Riverside Girls High School

Annual School Report

Your school, your community
Messages

Principal’s message

Riverside Girls High School is an exciting and rewarding place in which to learn and to teach. We are very fortunate to have an experienced and committed staff who daily provide quality learning experiences for our students. Most students, when asked what they enjoy about the school, talk about the teachers and the time they devote to ensuring students achieve their personal best in a caring and positive environment.

Also, our school is fortunate to have administrative staff dedicated to supporting both students and staff. We value their work immensely.

However, surveys of our local community revealed that Riverside has a low profile in the community. Survey results indicated opinions of the school are based on information other than the academic achievements of our students, our support of charities, the students' commitment to being socially aware or of the caring, expert teachers.

Therefore, in 2012 the school developed a promotions plan and held a community forum where students, staff, parents, friends and local residents had an opportunity to share their visions and expectations of the school. Using this information and the feedback from interviews with parents in local primary schools conducted by an independent researcher, the promotions team developed statements to reflect Riverside's identity. These statements have been endorsed by students and staff and also by the P & C.

Riverside is committed to developing “confident, independent and creative young women”.

- High expectations: excellence in learning
- A school of outstanding opportunity
- Where you connect, where you belong
- Expert teachers inspiring students
- Your school – your community
- Proudly educating generations of Riverside Girls

The school employed a promotions officer for 2 days a week to assist in the implementation of the plan.

Academic success continues to be a focus of the school. The HSC results were high, with growth above state for the top performing students. We achieved two “All Rounders” results (Band 6 in 10 units) and 78 Band 6 results.

I was very proud to be invited by Eastwood public school, another school in our Lane Cove network, to go on their biannual year 5 tour to Space Camp in Alabama USA. I was so intrigued with how this excursion stimulated an interest in science for student ‘trainee astronauts’ that Riverside will join Eastwood on their next trip to Alabama in September 2014.

In 2012, we continued to develop student leadership and encouraged community involvement in our planning by establishing a finance team where staff, parents and students worked together to provide recommendations to the principal on the use of school funds. Further community involvement was encouraged through participation at professional learning activities held on staff development days.

The school received a grant of $200,000 from the DEC to build a fully commercial kitchen. This amount did not cover the construction and I would like to thank the P and C for donating the funds to pay for the combination oven. The grand opening was a great success and especially for the TAS faculty who enjoyed showing the talents of students in their courses.

I am proud to be the principal of a great public school.

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.

Ms Belinda Kelly
Principal
P & C and/or School Council message

During 2012, Riverside Girls High School P&C continued to foster communication and participation between parents, carers, students, teachers and staff in many aspects of the Riverside community.

The P&C held meetings on the second Wednesday of each month during school terms, providing a valuable forum for parent discussion and feedback. All parents and carers were encouraged to attend and warmly welcomed. The minutes for all meetings are published on the P&C pages of the Riverside website.

At P&C meetings a number of guest speakers provided interesting details about education at Riverside including: Ms Vogelnest on her new role as Head Teacher, Teaching and Learning; Ms Cockburn, Drama teacher on the HSC Drama course; Ms Nikoletich, Deputy Principal on the new Year 10 end of year program; Ms Vogelnest, Head Teacher, Teaching and Learning on the new class set of iPads and their usage; Mr Jones, Riverside’s NSW Teachers Federation representative on the NSW state government Local Schools Local Decisions changes; and Ms Nikoletich, Deputy Principal on the canteen re-tendering process.

The P&C held an extraordinary meeting to discuss a possible application to the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program. This application gained P&C support but was unsuccessful.

The P&C provided the community representatives for the selection panels for the positions of: ESL Teacher; Math Teacher; Learning and Support Teacher; and History Teacher.

The majority of the P&C’s funds were provided by parent contributions collected by the school on behalf of the P&C. This was supplemented by proceeds of sausage sizzle and gelato cart fundraising activities at the Peta Pan Drama Production and on Open Day and Orientation Day. The P&C support also added to these events by providing refreshment catering and a strong air of community.

The P&C provided funding of $26,300 for the School Library; $3,400 to support Students representing Riverside at National Sport Competitions, the Peta Pan Drama Production and the Year 12 Graduation; and $28,850 for special projects, including a Kitchen Classroom Combi Oven, School Signage, Gym Volleyball Posts, a class set of iPads, a Ceiling Projector and a Performance Space PA System.

Communication with parents and carers has been achieved through the Riverside Currents monthly newsletter, P&C pages on the Riverside website, messages posted on the Parent Portal and email sent via the Parent Portal.

Mr Greg Tunnock
Riverside P&C President

Student representative’s message

Despite it being Ms Karoliny’s and Ms Lidman’s final year as coordinators, the Student Representative Council’s (SRC) involvement and overwhelming enthusiasm ensured that 2012 was a year to remember. We raised over $15,000 for our selected charities.

As usual, the SRC house representatives chose a charity and planned a fundraiser revolving around their chosen organisation. With O’Harris, Riverside was transformed from an everyday girls school into a world of dogs, cats, bunnies and birds to raise funds for the RSPCA. There is no doubt that this fundraiser was a hit with many of the girls enjoying the surprise visit from our retired deputy-principal, Mr Teece, and his own furry friends.

Mallinson’s fundraiser in early Term 2 was to raise awareness about the harmful effects of domestic violence. Despite the poignant message, girls had the opportunity to belt out their favourite tunes in the karaoke challenge, get creative with some DIY cupcakes and dress up as their masculine counterparts. The day was highlighted with a special guest speaker, the Hon. Victor Dominello, who discussed the significance of men in preventing violence against women and the importance of women speaking out.

Term 3 had 2 fundraisers from both Coen and Mackenzie. They were a great way for year 12 to celebrate their final weeks at Riverside. Everyone took a ‘Trip Down Memory Lane’, with the school full of childhood characters such as Mr and Mrs Twit, Dr Seuss’s Thing 1 and Thing 2 and lots of Minnie mice. The day raised funds for the Children’s Oncology Foundation and was an
absolute sensation, especially for those willing to embrace their younger selves.

Similarly, Mackenzie’s ‘40 Hour Famine’ challenged students to give up technology, social networking or furniture over 3 days. Those who succeeded in raising over $20 received a free sausage sandwich for their amazing contribution. The day also involved a guest appearance from the X-Factor dance group, Prolifique, and beat boxer, Genesis. This was enjoyed by those who are fans of the TV series.

It was great to welcome new representatives at the beginning of Term 4 following elections in August. As part of the SRC’s tradition, a handful of girls decided to continue Riverside’s annual Exodus Can Drive with the goal of collecting non-perishable items. We were fortunate to have Jeff Williams and Glenn Holdstock from the foundation to speak to us about the significance of our donations. It is clear that our contribution to the Exodus Foundation was helpful in creating a special Christmas for many less fortunate than us.

It is wonderful to see such a bright group of passionate students continuing to raise awareness and funds for causes that are clearly close to their hearts. We look forward to the coming year bringing success, challenge and opportunity. We would also like to welcome our new SRC coordinators, Mr Miles and Ms Glansbeek, and sincerely thank both Ms Karoliny and Ms Lidman for their commitment to student leadership throughout the past few years.

Julia Hood
Student representative

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>Gender</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<td>1007</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>957</td>
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An enrolment of 957 students in 2012 maintained overall enrolments at the same level as in 2011. In 2012 there was a return to six year seven class. Over 50% of students come from language backgrounds other than English with Cantonese, Mandarin and Korean being the largest. There was a decrease in the number of international students in 2012 with most continuing to come from China and Korea. Student mobility throughout the year continued to be significant to enrolment patterns.

Management of non-attendance

Monitoring student attendance remained a high priority in 2012, based on the high correlation between rates of attendance and high levels of student achievement. Student attendance (93.6%) continued to be above the state percentage and slightly above the regional figure. The school maintained its commitment to period by period attendance monitoring and follow-up of students with attendance issues through letters and ongoing case management coordinated by deputy principals with the student welfare team, parent and student interviews and the active involvement of our Home School Liaison Officer.

Post-school destinations

In 2012 95 year 12 students (62%) were offered university places for 2013 through the University Admissions Centre. Non-ATAR students pursued pathways via TAFE in 2013 or entry in the workforce.

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

In 2012 27% of students completing year 12 undertook vocational training across 12 vocational training courses. Hospitality was
offered at Riverside while other vocational training courses were accessed through TAFE or via school based traineeships as part of HSC accreditation. The majority of these students had chosen a non-ATAR pathway towards enrolment in TAFE or employment in 2013.

**Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification**

In 2012 96% of Year 12 completed the HSC while 4% were enrolled in a Pathway HSC or attained records of achievement.

**Staff information**

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

The school’s staffing entitlement in 2012 was 63.8. The school has a very experienced staff balanced with regular appointments of new scheme teachers.

**Staff establishment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>58*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
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<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<td>Counsellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>86.2</td>
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* 54 FTE

No staff identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

**Staff retention**

Riverside Girls has a high level of staff retention. A new Head Teacher Teaching and Learning was appointed in 2012 and there were two new appointments to the English and mathematics departments. Two teachers retired during 2012.

**Teacher qualifications**

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

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**Financial summary**

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

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<td>Tied funds</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
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<td>School-operated canteen</td>
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<td>Utilities</td>
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<td>Maintenance</td>
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<td>Total expenditure</td>
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<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
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A full copy of the school’s 2012 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 2012**

**Achievements**

**Arts**

**Visual Arts Prizes**

Eun Jung Son (year 11) and Claudia Widjaja (year 11) were selected for the National Art School Extension program. This is a prestigious course and is recognised towards their HSC. Students from all over NSW can apply.
Dana Kim (year 10) won the senior prize for Young in Art (Hunters’ Hill youth art prize) for a ceramic bust.

Eun Jung Son won the Ryde Council art award for International Women’s day.

Umi Graham won first place in the year 9/10 category for the Reconciliation Challenge. Her portrait of a famous indigenous female leader was exhibited at the Australian Museum.

In 2012, the coordinators of the band encouraged more public appearances. The Concert and Stage bands performed at Lane Cove shopping centre in December.

School Production 2012 – Peta Pan

The annual school production was an adaptation of J. M. Barrie’s Peter Pan, with our version, Peta Pan, exploring what happens when a girl does not want to grow up. As a girls’ school, we focused on issues relevant to today’s adolescent girls and therefore altered Peta’s gender.

The production drew on the resources of the entire school, with community support coming from the P and C, who donated $1000 towards costumes. The production incorporated elements of drama, music and dance, and demonstrated the talented students from across years 7 to 12.

Dance

During 2012, dance continued to be a popular activity at Riverside Girls High School. Students in Years 7 and 8 participated in specialist dance lessons during PDHPE lessons. Year 10 participated in a salsa dance unit and learned specialised salsa dancing techniques and skills in dance composition. Ms Jeanette Webb, a dance specialist teacher was employed by the school to teach the specialist dance lessons to all Year 10 classes. The salsa dance assessment formed part of the Year 10 RoSA.

Music

The number of students taking part in performance groups continued to grow in 2012. Main extracurricular groups included the concert band, stage band, string ensemble, choir and string trio as well as other smaller ensembles.

Students participated in a range of musical performances. The annual MECA Night (which featured extracurricular groups) included performances by various ensembles as well as individual performers.
Extra-curricular dance activities were offered to students throughout the year. A total of 44 students auditioned for two performing dance groups, The School Dance Company (a more senior and experienced group of dancers) and The School Dance Ensemble (a more junior group of dancers). Ms Tamara Mitchell continued her work with the school in 2012 as the dance teacher and choreographer for the School Dance Company. The group performed at school assemblies, The Sydney North Dance Festival, School Spectacular and The Ryde Schools Spectacular. It was a special year for the Senior Dance Company, being successful at very festival audition.

The 2012 School Dance Ensemble was led by Ms Rebecca Pagano who choreographed and trained the junior dancers both for a series of school-based performances and for the North Sydney Dance Festival.

In 2012, students had a variety of opportunities to audition for places at dance camps, companies, ensembles and workshops organised by The NSW Performing Arts Unit. Camps and workshops provided students with opportunities to learn new dance styles and techniques under the guidance of experienced and talented dance specialists and choreographers. The students who participated in the camps reported their experiences as very worthwhile and inspiring.

2012 was the first year Dance had an elective class for years 9 and 10. The course proved to be very popular and was enjoyed by all participants. Students participated in a wide variety of dance styles including Bollywood, hip-hop, cultural dance and contemporary, aiming to improve technique and grasp the basic dance elements in each style.

Riverside Dance Ensemble

Sport

Students have the opportunity to participate and compete in a diverse range of sports at many different levels. Riverside had a very successful year as overall zone champion school.

At the school swimming carnival, the winning house was Coen with runners-up O’Harris. Success was again achieved at the zone carnival with Riverside winning the overall point score for the fifth year in a row. Riverside also had 4 age champions at the zone swimming carnival – Catherine Ogilvie, Taylor Byrne, Sophie Taylor and Laura Crockart.

Riverside provided a strong team for the North West Met Zone at the Regional Swimming Carnival. A number of very successful individual swimmers as well as age relay teams qualified for the Combined High Schools (CHS) State carnival. Catherine Ogilvie, Ashleigh Wisniewski, Sophie Taylor and Laura Crockart, together with the U14 and U16 freestyle relay teams and the Junior medley relay team, competed at the All Schools carnival. Laura Crockart and Sophie Taylor both won medals in their individual events and went on to represent NSW at Nationals.

The next major carnival was the Cross Country held at Tarban Creek. Coen house were the overall winners with O’Harris the runners-up. At the zone carnival Sahmia Axe was 15yrs Age champion and our school placed 1st in the zone. Our U14, U16 and U17 teams all represented the zone at the area carnival as well as eight individual runners. Laura Crockart went on to represent Sydney North at the CHS Cross country championships and was a member of the Gold medal team.

The school athletics carnival was held at the Olympic Stadium Homebush. Coen house won this carnival, with McKenzie the runners up. Over 100 students went to the zone athletics carnival, where Riverside won for the first time in many years. Thirty girls competed at Regional Athletics in individual and relay track and field events. Chloe Davis, Ebony Burnard, Amy Sneddon and Xanthis Friel medalled at this carnival and went on to compete at CHS. Ebony Burnard was successful in winning two bronze medals in 1500m walk and shot put at CHS State championships.
The 2012 year for trampolining and gymnastics was a highly successful one. Riverside out numbered many other schools at regional level and did extremely well at state. At CHS the following girls won medals: Division E Catherine Ogilvie, Division D Sasha Kendall and Division B Holly Threlfo. Maia Kostic-Woolcock and Holly Gilbert competed in the Rhythmic Gymnastics competition where both performed well and received medals. Riverside had a strong presence at CHS Trampolining championships making up 15 of the 25 competitors. We were able to gain 5 with Sophie Trigona, Hope Rosenberg, Rosie Bisset, Anne Vervoort and Nicola Bolton.

As with previous years, we entered many knockout competitions including basketball, netball, hockey, soccer, tennis, softball, baseball, volleyball, touch football and waterpolo. We also competed in a number of gala days including futsal, netball, 7s touch rugby and basketball.

Our most successful teams this year were our baseball and futsal gala teams. The Open baseball team was successful in winning their knockout games and are Sydney North Regional champions.

In Futsal our U16 team participated in the semi-finals at the State championships and placed third overall.

New sports to Riverside this year included orienteering, 7s touch rugby and rowing. Forty students in years 7 to 10 competed at the orienteering regional championships at St Ives showground. It was challenging courses for some, having to run cross-country and learn to read a map, problem solve and trust decisions made. Renae Barber, Anastasia Baldwin and Anne Vervoort were the winners of their age divisions, with Riverside Girls winning best school. Anne Vervoort went on to compete at NSW schools orienteering championships and placed second in her event.

Year 9 students competed in the Zone Grade Sport competition on Mondays in Terms 2 and 3. In Term 2 our first placed soccer team won the grade competition.

Both year 7 and year 8 have represented Riverside at the Zone Games Day. In term 4 year 7 participated in our annual five day swim school program, learning survival swimming skills, dry rescue skills and resuscitation as well as furthering their personal swimming skills.

The Annual Year 9 ski trip to Mt Hotham and Falls Creek was held in August with over 40 students attending. Once again students progressed quickly in developing the skills of skiing over the 4 days in the mountains.

Other

AltTEN8 program for Year 10

In 2012, Riverside trialled a new alternative 8 day program for year 10 at the end of term 4.

AltTEN8 was a three day program consisting of a mixture of real-world project options, an Aboriginal bush culture experience, engaging guest speakers on Cyber Safety and Self Defence, as well as the chance for girls to explore in Zumba and Bollywood workshops.

It was clear from the feedback students appreciated the chance to engage in activities where they assumed greater responsibility for their own learning. Remarkable work was completed in the 3 day projects. Of particular note was the garden created by the science environmental project group, amazing gingerbread houses in food technology, a
beautiful wall hanging made in the textiles workshop to be displayed in the principal’s office and the artistic tables painted by our visual art experts.

Duke of Edinburgh

Riverside has only been in the program since 2012, yet a couple of girls from our first bronze group are going to start their gold award next year.

14 year 9 students started the bronze award, while 27 students started in year 10. 5 students from years 10 and 11 started the silver program.

The adventurous journey component has been very successful using Kangaroo Valley Safaris for all our expeditions. Outsourcing this component has been vital for the success of the program.

Eight staff rotate through the adventurous overnight excursions. Their support is integral to the success of the program.

The students are very self-motivated and monitoring happens with meetings once or twice a term.

Year 9 Commerce entrepreneurs program

At the end of Term 3, 2012 Year 9 commerce students planned, organised and ran their own small businesses in the project “Commerce in the Quad”. Stalls included cupcakes, sushi, jewellery and sausage sizzles. The event raised an impressive $1172.15 for the Cancer Council of Australia and all students and teachers were extremely proud of this result.

The students also developed collaboration skills through team work as well as knowledge of the many functions of a business. The students reported that one of the best things about the project was seeing their own ideas flourish and come to life on the day.

Year 12 Geography Field trip

As part of Riverside’s philosophy to provide new opportunities for students to develop their skills and abilities, year 12 Geography experienced an adventure exploring the shores of Kangaroo Valley for their study on local tourism. Twenty students, along with Ms Burgmann and Mr James, enjoyed a challenging program of orienteering, camping and canoeing. For many girls it was their first ever camping experience and they developed numerous new skills and strengths.

Geography students are required to study a local economic activity and selected the small business ‘Kangaroo Valley Safaris’. They had to be customers and so learnt navigation skills required for orienteering and were required to cross rivers in canoes, climb steep slopes and search rugged terrain to find clues. This experience not only consolidated their geographic knowledge and skills but developed confidence and critical thinking abilities.

Mock trial

In 2012, the Mock Trial team continued their run of success with a place in the top 32 schools in the state. A team of ten girls from years 10 and 11 bettered their placing from 2011, competing and winning against teams from selective high schools.

Young Scientist Competition

The science faculty showcased its strong commitment to developing student skills in scientific thinking, creativity and problem solving. Year 10 student, Genevieve Warzecha, was awarded “The Certificate of Excellence” in the prestigious STANSW “Young Scientist” Competition for her independent scientific investigation in environmental chemistry.

English competitions
Through their English courses, many more junior students participated in The Dorothea McKellar poetry competition and the Whitlam Institute “What Matters” writing competition, receiving participation certificates.

In 2012, students through years 7 – 11 participated in the English, Writing and Spelling competitions through International Competitions and Assessments for Schools. 70% of our participants in the writing competition received certificates for high achievement including thirteen credits, six distinctions and two high distinctions. There was a similar result in the English competition with fifteen credits, three distinctions and one high distinction which is an excellent achievement of academic success in the international arena.

Kate McFarlane at the University of Sydney state reception for distinction candidates

**Tournament of the Minds**

In only Riverside’s second year of participating in the Tournament of the Minds competition, two teams participated in the Northern Sydney Regional competition.

This competition provides the opportunity for students from years 7 to 10 to work collaboratively to solve a problem.

The Maths Engineering team, made up of novices produced an enjoyable and creative presentation.

The Applied Technology team’s (pictured below) solution was excellent, gaining them the title of regional champions and a place in the state finals.

Once again the school is indebted to Mrs Ruth McConnell, parent and facilitator of this program.

Rebecca Williams, Renae Barber, Kalei Barger, Sian Sykes (front with trophy), May Hingston, Colleen McConnell, Jessica Ellis

**Mind and Morality**

Three students, Teresa Fischer, Julia Hood and Elisa Lu, participated in the University of Sydney’s Mind and Morality course over the winter holidays. The course is designed to challenge students’ ways of thinking and to question the way in which we perceive the world. It deals with issues such as the nature of mind, morality, and other philosophical topics with the aim of improving our critical thinking. Although the course counts as a HSC unit of study, it also gives students the opportunity to experience university life and earn six credit points towards a degree at the University of Sydney.

These three students have learnt how to construct persuasive arguments and apply these skills in their essays. The students were assessed through two 1000-word essays (one on Mind, and the other on Personal Identity or Artificial Intelligence), a 2000-word essay on Ethics and their overall participation in class. It is clear that this course has been beneficial for all the students, with two of them achieving a distinction.

**Debating and Public speaking**

Riverside continued its commitment to public speaking and debating by entering all debating and speaking competitions coordinated by the Department of Education and Communities.

Riverside had:

- 2 teams in the years 7/8 competition
- 2 teams in the years 9/10 competition
- 1 team in year 11 Karl Cramp competition
- 1 team in year 12 Hume Barbour competition
• 2 students each in the Sydney Morning Herald Plain English Speaking Award (for senior students) and the Legacy Junior Public Speaking Competition.

Success was achieved in the following areas:

• State Finalist in the Sydney Morning Herald Plain English Speaking Competition - Greer Brennan year 12
• Regional Finalist in the Legacy Public Speaking competition - Rebecca Williams year 9
• Northern Sydney Regional Team member at the Junior State Debating Championships and Zone Finalist in the Sydney Morning Herald Plain English Speaking competition - Lucy Burke year 10
• Zone Finalist Legacy Public Speaking competition - Sian Sykes year 9
• Zone Champions - Year 8 Debating Team

Senior Citizens Morning tea

In term 1 Hospitality students with their Hospitality teacher prepared a morning tea for the senior citizens of Hunters Hill to celebrate Seniors’ Week. Eight dedicated and committed students arrived early to school and prepared sandwiches, cakes and slices for 150 guests. Five of those students continued to the Town Hall where they served the food, tea and coffee to the guests and happily assisted the council staff in the clean-up.

National Year of Reading

To celebrate the National Year of Reading, the Technical and Applied Studies (TAS) faculty, in conjunction with the Librarian and Mr Blundell, held a Mothers’ Day morning tea on the 9th May. Students were invited to bring a guest, mother, grandmother or significant person to attend the morning tea. Year 10 Food Technology students with their teachers planned the details of the event, selected the most appropriate recipe and baked 160 scones.

Claudia Widjaja of year 11 was commissioned to design the invitation which was delightful and captured the essence of the event. The Year 10 students decorated the hall with the assistance of the TAS staff and performed the challenging tasks of hosting on the day. Thanks to the TAS staff, Librarian Mrs Chamaoun, Mr Blundell and our hard working students the event was a roaring success and will be continued in 2013.

Commercial kitchen opening

The Department of Public Works commenced the construction of our new fully commercial kitchen in May. This construction process took a full term and the resultant kitchen is amazing and a delight for staff and students.

On Wednesday September 5 year 12 Hospitality students prepared a scrumptious buffet luncheon for 60 dignitaries, to officially open the kitchen facility. All TAS students embraced the opportunity to assist, year 10 Food Technology undertook waitressing duties and year 11 ITVET and Year 9 IST students designed menus and provided technology support.

Mr Craig O’Shea (Manager, Assets Management Unit), Ms Belinda Kelly (principal), Ms Deb Ainsley (Assets Management Unit) and Ms Jane Simmons (Regional Director, Northern Sydney)

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.
The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

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

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

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

Reading – NAPLAN Year 7

There was an improvement in the number of students achieving in bands 8 and 9 when compared to previous years. 74% of year 7 students achieved in the top 3 bands of the reading test.

Students achieved results above both the state and similar schools group averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average score, 2012</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SSG</th>
<th>State DEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number in Band</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage in Bands</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Average 2008-2012</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>State DEC % in Band 2012</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

Year 7 students performed above state average. There was an improvement in the percentage of students achieving in bands 8 and 9. 65% of students achieved in the top 3 bands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average score, 2012</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SSG</th>
<th>State DEC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number in Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage in Bands</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Average 2008-2012</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG % in Band 2012</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State DEC % in Band 2012</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading – NAPLAN Year 9

Results in reading were well above both state and similar schools group averages. 69% of students achieved results in the top 3 bands. The number of Riverside students achieving a band 10 was more than double the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average score, 2012</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SSG</th>
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<td>Number in Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage in Bands</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Average 2008-2012</td>
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<td>10.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSG % in Band 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>State DEC % in Band 2012</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

Results in numeracy were above state average. 68% of students achieved results in the top 3 bands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average score, 2012</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SSG</th>
<th>State DEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number in Band</td>
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<td>Percentage in Bands</td>
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<td>School Average 2008-2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSG % in Band 2012</td>
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<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State DEC % in Band 2012</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RoSA

Procedures are in place for students who leave school before completing the higher school certificate. In 2012 there were no students in this category.

Higher School Certificate

13 HSC course results were above the state average including ancient history, business studies, drama, English (advanced, standard, ESL extension 1), general maths, hospitality exam, legal studies, modern history, PDHPE and textiles and design.

The English/ESL/drama faculty had significant success being ranked 89th in the top 100 performing schools for English in the state.

As a cohort, students at Riverside Girls High School achieved a significantly higher result than the state average for English Advanced continuing an upward trend which has continued consistently since 2006. 57 Students undertook study in this course. 12 students (21.05%) of students received a result in Band 6 compared to 12.58% across the state which is significantly (9.47%) above the state average. 27 students (47.36) achieved a result in Bank 5 which again is significantly above the state average of 41.1%. 15 students (26.31) received a result in Band 4.
compared to 34.66% across whilst the remaining 3 students received a result in Band 3 (5.25%) compared to 10.29% across the state.

Similarly, results in the **Standard English** course continue the upward trend of the last several years and have been the best since 2009. 75% of students in the course achieved results in bands 4 and 5 compared to 51% across the state. The remaining 17 (26%) students received results in band 3 (13) and band 2 (4) compared to 45% across the state.

In 2012, 16 students undertook the **ESL** course at Riverside, with 4 students achieving a Band 5 (25%), above the State average of 21%. This year’s cohort performed to expectation with most results in the Band 5, 4 and 3, and with no students in Band 1. Many students performed very well to achieve creditable Band 3 and 4 results, given their very recent arrival in Australia and at Riverside.

**English Extension 1**

There were 12 candidates who undertook the Module: Texts and Ways of Thinking – Elective 2 Romanticism. Of those 4 received E4s (33.33%) compared to 24.95% across the State. 8 candidates received an E3 (66.66%) compared to 62.16%. 100% of students received either an E4 or E3 compared to 87.11%. Overall, Riverside’s results were 0.43% above the state average. This outcome continues the upward trend in this course.

**English Extension 2**

There were 6 candidates who completed Extension 2, the majority achieving results in band E4 (66.66%) compared to 21.88% across the state and 33.33% in band E3 compared to 56.55% across the state, which continues the upward trend in this course.

Students successfully completed our first English Studies course in 2012. The students enjoyed the wide variety of learning activities as well as texts such as Ahn Do’s, “The Happiest Refugee”. It was pleasing to observe, over the period of the course, the development of the students’ in confidence enjoyment which resulted in academic success that some had not experienced in English before.

**Drama**

In Senior Drama, students once again achieved outstanding success in 2012. Fifteen students completed the HSC Drama course and 73.32% of them achieved results in bands 5 and 6 compared to 43.85% across the state. Three students or 20% of girls achieved results in band 3 compared to 38.74% across the state. These results build upon the similarly excellent results in HSC Drama achieved in 2011 and reflect the solid results across all courses in this faculty.

**HSC: Relative performance from Year 10 (value-added)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Band</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 2012</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Average 2008-2012</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG Average 2012</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The difference between the SSG average and school average indicate that middle and high performing students have improved on their performance since year 10. Teachers provide extensive and personal feedback to these students and indicate that students. This achievement also indicates that students feel supported to achieve their personal best.

**Significant programs and initiatives**

**Aboriginal education**

Whole school initiatives in the area of Aboriginal education have developed a deeper understanding and respect for the Aboriginal culture and community. Individually, the students who identify as Aboriginal have Personalised Learning Plans which allow the girls to identify their personal goals and to review their progress on an annual basis. Each of the girls has undertaken on-line assessment of their strengths in order to identify areas where they are likely to flourish.

Regional Aboriginal Liaison advisers link closely with the school to ensure that each of the students is able to link with appropriate workplace or tertiary opportunities.
All teachers attended a day at Mougamarra, a site near Cowan that has extreme significance to indigenous Australians because of rock carvings. This site is quite difficult to access and rarely open to the public. The regional Aboriginal consultant ensured this day proved valuable in developing teachers’ awareness of Aboriginal culture. He has subsequently provided additional support with curriculum planning for Aboriginal education.

**Indigenous Perspectives**

The Year 9 Science Extension class explored Indigenous perspectives as enrichment activities within their Ecology unit. They developed a deeper understanding of our local Guringai and their land management practices. The students tried their hand at “peck & grove” rock engraving to make signpost stones for the Riverside bush tucker garden. They also identified and labelled bush tucker plants with botanic details along with their modern and traditional culinary and medicinal uses.

The students were surveyed and identified these activities as the most fun and interesting they’d had all year. “Learning about this unique culture that is so significant to where we are now living, gave me a new way to think.”

Eleven students successfully participated in the “Preserving Aboriginal Heritage” poster competition where they were presented with hand painted Kangaroo totem boomerangs during a fieldtrip to the Aboriginal Heritage Office, Northbridge.

Ms Warzecha, their teacher, was recognised for her commitment to raising awareness of indigenous perspectives with a Metropolitan North Regional Award presented at a ceremony at the new Gurrawa Aboriginal Education Centre, the Nth Beaches TaFE in early December.

MS Belinda Kelly (Principal), Ms Tracey Warzecha, Ms Jane Simmons (Northern Sydney, Regional Director)

**Multicultural education**

Riverside has a rich and culturally diverse school community with over 50% of the students coming from Language Backgrounds Other Than English. Students and teachers are encouraged to value, appreciate and embrace this cultural, linguistic and religious diversity to help sustain a harmonious and inclusive school environment.

To ensure the school’s commitment to our rich diversity and to anti-racism, an Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) is trained each year and it is that teacher’s role to educate, act as a mediator and mentor and promote acceptance and the peaceful resolution of conflict. The ARCO’s role is promoted within the school through posters and TV screens, which identify the ARCO and where he or she can be found within the school.

A continuing initiative in 2012 was the inclusion of an International student representative in the SRC, enabling this representative to be involved in all SRC activities and fund raising events,
attending SRC roll group and meetings, and to provide a valuable conduit of information to further the inclusion and participation of international students at Riverside. Some of the highlights included attending the International Woman’s Day Breakfast and the SRC Leadership workshops.

In 2012, many of our LBOTE and international students represented the school by serving as guides and hosting a barbecue for a large delegation of secondary teachers and principals visiting from China.

English as a Second Language (ESL) is essential learning support at Riverside due to the large percentage of LBOTE (Language Backgrounds Other Than English) students including a significant number of full-fee paying international students from countries such as China, Korea and Hong Kong.

ESL parallel classes operate in the junior years in English (years 7-10) and the English ESL Preliminary and HSC courses are offered in years 11 and 12 for those students who are eligible. In addition to these English classes, the ESL students (years 7-12) are supported where possible in language dense subjects across the curriculum such as junior History and Science, and senior Business Studies. Seniors are also able to attend tutorials where students work in small groups or independently to further consolidate, revise and practise their English language skills.

The progress of ESL students is monitored by the ESL teachers to determine the levels of assistance required through diagnostic testing. Students are actively encouraged to seek assistance from ESL staff for any area of difficulty they might be experiencing in English and across the curriculum.

In 2012, Riverside continued to commit extra resources to ESL to enable the funding of another ESL teacher (part time), allowing extra tutorial and classroom support across a wide range of curriculum areas. The ESL teachers were further supported through continuing professional development in the form of network meetings and courses, as well as training to support the English Fundamentals course. These initiatives highlight the importance of providing ESL support for the many students who make up this diverse cohort, as well as Riverside’s ongoing commitment to supporting students’ language needs.

Multicultural education is also a specific focus in the English curriculum where issues of migration, indigenous issues and culture, and cultural, language and religious diversity are explored through a wide variety of texts in both the junior and senior school, through texts such as “Immigrant Chronicle” by Peter Skrzynecki, “Swallow the Air” by Tara June Winch, “Beneath Clouds” directed by Ivan Sen, “Parvana” by Deborah Ellis, the poetry of Jack Davis, “Whale Rider” directed by Niki Caro and a range of multicultural book collections.

An important event held at the end of Term 3, 2012, as in preceding years, was a farewell luncheon for the Year 12 International students, to celebrate their time at Riverside as part of the school community and mark the successful conclusion of their studies at the school.

Other programs
Student Welfare

The focus of Student Welfare at Riverside is to establish a framework within the school’s overall curriculum that underpins the development of strong, confident young women able to deal with life’s challenges in a mature and assertive manner.

This year we have focussed on building stronger links with the parent community by adding to the parent forum program a Q & A Forum in Term 1. This forum was attended by 65 parents (mainly of Year 7 students) who were able to ask questions of the many teachers who attended.

Weekly team meetings allow the student welfare team to develop practical skills in dealing with the many issues that may arise within the student body. The team consists of a Head Teacher, a supervising Deputy Principal, school counsellor and 7 year advisers. This year saw the creation of a new role within the team, that of Overseas Student Contact, with the specific responsibility of monitoring enrolment processes and wellbeing of our international students.

The annual Student Welfare Conference was attended by two aspiring year advisers as well as parent representative volunteer Julieanne Jones in addition to our regular team members. The guest speaker was Grant McKell, psychologist, who spoke about managing troubled behaviour in adolescents. The team planned a whole-school camp program introducing two-night camps each
for Year 8 and Year 12 to complement the extra-curricular events already in place across the school. These camps will focus on developing an intrinsic sense of belonging within these cohorts.

The highly successful community mentoring scheme was once again held during terms 2 and 3 with 18 students being matched with a TAFE trained adult mentor.

The first student camp, for Year 8, was held at Narrabeen Sport and Recreation Camp in Term 4. It was voted a great success by the more than 140 girls who were able to attend.

Year 9 students undertook two days of peer leader training in preparation for welcoming the 2013 year 7 cohort. All year 9 students not attending the annual ski camp held a BBQ and film afternoon.

A six week mindfulness program was conducted with 28 students from Year 10 participating. The course focussed on stress management and was received well by the participants who reported that they were feeling more able to increase their calmness, identify their stress and handle it more productively.

**Anti-Bullying Plan**

Riverside provides an inclusive environment where diversity is affirmed, individuals respected and harmony valued. The provision of quality education demands that students’ learning needs are met in a safe, secure and supportive environment. At Riverside, our strategy has evolved over the last 6 years and is evaluated annually by the Student Welfare Team and School Executive Team.

A copy of the RGHS Mean free action plan is found at [www.riverside.nsw.edu.au](http://www.riverside.nsw.edu.au) and on the staff intranet.

Since schools exist in a society where intimidation and harassment occur, RGHS acknowledges the role it has in the social education and development of resilience in its community.

Mean behaviours occurring in the school context will be directly addressed, implicitly and explicitly, through the student, staff and parent community.

The school addresses meanness by:

- Using the SolveIt interview process for initial reports of repeated meanness;
- Identifying & implementing common conflict resolution strategies including a mediation process called SortIt;
- Ensuring Year 7 students entering the school undergo teaching & learning about the nature of meanness, including techno-mean;
- Responding to recurrences of extreme meanness via the Student Management System;
- Including specific teaching about meanness in the AB (Anarchy to Belonging) project, English & PDHPE;
- Ensuring that student activities such as camps maximize student interaction;
- Facilitating continual self-evaluation of staff practice; and
- Implementing regular staff professional development.

The school undertakes to detail its anti-bullying strategy prior to students enrolling by circulars handed out at Orientation and at parent evening forum during Term 4. A subsequent parent forum outlines school processes in further detail in week 5 of Term 1.

Details of the school processes are published in the school diary (along with Kids Helpline contact details) and reinforced at Year meetings and through active implementation.

Year 7 are introduced to the fundamental guidelines of social relationships during the initial Peer Support training. Students also develop a publisher pamphlet on available help in their ICT lessons during Term 1. Subsequent to this a whole day’s curriculum on Techno-meanness is planned around activities developed to give students a deep understanding of the processes.

Incidents of conflict are dealt with through assisted mediation until girls in senior years are confident to deal with differences in a mature and considered manner. If not mediation is provided by trained staff.

The prevalence of mean behaviours is monitored by the student welfare team with regard to:

- Age range of students involved in incidents of meanness;
- Self-report feedback from student who have been targets;
• Recurrences within the same social groups; and
• Self-report feedback of student confidence in applying conflict resolution strategies.

Progress on 2012 targets

Target 1

Curriculum and Assessment in Literacy

 Improve student academic performance in literacy with a focus on the gifted and talented.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome included:

• Improved student literacy for students in upper bands in NAPLAN (within school match) by 1%.
• Improved reading performance in NAPLAN (within school match) by 1%.
• Increased performance in at least a third of the applied comprehension items.

Our achievements include:

• Teachers are confident to use SMART 2 data to impact on their teaching and learning of literacy;
• All faculties completed detailed data analyses of their NAPLAN and HSC results;
• Teachers shared knowledge of using technology to teach literacy;
• An across school team was established to celebrate the national year of reading;
• An increase in the use of the library area, in borrowing, with high participation and fun whole school events to celebrate reading;
• New suggested reading lists developed based on borrowing habits; and
• A parent forum conducted on how to increase the amount of reading their child does.

Target 2

Curriculum and Assessment in Numeracy

 Improve student academic performance in numeracy with a focus on the gifted and talented.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome included:

• Improved numeracy for students in upper bands in NAPLAN (within school match) by 1%.
• Improve student numeracy in top bands by 2%.

Our achievements include:

• Teaching programs show evidence of NAPLAN analysis affecting the teaching focus in classrooms;
• Faculties implemented cross curricular learning projects in stage 4 which required explicit teaching of numeracy skills;
• Increased use of Mathletics as a learning tool for students to improve accuracy and recall of number facts; and
• Students participated within school problem solving competitions and in external challenges such as Maths Olympiad and Mathematics challenge for young Australians, Tournament of the minds.

Target 3

Curriculum and Student Engagement and Attainment

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome included:

• All matched students achieving 60% expected growth by 2014 with a focus on students at proficiency level (bands 5 and 6); and
• Develop and implement a curriculum model that uses a strong foundation of wellbeing skills to support student creativity and innovation.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome included:

• Increased student performance with a focus on student engagement in and for learning
  - Half matched students achieving 60% growth in NAPLAN;
  - Increased student participation in classroom learning activities with a focus on enhancing cross curricular and project based curriculum pedagogy; and
  - Improved student HSC performance in at least 2 subjects as measured by increased value added results.
• To improve student outcomes through a focus on enhancing professional learning communities and networks
  - Increase student participation in school teams, focus groups and community partnerships.

Our achievements include:

• A gifted and talented students (GATS) team formed to revise policies and procedures;
• year 7 student interested in placement in the GATS class where required to present a portfolio of work;
• Mentoring program introduced for Stage 6 GATS students;
• Innovative initiatives introduced such as the “Big Picture” cross curricular units (Science and HSIE) which received very positive evaluations from students;
• End of year 10 program Alten8 conducted to increase end of year attendance and to celebrate effort and creativity;
• More newsletter articles were written by students telling their stories of success;
• Students participated in school decisions making and project teams including finance team, events management team
• Positive community feedback on end of year assemblies was realised as student achievement of personal best recognised; and
• A community forum identified the core values important to all members of the school community. This language is now visible in all school documentation.

School evaluation
NSW public schools conduct evaluation to support the effective implementation of the school plan. In 2012 our school carried out evaluation of Science.

Background
During 2012 the science faculty completed a formal evaluation process. The focus areas selected included the use of ICT to enhance Teaching and Learning; Teacher Attitudes and how the faculty plans to achieve school targets in Literacy, Numeracy and Student Engagement.

The purpose of faculty evaluation is to improve all that we do. It is a key element of continuous school improvement being the basis for informed planning and decision making. It leads to the implementation of sustained change and helps to build the internal capacity of a school to change and improve. Through the evaluation process schools demonstrate their accountability to the broader community. Evaluation is directed toward improving student learning outcomes and allows staff to focus on organisational improvement.

Priorities within the process were the collaboration of staff, transparency and the identification of specific achievable and sustainable goals.

The evaluation team consisted of a Deputy Principal, two Head Teachers and a Classroom Teacher. The review process used a range of tools including teacher interviews, student focus groups, student and parent surveys and classroom observation.

Findings and conclusions
The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support Teaching and Learning

The science faculty demonstrated outstanding performance in the use of ICT featuring seamless flow in moving from using technology to other learning experiences with each lesson e.g. experiments, note making, quizzes and modelling. In addition, ICT was used to introduce, explain and reinforce difficult concepts and to engender deep learning. The ease with which all teachers applied these practices was impressive.

The success of the use of ICT is underpinned by teaching programs which are available to students and teachers alike in electronic format. A wide range of teaching resources are available for each component of the teaching programs supporting teachers to tailor the learning experience to the needs of individual students and classes.

Students and parents identify the faculty as clear leaders in the use of ICT at Riverside. They acknowledge that ICT is used to provide relevant structure across each course and enhanced student engagement by bringing science to life. Students articulated that they used a broad range of ICT tools and that these were a feature of each lesson.

It was observed that ICT was just one of many tools used to create vibrant and exciting classroom environments and that teacher expertise and confidence in using technology in a meaningful way was evident in all lessons, lesson plans and teaching programs. Teachers demonstrated the ability to use technology to locate information and resources to support classrooms discussion as they evolved in lessons.
It was evident that teacher expertise in the use of ICT to enhance learning was a result of the leadership of the head teacher. His commitment, ongoing support and understanding of how the innovative use of technology make learning dynamic has resulted in dramatic changes to the landscape of learning in the science faculty over the past three years.

Teacher Attitudes

Teacher professionalism is an area of acknowledged strength. Individuals are treated ethically, fairly and justly. Teachers promote tolerance, sensitivity to and appreciation of a diversity of cultures, attitudes and values. They actively seek and engage in training and development activities to enhance professional capacities.

High levels of teacher morale is evident through engagement in formal and informal discussion about learning and teaching, whereby teachers demonstrate their enthusiasm, commitment and enjoyment.

Positive relationships are a feature of this faculty whereby teachers and students work together in cooperative learning environments and teachers give and receive professional and personal support. A tangible atmosphere of professional respect and collaboration was identified by all the evaluation team during all processes of the evaluation.

Data from student focus groups identified that students felt supported and safe in class and that teachers worked to develop and maintain positive relationships with students. This was also evident in classroom observations.

School Planning and Targets

Literacy was a feature of all lessons observed. Teachers are skilled in dealing with the metalanguage within each lesson and it is embedded in all programs across years seven to twelve. Extensive use of scaffolding assists students to develop confidence in writing paragraphs with in tasks. Oral presentation skills are assessed in years eight and nine.

Research tasks are designed to ensure students avoid plagiarism. In addition, a whole school emphasis on developing inference skills is a teacher focus.

Teachers recognise that including literacy in a breadth of ways will continue to be a challenge especially in the context of the extensive metalanguage understanding necessary for effective learning in this curriculum area.

A numeracy rich environment is evident in all lessons with strengths being in the construction and analysis of data with explicit links to number skills during lessons.

As in the ICT focus area, student engagement was found to be a highlight of the faculty. Whilst the new science laboratories have given the physical environment a clear boost the excellent quality of the teaching and learning process allows student engagement to be a stand out performance for this faculty. Teachers lead calm and organised class environments where students participate in hands on activities, interactive lessons and demonstrations that allow high levels of engagement. The professionalism and passion of teachers who are always willing to try more things and to vary student experience allows continuous engagement to underpin learning.

Students referred to the skill base of their teachers and acknowledged their expertise in lesson sequencing and linking learning to real life. They also enjoy the opportunities the curriculum allows for field work and the outdoor classroom experience.

Future directions

2013 will see the science faculty preparing to implement the National Curriculum in 2014.

High levels of teacher morale, professionalism, positive relationships and strong leadership will assist staff to achieve this. Targets include extensive programming, redevelopment of assessment procedures and tasks. The faculty aims to continue to develop their ICT skills and competencies to enable them to successfully incorporate ICT into science lessons. They also plan to continue to develop strategies to support students in the areas of numeracy and literacy.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2012 the school sought the opinions of parents, students, teachers and the general public about the perceived strengths and reputation of our school.
Surveys of members of the wider community indicate that our reputation is positive. The terminology most often used to describe their perceptions included polite and well-mannered students, individualised attention to support students and their learning, quality education with a reputation for good academic results.

Researching the views of students, staff and parents involved the use of surveys and forums. We asked respondents to identify the strengths of Riverside, its reputation, issues the school is facing and the most desired characteristics of students in the 2020 cohort.

Results indicated that the strengths of our school include supportive and passionate teachers, the nurturing environment, academic excellence, strong student welfare and broad extra-curricular activities, social justice, caring and excellent staff, appreciation of students, the diversity of the student population, the reputation of the school, opportunities provided to students and the friendly and supportive atmosphere.

The terms most identified as representing the school’s reputation in the community include: confidence, high achieving, a good school, academic, well mannered, proud, supportive, diversity and dedicated.

There was a strong connect between responses of all respondents in relation to perceptions of Riverside Girls High School now and in the vision for student graduates i.e. confident, strong, resilient, socially engaged, informed, self-aware, creative, innovative and independent.

It is clear from our results that parents are well aware of the great strengths within the school, whilst acknowledging that the community judges the school on student appearance (uniform) rather than a knowledge of our students, staff and our combined achievements.

As a result of the findings we plan to focus on two issues in 2013. Firstly, a whole school approach to develop strategies leading to improvements in uniform compliance and a focus on responsible behaviour in relation to litter in the playground. Secondly, increased publicity will indicate the breadth and depth of activities girls engage in both at school and on behalf of the school in the wider community. This will be of value in enhancing the already sound reputation the school has in the local community.

Professional learning

In 2012, staff engaged in a variety of professional learning experiences delivered through whole school programs as well as courses offered by Northern Sydney Region and private providers. There was a focus on utilising the skills of staff to enhance teaching and learning practice with a focus on differentiating the curriculum. Staff engaged in whole day faculty based workshops where quality work tasks were produced.

Once again the afterschool ICT workshops coordinator by staff member, Leonore Glansbeek were well attended. Teachers also engaged in CPR training, leadership and career development opportunities, student welfare and equity, quality teaching and blogging.

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.

School priority 1

Outcome for 2012–2014

Curriculum and Assessment in Literacy

Improve student academic performance in literacy with a focus on the gifted and talented.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Improved student literacy for students in upper bands in NAPLAN (within school match) by 1%;
- Improve reading performance in NAPLAN (within school match) by 1%; and
- Increased performance in at least a third of the applied comprehension items.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Professional learning in differentiation with a focus on high performance learning skills;
- Professional learning in models such as Bloom’s taxonomy to develop students higher order thinking skills;
- All lessons to include writing for an extended period;
Greater use of pre-testing to inform staff of student knowledge and establish a baseline to inform teaching practice; and

Literacy outcomes identified in quality assessment tasks.

School priority 2

Curriculum and Assessment in Numeracy

Outcome for 2012–2014

Improve student academic performance in numeracy with a focus on the gifted and talented.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• Improved numeracy for students in upper bands in NAPLAN (within school match) by 1%; and
• Improve student numeracy in top bands by 2%.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Embed numeracy strategies into all programs;
• Continue to conduct professional learning to find numeracy demands of each course; and
• Teach students how to reflect on their learning mathematically and problem solving.

School priority 3

Outcome for 2012–2014

Curriculum and Student Engagement and Attainment

All matched students achieving 60% expected growth by 2014 with a focus on students at proficiency level (bands 5 and 6)

Develop and implement a curriculum model that uses a strong foundation of wellbeing skills to support student creativity and innovation.

2013 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• Increased student performance with a focus on student engagement in and for learning:
  - Half matched students achieving 60% growth in NAPLAN;
  - Increased student participation in classroom learning activities with a focus on enhancing cross curricular and project based curriculum pedagogy; and
  - Improve student HSC performance in at least 2 subjects as measured by increased value added results.

• To improve student outcomes through a focus on enhancing professional learning communities and networks:
  - Increase student participation in school teams, focus groups and community partnerships.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Implement a revised GATS policy and review acceleration and the rigour of assessment tasks and promotions of the GATS policy in the wider community;
• Develop teacher expertise in the provision of quality feedback to individual and groups of students; and
• Professional learning in programming for the Australian Curriculum with a focus on extended outcomes and differentiated assessment.

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: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr