unseen topics and then presented a prepared speech.

Against worthy competition, Madeleine was judged the winner and progressed to the regional finals to be held early next year.
Multicultural Education

Through the integration of multicultural perspectives in whole school and faculty programs, students at Pennant Hills High School have a broad range of opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes required for life in a diverse society.

Students participated in the Australian Government Harmony Day activities at Pennant Hills High School. The focus of this day was to raise awareness and understanding of the difficulties faced by students from around the world. The school also hosted the Regional SRC Harmony Day celebrations, where students from across Northern Sydney Region participated in activities to highlight the challenges and opportunities relating to integration.

Multicultural Day was a highly successful event in Term 3, celebrating diversity. Students and staff worked together to provide a rich cultural experience, raising over $2300 for donation to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. It is anticipated that Multicultural Day will become a regular feature of school life.

The school’s English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher provided targeted assistance to students from language backgrounds other than English, which played an important role in helping them to reach their academic potential.

Band Trip to Canberra

In October Concert Band 1 and Big Band were honoured by an invitation by the Hon Philip Ruddock, Federal Member for Berowra, to perform in the Great Hall at Parliament House, Canberra. Audience members included MPs Hon Philip Ruddock, Hon Wyatt Roy, Hon Louise Marcus and Hon John Alexander, as well as other parliamentary staff and tourists.

Young Endeavour

The Rotary Club of Pennant Hills once again generously provided the opportunity for a student from Pennant Hills High School to sail on the Young Endeavour as part of its program to promote the development of self-confidence, cooperative teamwork and leadership skills in today’s youth.

After a rigorous selection process, Year 11 student Madeleine Croft was invited to sail on an 11-day voyage in January 2012. The Young Endeavour sailed from Eden to Sydney Harbour, arriving as part of the Australia Day celebrations.

The other candidates, Elizabeth Arthur, Kasia Czarnota, Huw Fisher, Logan Moore, Corey Stewart and Joshua Williams were awarded a weekend of self-discovery and training on James Craig, also kindly sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pennant Hills.

Innovation and Engagement Research Study

In late November four members of the Teacher Professional Learning Team travelled to Melbourne on a study tour to research educational innovation and student engagement, where they visited five high-performing schools to gather ideas relating to continuous school improvement. Camberwell High School, Eltham High School, Glen Waverley Secondary College, McKinnon Secondary College and Mordialloc College were chosen as destinations because of their innovative teaching and learning programs. The team saw a number of exciting programs and school-based initiatives, and has returned with ideas for achievable goals for our school in 2012 and beyond.
Staff involved presented to the executive team and developed a program of school improvement based on the research. The first of the many new school-based initiatives that will be introduced in the 2012 school year will be the Year 7 Learning to Learn Program and the school’s Learning Centre. Both of these new initiatives will be designed around educational innovation, student engagement and quality teaching.

Aboriginal Education

Pennant Hills High School is committed to the provision of high quality, culturally sensitive education about Aboriginal Australia. The development of an Aboriginal education teacher professional learning plan led to all teaching staff participating in a comprehensive program of Aboriginal cultural education at school development days throughout the year.

In April teachers participated in a workshop led by Nadia Wheatley and Ken Searle who articulated to staff their experiences of working with Aboriginal families at Papunya School in Central Australia, highlighting the needs and expectations of Aboriginal people towards formal education and how we can best meet those needs in urban Australia. They also gave helpful insights into how best to include Aboriginal perspectives into current school programs.

In July teachers travelled to Muogamarra Nature Reserve to benefit from shared cultural experiences which would enable us to embed the concept of caring for country into teaching and learning programs. The plan culminated in December with a synthesis of Aboriginal culture and experiences as seen through our teaching programs, skilfully led by our Aboriginal Education Co-ordinator, Owen Belling.

Evaluations of this TPL program have been very positive and there is significant interest in developing a school team and partnerships with rural schools.

The school is a member of the Dare to Lead Coalition which provides valuable resources to support students and teachers in the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy.

The study of Indigenous culture is an important aspect of the English, HSIE and Creative and Performing Arts Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Musical performances, film, art and drama facilitate understanding of Aboriginal perspectives for students across all stages. The delivery of HSIE courses in Stages 4 and 5 builds student understanding of Aboriginal history and place. In this way Pennant Hills High School continues to promote Aboriginal cultural perspectives and ensures that all students learn about, and value, Aboriginal culture.

Little Shop of Horrors

Pennant Hills High School produced a full-scale musical in 2011. Little Shop of Horrors involved 126 students in aspects of the production: cast, crew, promotions and front-of-house. Year 12 student Jacquie Nolan served the production as student director. Attendance was consistently high at all four evening performances.
Additionally, there were two matinees: one for our partner primary schools and the other a complimentary performance for local senior citizens. The successful musical truly displayed Pennant Hills High School’s excellence in the creative and performing arts.

**Debating**

Six teams were entered in the state-wide interschool debating competition.

The Year 12 team, Shannen Potter, Ashleigh Lee-Joe, Sarah Maynard and Lauren Bonner, had success in their round robin debates and became zone champions for the fifth successive year. Year 11 debaters, Paul Bonjour and Luke Chapman, were added to this team which won its way through to the regional semifinal.

The Year 11 team, comprising Kasia Czarnota, Madeleine Wensley, Paul Bonjour and Luke Chapman, also became zone champions and regional semifinalists.

We continue to build a strong culture of debating in the junior years. In the Year 9/10 Division, our teams won the majority of their zone rounds but did not progress to the regional competition.

Our Year 8 team were runners-up in the zone championship. The Year 7 team, comprising Abbey Campbell, Katie Johnson, Jack Naylor, Jaime O’Connor and Jack Townend, were the zone champions.

**Extra Programs for Students**

Students have continued to be enthusiastically involved in the drama ensemble. Interested students participated in after-school workshops to develop their skills in interpretation, mime and improvisation. The ensemble performed with distinction at the annual drama festival in June.

A chess club was introduced as a lunchtime activity. The program resulted in a noticeable increase in students’ confidence and skills, and improved their socialisation with students from other year groups.

Leadership in the Middle School (LIMS) and ISCF groups continued to be an integral part of the school culture, enhancing student development and emphasising the value of respect for others.

A movie club ran during Terms 2 and 3 for students with Asperger’s Syndrome. Students were involved in scriptwriting, filming, editing and developing a small movie to assist in the development of their social skills.

In a program aimed at supporting students having difficulty engaging with the workload at school, counsellors from Mission Australia assisted students by providing them with strategies to increase their self-confidence and resilience, as well as offering family support as required. Mission Australia worked with these students for two days per week over a 10-week period.

Year 8 science gifted and talented students (GATS) hosted local partner primary school students working in various areas of science. The younger students participated in science activities and received expert guidance from the GATS. This program forms an excellent link between Pennant Hills High School and the local partner primary schools; provides primary school students with the opportunity to experience science in a more specialised environment; and also provides the Year 8 GATS with an opportunity to strengthen their leadership and scientific skills.

**Supporting our Students**

10% on Top (Teacher Mentors)

This mentor program for Year 12 students continued this year and will be maintained in 2012 with the new HSC cohort. Results from a survey of Year 11 students indicated that 67% of our students plan to go to university, 13% plan to go to TAFE or into the workforce, and 20% were unsure. Only 18% of students surveyed indicated that they are currently achieving their best results.

Forty-two members of the teaching staff at Pennant Hills High School volunteered their time to mentor students, working on an individual basis and in small groups. The focus was on areas such as study skills, confidence building, time management and stress management.

**Anti-bullying**

An updated Anti-Bullying Policy with revised procedures was implemented. Enhancing positive relationships was emphasised through the use of theatre performances and the distribution of a
brochure, *Good Friends Good Learners*, developed by the Welfare Team. The brochure provided students with strategies for being a friend, participating in thoughtful relationships, effectively helping other people and resolving conflicts when they arise. Bullying and offensive behaviour were defined and students were encouraged to seek assistance from specialised staff members. Additionally, students devised a poster campaign to raise awareness of the importance of speaking out against bullying.

The school was selected to participate in a DEC pilot email system for students and parents to more promptly report bullying. This involvement will also provide the school with a means of further evaluating our current anti-bullying policies and procedures and will further support our students in dealing with issues of bullying.

**Values Education**

The Values Education Action Research Project involved four of our partner primary schools working concurrently to achieve goals relating to values education. Although schools followed their own approach to implement this project, co-ordinators from each school communicated through scheduled meetings or through e-contact to discuss common themes. The aim of the project is to collaborate with primary schools, teaching young individuals values based on those provided by DEC.

Students initiated, organised and actively participated in a clean-up day in conjunction with the National Clean Up Australia Day.

**Respect and Responsibility**

The maintenance of a happy and safe school is always the highest priority for the Pennant Hills High School community. This is achieved systematically through the work of the welfare team and all other school staff, who recognise and support student needs.

The environmental education group drafted a School Environment Management Plan and developed links with Hornsby Shire Council and Education for Sustainability. The group has been involved in the installation of a water tank, and composting facilities on the school farm.

Students from Pennant Hills High School continue to undertake State Emergency Service (SES) cadetships under the leadership of School Administrative Officer Lee Lowe, with two students from the previous year’s cadet cohort went on to join the SES.

The development of our students as safe and ethical digital citizens is crucial to education in the twenty-first century. In Term 4 staff, interested parents and Year 9 students attended a very informative seminar on cybersafety, presented by the Australian Media and Communications Authority, which facilitated increased awareness of online threats and how to minimise or avoid them. Police Youth Liaison Officers addressed year assemblies on the legal issues surrounding bullying and harassment involving the use of electronic media. The Welfare Team updated current policies and procedures to address issues that result from the use of technology, including cyber-bullying.

A key priority is the maintenance of a school climate where abusive verbal or physical behaviour is not accepted or condoned. At the Year 7 orientation camp students benefited from workshops on the use of appropriate language with people the students do not know well, in order to help avoid misunderstandings. Active involvement of the SRC and the prefect body has contributed significantly to the maintenance of a happy and safe school environment, and to students’ ability to access a wide range of learning experiences.

The LIMS program encouraged students to work for social justice in a number of ways, such as the support for Guide Dogs Australia, the RSPCA and the Cystic Fibrosis Society.

Active involvement of student leaders is a feature of our school. Peer support assisted Year 7 students with transition. The Year 11 driver awareness course and Year 10 Crossroads program both raised student awareness of their responsibilities as ethical and productive members of society.
**Gifted and Talented Education**

The gifted and talented team focused on providing a challenging and engaging curriculum across all stages. The school offers placement in academically selected Year 7 and Year 8 classes. While students in these classes receive differentiated programs encompassing enrichment and extension, a major focus of the team was providing differentiated programs across all of Stage 4. As a result, teachers undertook project based learning in various faculties with samples of differentiated units of work to support them.

An Academic Challenge Day was held in Term 3, providing Year 7 students with an opportunity to enhance leadership skills and engaged them in problem solving, thinking and logic skills. The day also promoted team building skills and a sense of community within partner schools.

**National Youth Forum**

The Rotary Club of Pennant Hills sponsored two Year 11 students, Reyland Szeto and Luke Chapman, providing them with the opportunity to attend the National Youth Science Forum in Canberra and Perth respectively.

**Model United Nations Assembly**

Two Pennant Hills High School teams participated in the Sydney Region Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA), held over a weekend in Term 2.

Year 11 students Paul Bonjour, Amy Rodda and Madeleine Wensley represented Israel, while Luke Chapman and Kasia Czarnota from Year 11 and Callum Moses from Year 10 represented Bangladesh. Teams debated eight resolutions on issues of global interest in an assembly comprising 40 countries represented by over 20 high schools.

Students are not only required to demonstrate their confidence in prepared and impromptu public speaking, but also an intimate understanding of their country’s position in the global community. Resolutions ranged from provisions for access to fresh water to the responsible disposal of nuclear waste.

Both of our teams were prominent in debate, showing an exceptional level of preparation. Israel was awarded second place, progressing to the national competition in Canberra, now representing Egypt. Paul, Amy and Madeleine spent another weekend competing against even stronger teams on six new resolutions. Though they did not place, our team represented their country and school proudly.

**Leadership in the Middle School**

Year 8 LIMS students began the year with a leadership day run by representatives of Rising Generation and supported by our Year 10 mentors.

The major focus of the LIMS program was the strong involvement of students in the school community. Students assisted with the West Pennant Hills Primary School Grandparents’ Day, provided refreshments for parents during the Parent—Teacher Evenings, helped with the Year 12 Graduation Ceremony and participated in the ‘Transition to High School’ Program.

The important values of respect and responsibility continued to be a central foundation for LIMS students. They hosted a visitor from the Guide Dogs Association who informed students about the role of service dogs in the community.

Another aspect of the LIMS program was fundraising to support charities such as the RSPCA, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the Guide Dogs Association.

**Merit Award System**

Students continued to achieve at the higher levels of the Award System. Four students achieved platinum awards. These students demonstrated exceptional commitment to various significant programs across the school.

A large number of students continued to achieve gold, silver and bronze awards and enjoyed recognition of their achievements through a series of morning teas with the principal, held throughout the year.

**Learning Support Team**

The Learning Support Team (LST) focused on raising the profile of students with special needs in regular classes and providing teachers with strategies to assist in making modifications and adjustments to the curriculum. Access to resources and strategies was increased through the use of the school intranet and Moodle. Extra
support for students was provided through the development of personalised learning plans and involvement in community-based work experience programs. Students demonstrated positive academic and social growth throughout the year.

Links between mainstream teachers and the support unit were further strengthened. Procedures were developed to streamline the process of profiling students’ achievements and writing Life Skills Reports for Stages 5 and 6, applying for TAFE Access courses and work experience participation.

The Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA) model moved from traditional support in the classroom to placing students into small groups providing targeted support in common areas of need. Analysis of data derived from NAPLAN results, combined with previous STLA assessments, facilitated the meeting of students’ individualised learning needs.

An enthusiastic group of Year 11 students applied their skills from the Peer Tutoring Literacy Program to develop a drop-in learning centre for students experiencing academic difficulties. They offered support to students with organisation of class work and completion of assignments.

**Year 7 Transition to High School**

Pennant Hills High School has developed strong links with our partner primary schools to assist students in their transition to high school. Over the year, we welcomed primary school students to participate in activities hosted by the science, personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE) and visual arts faculties. Students visited our annual visual arts exhibition, participated in an academic challenge day and attended various band camps and rehearsals.

The orientation camp enabled Year 7 students to develop new friendships while participating in a range of team-building activities.

Students also enjoyed the ‘Welcome to Year 7’ Dance organised by our prefect body. The annual family barbecue provided parents and students with an opportunity to meet teachers.

**Supporting our Community**

**Community Concert**

Year 12 students produced and performed a concert for our community’s senior citizens in September. This annual event provides our students with an opportunity to recognise the senior citizens for their contribution to our community. The concert, held in our school MPC, was attended by approximately 100 senior citizens and their carers who also enjoyed a morning tea prepared and served by our students.

**Prefects**

Prefects led a number of initiatives to support both our school and the wider community. Under the leadership of our captains, the prefect body chose the OASIS Youth Support Network run by the Salvation Army as the main beneficiary of their fund-raising. In support of OASIS, the prefects held a number of barbecues which raised funds whilst also providing the prefects with team-building opportunities. In a letter of appreciation from The Salvation Army it was recognised that our support continue(d) to scale and reach out to more disadvantaged young people by providing crisis and transitional accommodation, educational access, workplace training, counseling, legal assistance, life skills and the opportunity to dream big. These are opportunities that are fundamental to the lives of the majority of our students and it was with great pride that our prefects were able to support young people with limited opportunities.

Prefects represented us with distinction at a number of school events. They hosted the Deputy Director-General of Schools, Mr Gregory Prior, and Northern Sydney Regional Director, Mrs Jane Simmons during a visit to the school. Mrs Simmons commented favourably on the level of pride which the students displayed in their school. The prefects also acted as hosts for the annual senior citizens concert organised by Year 12.
Partner Schools Literacy and Numeracy

Representatives from our partner primary schools met in Term 4 to analyse Stage 3 and Stage 4 NAPLAN data. A co-ordinated approach was developed, identifying and targeting aspects of literacy and numeracy. A weekly literacy and numeracy blitz has been implemented to better equip students with necessary knowledge and skills.

Premier’s Sporting Challenge

As part of the Premier’s Sporting Challenge, a program that encourages healthy lifestyles, Year 7 students participated in a team exercise producing physical activity logs. The school received the gold award in recognition of the students’ high level of participation in physical activity.

School Performance 2011

Academic Achievements

HSC Results

Shannen Potter (ATAR 95.6) received a Premier’s Award for All Round Excellence in the HSC, after achieving marks of 90 or above in 10 units of study. Eighteen students achieved an ATAR above 90, and of the 190 students who sat for the HSC there were 91 ‘Distinguished Achievements’ across the 43 courses examined.

At the 2011 HSC the school’s results were above state average in 19 courses with 10 or more candidates.

There were two places gained by Pennant Hills High School students on state-wide merit lists.

Sarah Maynard was placed third in the state in textiles and design.

Harry McInnis was placed eighth in NSW in industrial technology.

These achievements are a great honour for the students and our school.

HSC Major Works

Ten students, Tim Cleasby, Thomas Job, Lochana Kariyawasam, Harry McInnis, Taylor Nell, Thomas Roddy, Clancy Simpson, Mitchell Smith, Alana Thomas and Hadley Wood had their HSC industrial technology major projects identified by Board of Studies examiners as being of a sufficiently high standard to be suitable for inclusion in one of the state-wide InTech displays.

Similarly, Madison Mitchell’s visual arts project, Intertwined, was nominated for consideration for inclusion in the highly prestigious state-wide ArtExpress 2012.

School Certificate Results

In the School Certificate, Pennant Hills High School’s results were above state average in all external examinations.

Academic Competitions

Fifty-eight students took part in the Rio Tinto Big Science Competition. A Year 8 student, Sophia Gilchrist, was one of only 58 students across Australia to achieve a ‘top scorer’ award in the competition, which attracted more than 31 000 competitors. Sophia received a special award at Parliament House, Canberra in September. Of the entire group, 12% gained a high distinction, 28% a distinction and 34% achieved a credit.

A total of 23 Preliminary and HSC geography students competed in the 2011 Australian Geography Competition. Of these students, a staggering 61% were awarded a high distinction while a further 13% received either a distinction or a credit.
Our teams also performed strongly in the 2011 RoboCup Junior Challenges in the premier rescue and open soccer divisions. The two rescue teams progressed to the national titles in Tasmania and placed eighth and tenth.

ESSA

The Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) is a mandatory science assessment program that provides information about knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of Year 8 students. The results are reported in six levels from 1 to 6, with highest achievement at Level 6. In 2011, 46% of our students achieved Levels 5 or 6 compared to state 22%. Only 5% of our students were at the lower levels of achievement (Levels 1 and 2), compared to state 11%. Overall, our students who gained Level 6 in the tests achieved better than the average for students across the state. For our school, 86% of Year 8 students achieved at Levels 4–6 compared with 61% for the state.

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Year 7 and Year 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 these assessments.

Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest)
Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest)

The Year 7 reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation and numeracy scores were all above the Australian schools average. The scores for Year 9 in all areas of literacy—reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation—were above the Australian schools average. Scores for Year 9 numeracy were substantially above the Australian schools average.

Minimum Standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum desirable standards for reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and numeracy at particular ages. These are referred to as national benchmarks. The performance of the students in our school in Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN is compared to these benchmarks. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these benchmarks are reported in the following tables.

| Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading | Writing | Spelling | Grammar and Punctuation | Numeracy |
| 99.4 | 97.3 | 94.7 | 93.7 | 95.7 |

| Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading | Writing | Spelling | Grammar and Punctuation | Numeracy |
| 93.4 | 89.1 | 95.0 | 91.5 | 94.9 |

Year 7 Reading

Reading levels in Year 7 for 2011 indicate that 14.4% of students were in the highest band (Band 9) which was above the state average of 9.6%. Those who gained the second highest band comprised 28.2% which was above the state average of 16.8% and the 2008–2011 school average of 26.8%.

![](image-url)
Year 7 Writing

Writing levels in Year 7 show that 6.5% of students were in the highest band. The number of students who were placed in the second highest band (26.1%) was significantly above the state average of 13.2%. No comparison can be made to the state and school average from previous years due to the different writing style assessed in 2011.

Year 7 Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation levels in Year 7 indicated that 11.4% of students were placed in the highest band in 2011, which was above the state average of 8.6%. The proportion of students in the second highest band (34.8%) was significantly higher than the state average of 16.5% and the 2008–2011 school average of 26.2%.

Year 7 Spelling

Spelling levels in Year 7 indicate that 13% of students were in the highest band in 2011, which was above the state average of 11.6% and above the 2008–2011 school average of 11.3%. The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (29.3%) was considerably higher than that of the state average (18.6%).

Year 7 Numeracy

Numeracy results for Year 7 revealed that 22.8% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 9) which was significantly higher than that of state averages (14.4%) and the school average 2008–2011 (21.3%). The proportion of students in the second highest band was 22.8% which was also significantly higher than the state average of 12.5%.
Year 9 Reading
Reading levels in Year 9 indicate that 14.6% of students were in the highest band (Band 10) which was significantly higher than the state average of 7.7% and that achieved on average at the school from 2008–2011 (8.9%). The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (Band 9) was 25.1% which was considerably higher than that of state results (13.1%).

Year 9 Writing
Writing levels in Year 9 indicate that 11.8% of students in 2011 were in the highest band which was higher than the state average of 8.1%. Students placed in the second highest band indicate that 14.4% achieved higher results compared to those in the state (9.6%). No comparison can be made to the state and school average from previous years due to the different writing style assessed in 2011.

Year 9 Spelling
Spelling levels in Year 9 indicate that 9.7% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10) which was higher than the state average of 7.6% and down on the 2008–2011 school average of 11.7%. Students placed in the second highest band indicate that 22.1% achieved higher results compared to those in the state (17.4%).

Year 9 Grammar and Punctuation
Grammar and punctuation results in Year 9 indicate that 9.2% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10) which was higher than the state average of 5.1% yet down on the 2008–2011 school average of 14.2%. The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (20.5%) was significantly higher than for the state as a whole (10.7%).
Year 9 Numeracy

Numeracy results for Year 9 revealed that 18% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10) which was significantly higher than the state average of 11.7%. The proportion of students in the second highest band was 24.3% which was also significantly higher than the state average of 12.7% and that achieved by the school on average 2008–2011 (24%).

School Certificate

In the School Certificate, with the exception of computer skills, the performance of students is reported in six bands, with Band 1 being the lowest level of achievement and Band 6 the highest. In the 2011 School Certificate examinations our students achieved higher marks on average in all external examinations and a greater proportion in the two highest bands than the state average in each of English, mathematics, science, and Australian geography, civics and citizenship.

English

A total of 50.0% achieved results in the highest two bands, compared with 32.6% state-wide. The average mark of 79.1% was above the state average of 75.6%. The proportion of students in 2011 achieving either Band 5 or 6 was higher compared to the school average for 2007–2011 of 47.3%.

Mathematics

A total of 35.1% of the students achieved in the top two bands, which is appreciably higher than 22.3% state-wide. The average mark of 74.2% was also significantly above the state average of 68.9%. The trend (2007–2011) indicated a consistent proportion of results in the two upper bands (36.9%).
Science
A total of 40.1% of candidates achieved in the top two bands, which is considerably higher than the 28.6% achieved state-wide. The average mark of 77.1% was above the state average of 73.6%. The overall trend shows a similar proportion of attainment in the top two bands when compared to the school average for 2007–2011 (42.0%).

Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship
A total of 20.6% achieved a result in the top two bands compared with 19.7% state-wide. The average mark of 72.5% was above the state average of 69.7%. Comparison with the school average 2007–2011 data (26.6%) indicates a slight drift in the distribution of results from the higher towards the middle performance bands.

Australian History, Civics and Citizenship
A total of 19.1% achieved in the top two bands compared with 21.3% state-wide. The average mark of 71.8% was above the state average of 70.1%. The trend (2007–2011) indicates a similar proportion of results in the upper two bands (19.8%).

Computing Skills
The computer skills results are categorised as Competence Not Demonstrated, Competent or Highly Competent. A total of 63.4% of students were rated as Highly Competent, and a further 36.7% as Competent. No student was found to have Competence Not Demonstrated. The school average mark was 82.1% compared to a state-wide average of 76.8%. The results for 2011 indicated a slight drift from the Highly Competent to the Competent Band when compared to the school average for 2007–2011.
School Certificate Relative Performance Comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>School 2011</th>
<th>School Average 2007-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian History, Civics and Citizenship</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: By definition, the State average relative performance is zero

Higher School Certificate

The average result in all KLAs was generally comparable to the corresponding means for all schools across the state. Pennant Hills High School students achieved 91 results above 90% in various courses and were recognised by being named in the Board of Studies Distinguished Achievers List in 2011, compared to 105 in 2010. In the Higher School Certificate, with the exception of extension courses, the performance of students is reported in six bands, with Band 1 being the lowest level of achievement and Band 6 the highest. In extension courses there are either four or five bands. A total of 119 students, which is 68% of the year group, achieved at least one Band 5 result.

English

Over fifty per cent (50.8%) of students in advanced English achieved a Band 5 or 6 with an average mark of 78.9 (state 79.1). In English standard 14.9% (8.9% state) of students earned a Band 5 or 6 with an average mark of 69.0, which was above the state average (62.8). The English advanced average mark was similar the school’s average from 2007 to 2011 (78.2). Of the students who studied English extension 1, 90.5% were placed in the top two bands and the average mark for English extension 1 (77.2) was slightly higher compared to the average since 2007 (76.1) but a little lower than the state average (79.5). Of English extension 2 candidates, 81.8% were placed in the highest two bands with an average mark of 80.7 which was above both the state average (78.3) and the school average since 2007 (74.6).

Mathematics

Extension 1 mathematics students achieved an average mark of 78.9, which was slightly below the average mark in the state (81.4). Seventy-five per cent of the extension 1 students were placed in Bands 5 or 6, while in mathematics 58.3% achieved a Band 5 or 6. The average mark for the mathematics course (78.0) was above the state average (76.2). In general mathematics, 24.6% achieved a Band 5 or 6 with an average mark of 71.6, which was higher than the state-wide average (66.4). The average marks achieved in mathematics extension 1, mathematics and general mathematics were all slightly below the average for the school over the last five years.

Science

The average marks achieved in biology (74.4), chemistry (81.6) and earth and environmental science (75.7) were all above the state averages, while the average in physics (74.2) was similar to the state average. In biology, 33.3% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 31.0%) and in earth and environmental science, 38.7% (state 40.9%) achieved a Band 5 or 6. The average mark for the mathematics course (78.0) was above the state average (76.2). In general mathematics, 24.6% achieved a Band 5 or 6 with an average mark of 71.6, which was higher than the state average (76.2). In physics, 21.2% were placed in the top two bands compared to 36.2% in the state. In chemistry, 61.5% of students achieved a Band 5 or 6, which was noticeably higher than the state average (40.0%). The chemistry marks also exceeded the school’s average results since 2007.

Human Society and its Environment (HSIE)

Ancient history (70.7), business studies (72.8), geography (72.6), legal studies (75.2), modern history (76.4) and history extension (76.9) all achieved averages above the state average. The proportion of students who achieved either a Band 5 or 6 result was 29.4% in ancient history, 27.1% in business studies, 27.6% in economics, 21.1% in geography, 45.2% in legal studies, 45.0% in modern history and 5.6% in society and culture. Of history extension students, 85.7% were placed in the top two bands compared to 74.2% for the state. History extension marks exceeded school average results for 2007–2011.

Technological and Applied Studies (TAS)

Industrial technology results were exceptional, with an average mark of 90.9, significantly exceeding the state average of 69.3, with a
student achieving eighth place in NSW in the course. In addition 100% of the industrial technology candidates were placed in the top two bands. Textiles and design students achieved an average mark (85.5) which was significantly higher than the state average (73.5), and a candidate from the school was placed third in NSW in the course. Results in engineering studies (75.8), food technology (74.5), hospitality examination–VET (80.9), information processes and technology (76.6) and software design and development (72.4) were also above state averages. The proportions of students achieving either a Band 5 or Band 6 result were 25.0% in engineering studies, 33.3% in food technology, 70.0% in hospitality examination (VET), 43.8% in information processes and technology, 36.4% in software design and development and 64.3% in textiles and design. Hospitality examination (VET), industrial technology and textiles and design exceeded the average results at the school since 2007.

Languages

The small size of the candidatures (less than 10 students) in most language courses makes it difficult to effectively and reliably analyse data, and individual course results are not permitted for publication. Students in French beginners achieved an average mark (70.3) slightly below the state average (74.4) and 21.4% of them gained a Band 5 or 6 result. The Japanese continuers average mark (77.6) was also just below the state average (78.6) and 50% of the students achieved a result in the highest two bands. Results for both French beginners and Japanese continuers were below the school average for 2007–2011. Across the remainder of the KLA, 33.3% of students achieved at least one of the two highest bands in French continuers, French extension, Japanese beginners and Japanese extension.

PDHPE

Students achieved a course average above state levels in both community and family studies (82.5) and PDHPE (72.4). Of the community and family studies students, 57.9% achieved a Band 5 or 6 result, as did 26.2% of the PDHPE students. Community and family studies students achieved a mark above the average for the subject in the school since 2007, while those in PDHPE gained a similar average result.

Creative Arts

The average result achieved in drama (74.3) was similar to the state average (75.2), with 26.7% of the candidates receiving either Band 5 or 6. In visual arts the average mark (82) was higher than the state average (76.5) and the proportion of students achieving Band 5 or 6 was 60.6%. The small size of the candidatures (less than 10 students) in the music courses makes it difficult to effectively and reliably analyse data and individual course results are not permitted for publication. In music 1, music 2 and music extension combined, 53.3% of the students gained a result in the top two bands. The average mark in drama was lower, while the average for visual arts was similar, when compared to the school average for the last five years.

Higher School Certificate Relative Performance Comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Band</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 2011</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Average 2007-2011</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG Average 2011</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: By definition, the State average relative performance is zero

Arts

Displays and Exhibitions

Students showcased their skills and abilities through a number of exhibitions and presentations which included the drama festival, industrial technology display, visual arts exhibition and design and technology display. HSC drama students staged trial performances in front of live audiences. Band ensembles performed at the annual band festival which involved bands from all partner schools.

Sport

Swimming

Pennant Hills High School placed fourth at the zone swimming carnival with the 17–19 boys 200m freestyle relay team (Nicolas Rispoli, Stuart Rodda, Sam Hedges and Francis Yeung) breaking the event record. Fourteen of our competitors qualified for the Sydney North Area Swimming Championships where first places were achieved by Ami Matsu (100m backstroke), Nicolas Rispoli (200m freestyle), and the 17–19 boys 200m relay team. At the CHS Championships the relay team achieved second place, and Nicolas Rispoli was
awarded the Sir Harry Rawson Challenge Cup. Nicolas progressed to the NSW State Age Short Course Championships where he performed with considerable merit.

**Cross Country**

The school achieved second place at the zone cross country carnival for the third successive year. Oliver Lidbeater, Hamish Menday, Olivia Dunn and Adam Nixon won first place in their age groups. At the regional carnival Toby Menday placed first in the boys U16s 6km event, a result which he repeated at the State Cross Country Championships. Pennant Hills High School had three teams competing at these championships, with each achieving a gold medal—a first for the school.

**Athletics**

The school team won the Ku-ring-gai Zone Athletics Championships, where Rachel Attenborough was awarded 17+ Age Champion. At the Sydney North Regional Athletics Championships, Pennant Hills High School was the champion school for the fifth consecutive year and we were awarded the Kippax Cup for champion boys school. Rachel Attenborough broke the 400m hurdles record and was awarded age champion. Tim Foster was the most outstanding male athlete (AWD) at the CHS Athletics Championships, and Belinda Smith (16+ AWD) was nominated for a Regional Blue in Athletics following her outstanding performance. At the NSW All Schools Athletics Carnival, Toby Menday and Tim Foster performed strongly. Tim Foster and Tristan Sassen progressed to the National AWD Underage Championships.

**Team Sports**

Eighteen teams and two individuals competed at the CHS triathlon. Adam Nixon, Nicolas Rispoli and Blake Ryan placed second in the team event. The senior girls team won the State Volleyball Cup and the open boys team placed fifth in the state knock-out competition.

**Other Achievements**

Rachel Attenborough received the Pierre de Coubertin Award in recognition of her outstanding sporting achievements. John-Paul Khamis became the four-time Australian Karate champion at the National Titles after winning his age division. Abby Mackay was awarded three gold medals at the Australian National Haidong Gumbo Championships.

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**Progress on 2011 Targets**

**Target 1**

*To continually develop the literacy skills of all students.*

Our achievements include:
- Year 9 students performing well above state average in NAPLAN Literacy skills; and
- fifty per cent of Year 10 students achieving a result placing them in Band 5 or 6 in the School Certificate English Literacy examination.

**Target 2**

*To continually develop the numeracy skills of all students.*

Our achievements include:
- a 5% increase in the number of students achieving results placing them in the top two Bands of the Year 7 Numeracy skills test;
- a significant increase in the number of Year 9 students achieving results placing them in the top two bands of the Year 9 numeracy skills test. Thirty-five per cent of students were placed in these bands in 2010 and over 42% of students achieved at this level in 2011.
- thirty-five per cent of Year 10 students achieving a result placing them in Band 5 or 6 in the School Certificate mathematics examination.

**Target 3**

*To establish effective partnerships with families to support the learning of each child.*

Our achievements include:
- a significantly reduced number of ‘N’ warning letters sent home to the parents of students in Years 10, 11 and 12. This was achieved through improved communication between the school, students and parents regarding assessment.
- significantly greater support from families in assisting students in resolving suspensions.

**Target 4**

*To increase the availability of digital learning resources that develop deeper understanding of Aboriginal history, cultures and language.*

Our achievements include:
the provision of substantial TPL opportunities to ensure that awareness of Aboriginal history, culture and language is embedded in all courses; and

- the receipt of support from the DEC Northern Sydney Region Aboriginal Education Team in the provision of resources.

Target 5

To strengthen the implementation of the NSW Quality Teaching (QT) model.

Our achievements include:

- alignment of programs and assessment to the QT model and incorporation of the QT document language in programs and tasks; and

- an increased number of Band 5 and 6 results in the School Certificate compared to 2010.

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. Our school carried out evaluations of quality teaching and learning and the Digital Education Revolution.

Educational and Management Practice—Quality Teaching and Learning

Background

The Quality Teaching Model provides a framework to focus attention on, and provide consistent messages about, pedagogy in public schools. It emphasises the importance of three key dimensions of teaching and learning: that it is fundamentally based on promoting high levels of intellectual quality, on promoting a quality learning environment, and that it develops and makes explicit to students the significance of their work. It is a key structure in education.

Pennant Hills High School’s Teacher Professional Learning Team further strengthened the focus on the elements of quality teaching, targeting student engagement as a key area for twenty-first century learners. Additionally, the school’s Assessment and Reporting Team sought feedback about policy and procedures developed in 2010.

To inform and support the process, online surveys were conducted to evaluate the core business of teaching and learning. Data was gathered from Year 7 and Year 9 students, to facilitate a longitudinal study into 2012 – 2016. Teaching staff and parents were also surveyed, and a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data was captured.

Findings and conclusions

The data indicated that a culture of high expectations exists in the school. Students, teachers and parents all reported that there was a strong focus on student achievement and developing strategies to support and extend this culture. Students were found to be working both individually and collaboratively, and clear information was provided to parents through the reporting system.

Increased use of the merit system to reward effort, the use of personnel outside the classroom to assist learners and the provision of feedback about work emerged as areas for further development. Communication from teachers about learning, and the provision and monitoring of homework, were identified by some parents as priorities.

Future directions

Plans are to be developed for a Learning Centre and a Homework Club to operate in the School Library commencing in 2012. These initiatives will help students access support for their learning beyond the classroom.

The Assessment and Reporting Team will continue to audit and evaluate assessment items across all stages, including faculty procedures for the provision of formal and informal feedback.

The Teacher Professional Learning Team intends to reinforce with teachers Professor John Hattie’s work on feedback through our regular professional learning afternoons.

In Term 4 the staff endorsed the adoption of PBEL at Pennant Hills High School. PBEL employs a whole school systems approach to encourage positive behaviour from all students, which has been shown to improve their self-concept and motivation to learn.

In Term 1 2012 twelve teachers will be trained in PBEL procedures for implementation, and a review of our merit system is planned as part of the process.

Year 8 and Year 10 students will be surveyed in 2012 to evaluate progress in teaching and learning.
Curriculum—Review of the Digital Education Revolution

Background

The Digital Education Revolution (DER) program began in NSW schools in 2009. This program has seen each Year 9 cohort issued with netbook computers. Netbooks issued under this program have been distributed and maintained by technical support officers (TSOs) who have guided students through the process of using their netbooks on the DEC and school networks. Students, staff and parents have been able to give feedback regarding the effectiveness of the DER program through online surveys.

Findings and Conclusions

Parents were generally positive with respect to their children having access to personal computers in the classroom. They saw the DER netbooks as a learning tool to enhance traditional teaching and learning through the integration of technology. Concerns expressed by parents regarding the use of netbooks included the additional distractions that may be caused during lessons and the restrictions placed on student access to the internet by mandatory internet filtering.

Students had mixed experiences with the netbooks as each cohort has been issued with a different model computer with gradual improvements in processor speed, screen size and quality. Students have indicated that computer fragility has been a problem but also point out that the TSOs provide a good service in helping them through their difficulties. Students also pointed out that some have had difficulties printing from the computers and accessing the internet from home. Students reported that the netbooks were adequate as a single function tool, for note taking, researching and to store digital versions of their textbooks. Many students commented that the use of Moodle and Edmodo was effective for the submission of assessment tasks.

Staff identified the netbooks as beneficial learning tools when used to access Moodle resources and in using Web 2.0 learning tools such as Edmodo, Documentary Films, Prezi and other programs. Staff also found that the internet filtering restrictions created levels of frustration amongst users. In addition, the inability to install specific school-based application software made many school administration tasks difficult for teachers to complete on the DER netbooks.

Future Directions

Staff training and support with be increased to enhance the use of Moodle as a tool for the storage and access of teaching and learning resources. Staff will also be encouraged to demonstrate to other members of staff skills and learning strategies that they have developed so that ideas can be shared across the school. Student mentors will be trained to assist other students in using their netbooks in an effective manner for learning across all KLAs.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Data was gathered from a sample of parents, teachers and students in Years 7, 9 and 12.

Parents actively support their child’s learning, and are very positive about the high expectations teachers have of students, and the clarity of formal academic reports. However, some responses indicated a desire for an increased frequency of communication with teachers about their child’s progress. Parents are also highly motivated to ensure that students are given the opportunity to access new and different ways of learning, and that there is a balance between independent and collaborative learning.

Student data indicated a strong focus on achieving excellence, with most students saying that their teachers expected a high standard of work and that they tried hard to do their best. There is significant evidence that students believe they are able to work effectively in class. Increased use of the merit award system to reward effort and the provision of feedback about class work and homework emerged as areas for further development.

Teacher feedback showed a strong belief in the existence of a fair approach in class, and in the encouragement and support of students to achieve their best. Areas for development were the use of student self-assessment and reflection on their work, and the provision of support for learners beyond the classroom.
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. A school team has developed our strategic directions for 2012–2014. These are:

- to improve the literacy skills of all students;
- to improve the numeracy skills of all students;
- to assist all students to reach their academic potential and ensure engagement across all areas of the curriculum;
- to continue to build on the positive links between Pennant Hills High School and our partner schools and other community networks that provide support for student learning; and
- to provide a quality learning environment for all students and a professional working environment for all staff.

School Priority 1

Outcome for 2012–2014

To improve the literacy skills of all students.

2012 targets to achieve this outcome include:

- all teachers explicitly teaching relevant content from the Pennant Hills High School Literacy Plan as well as developing effective strategies for the implementation of literacy in course work;
- the publication of weekly literacy rules through school communication channels to enhance awareness of literacy and to encourage further development of students’ interest and skills;
- the provision by all teachers of regular formative feedback to students on literacy levels and priorities for development; and
- incorporation of appropriate and challenging ICT strategies into all teaching and learning programs to engage students and enhance their literacy levels and ICT skills.

Our success will be measured by:

- an increase of at least 5% in the percentage of students who experience greater than state-wide minimum growth in literacy skills.

School Priority 2

Outcome for 2012–2014

To improve the numeracy skills of all students.

2012 targets to achieve this outcome include:

- all teachers explicitly teaching relevant content from the Pennant Hills High School Numeracy Plan as well as developing effective strategies for the implementation of numeracy in course work;
- the publication of weekly numeracy rules through school communication channels to enhance awareness of numeracy and to encourage further development of students’ interest and skills;
- the provision by all teachers of regular formative feedback to students on numeracy levels and priorities for development; and
- incorporation of appropriate and challenging ICT strategies into all teaching and learning programs to engage students and enhance their numeracy levels and ICT skills.

Our success will be measured by:

- an increase of at least 5% in the percentage of students who experience greater than state-wide minimum growth in numeracy skills.

School Priority 3

Outcome for 2012–2014

To assist all students to reach their academic potential and ensure engagement across all areas of the curriculum.

2012 targets to achieve this outcome include:

- the review and modification of teaching programs and assessment tasks as required so that elements of the intellectual quality and significance dimensions are embedded in each;
monitoring of the progress of National Curriculum syllabi and planning for effective implementation into teaching and learning;

- an increased focus on public recognition of academic achievement;
- greater implementation of Aboriginal Education perspectives across all areas of the curriculum; and
- consistent use of exemplar answers in the provision of feedback to students regarding completed assessment tasks and examinations.

Our success will be measured by:

- a greater focus on the Quality Teaching Frameworks and a review of all teaching programs and assessment strategies to ensure elements from the intellectual quality and significance dimensions are embedded; and
- a 5% increase in the number of students achieving Band 5 and 6 results at the Higher School Certificate.

School Priority 4

Outcome for 2012–2014

To further build on the positive links between Pennant Hills High School, our partner schools and other community support networks that can provide support for student learning.

2012 targets to achieve this outcome include:

- the investigation of strategies to increase opportunities for partner schools to participate in learning activities at Pennant Hills High School;
- the encouragement of faculties to develop business and industry links to provide significance to student learning; and
- further development of links with outside agencies such as the NSW Police Force, Northern Sydney Area Health Service and service clubs that provide resources.

Our success will be measured by:

- further increases in the number of programs to assist in both continuity of learning from Stage 3 to Stage 4 and in developing leadership in learning skills for Pennant Hills High School students.

- more community opportunities that support student learning, student welfare and school procedures.

School Priority 5

Outcome for 2012–2014

To provide a high quality learning environment for all students and a professional work environment for all staff.

2012 targets to achieve this outcome include:

- the training of school staff in PBEL;
- the linking of school welfare and discipline codes to PBEL;
- explicit teaching of the standards required to achieve at the highest levels; and
- active encouragement of students through the school merit award system to achieve at the highest level.

Our success will be measured by:

- the implementation of PBEL in identified areas of the school;
- an improvement in the physical environment of the school; and
- the consolidation of positive relationships between staff and students.
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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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: