



Department of  
Education

D21/0128267

Public education  
**A world of opportunities**

# Balga Senior High School

## Public School Review

March 2021



# PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

## Purpose

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All Western Australian public schools are reviewed by the Department of Education's Public School Accountability directorate. A review gives assurance to the local community, the Minister for Education and Training and the Director General about the performance of public schools in delivering high quality education to its students. The review acknowledges the achievements of the school and gives feedback to support the Principal and staff with their improvement planning.

Initially conducted on a three-year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, three or five-year timeframe.

The Principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence from the school. Information to be validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal, the Chair of the School Council/Board and the regional Director of Education.

## Expectations of schools

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The Statement of Expectation (Statement) makes clear and public the expectations and responsibilities of schools and the Department in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department of Education, represented by the Director General; the school, represented by the Principal; and is noted by the school council/board, represented by the Chair.

The Statement sets out the expectations of Principals in relation to the delivery of the 2020-2024 strategic directions *Every student, every classroom, every day*, and *Building on Strength*.

The Statement will underpin each school's strategic planning and self-assessment and will form part of the school's Public School Review, as well as the Professional Performance Review of the Principal.

## Public School Review – The Standard

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A Standard has been developed across the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework to describe essential indicators of performance. The selection of the indicators is based on literature research and historical reviews of school performance in Western Australian public schools.

The purpose is to better ensure that judgements about student performance are standardised and objective. Indicators describe what is evident in schools functioning 'as expected' within each domain.

The Standard defines the expected level of school performance. Judgements are made in relation to the Standard. External validation is also based on evidence presented relating to the Standard.



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## Context

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Balga Senior High School is located 20 kilometres north of the Perth central business district within the North Metropolitan Education Region. The school opened in 1970 to cater for an expanding multicultural population in Perth's northern suburbs. In 2013 the school became an Independent Public School.

The student population is diverse with students from over 40 nationalities represented. There are currently 572 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 881 (decile 10).

Balga Senior High School incorporates an Intensive English Centre to provide migrant, refugee and International Fee Paying students with the opportunity to integrate successfully into mainstream education. The Intensive English Centre curriculum is designed to meet the educational needs of all students from both limited and formal education backgrounds.

As an Aboriginal Innovation School, Balga Senior High School also implements programs to specifically support Aboriginal student learning. These programs have contributed to improvements in attendance and engagement in learning across the school.

Guided by the motto 'Strength in Unity', the school provides an educational program to students within a collaborative and multicultural environment.

The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) plays an important role within the school community and enables additional resources to be provided through fundraising events. The school values parent and community involvement and in addition to the active P&C, the school also has a dedicated School Board.

## School self-assessment validation

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The Principal submitted a broad school self-assessment.

The following aspects of the school's self-assessment process are confirmed:

- Staff demonstrated developing knowledge of school self-assessment processes and a commitment to school improvement.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided an understanding of the current school context, performance and planning priorities.
- The school selected a range of information as evidence for their self-assessment.
- There was alignment between the performance evidence and actions planned for the future.
- The school visit yielded information that added value to the school self-assessment and assisted with validation.
- A cross section of school leaders, teachers, support staff and parent and community representatives elaborated on the evidence described in the ESAT submission, during the validation visit.

The following recommendations are made:

- Use the ESAT as a repository for performance evidence as part of the ongoing school self-assessment process.
- As a staff group, reflect on the Public School Review process undertaken, to guide future school self-assessment.

## Public School Review

### Relationships and partnerships

Staff recognise the importance of engaging with the community to build and maintain strong and sustainable relationships, to positively impact student opportunity and achievement.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A broad range of communication processes are utilised to ensure contextual and cultural relevance. Translations are available for key languages within the school and community.
- Survey feedback has demonstrated improved satisfaction in school operations. Increased numbers of parent respondents have been enabled through the strategic availability of interpreters and creative options for survey access.
- The effective School Board plays a significant role in oversight of the school's direction, providing targeted advice and support.
- A proactive approach to community engagement through partnerships with local groups such as the North Metropolitan Health Service, Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre and the Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Community Centre supports student development.

#### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop the quality and breadth of translation of school documents and publications.
- Maintain and extend the survey language support strategy.

### Learning environment

The school structure and operations are designed to optimise student safety, learning, responsibility and respect. Acknowledgement of student diversity is paramount in seeking to create the conditions that enable success for all students.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The health, wellbeing and safety of staff and students is prioritised in processes to manage behavioural incidents.
- Student services structures support students at educational risk. The engagement of the high need student population is prioritised in school resource deployment.
- Students feel valued in having a voice in school decision making.
- The importance of an engaging learning environment is acknowledged through extensive use of the self-managed maintenance process to undertake buildings and grounds improvements in recent years.

#### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Implement the Positive Behaviour Support framework to incorporate school values and behaviour management policy.
- Further upskill staff on Individual Education Support Plans and target Classroom Management Strategies and trauma training to ensure engaging strategies are implemented in all learning environments.

## Leadership

Leaders acknowledge the importance of the school as a community fixture. They understand the benefits when staff thrive on their connection with the community and are able to adapt to expectations regarding student needs.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Strategic direction is influenced strongly by an appreciation of entry levels of student achievement. Systemic data demonstrate progress in response to the individual pathway approach being developed.
- There are evidence-based operational plans for all learning areas, reflective of business plan targets. Alignment between strategic and operational direction is progressing.
- Reflection and collaboration are viewed as integral in developing staff capability. Performance management processes are in development to focus on a growth mindset with improved student outcomes as the product.
- Longstanding connections with the local Aboriginal community have resulted in engagement with the Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Community Centre in the storytelling project.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Establish a tool to monitor progress against business plan targets as a basis for School Board feedback.
- Continue to develop the Language and Culture program and enable student leadership opportunities.

## Use of resources

Deployment and workforce management practices enable long-term and short-term planning for resources reflective of identified need. An awareness of the community's capacity to support school funding allocations in relation to student need, is considered carefully.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Transparent financial management processes are evident with embedded practices for oversight by the Finance Committee. Status reports are referred to the School Board.
- Budget allocations reflect targeted initiatives in addition to operational delivery needs. Cost centre managers stipulate purposeful identification of need for budget allocation.
- Attention to asset replacement has resulted in a critical assessment of accounting for school resources and the monitoring of long-term needs.
- Student characteristics funding targets the Learning Support program and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) students, with support provided for students in areas such as literacy, numeracy and wellbeing.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Maintain high performing staff and continue to encourage pre-service placements and optimise recruitment options.

## Teaching quality

The plan, act, assess cycle is a key driver for the focus on quality teaching. Teachers use the AITSL<sup>1</sup> Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to guide pedagogy.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teachers collaborate to develop cohort learning programs, which are then adapted to suit individual classes.
- Staff deliver a clear understanding of expectations for students through the provision of curriculum programs and assessment outlines.
- Targeted professional learning has enabled teachers to cater for student diversity and support EAL/D and Aboriginal student learning in particular.
- Teachers use achievement data to inform planning and assessment using tools such as: Special Educational Need planning and reporting; the EAL/D progress map; Group Education Support Plans and Individual Education Support Plans.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Provide professional learning for staff on the AITSL Teacher Self-Assessment Tool.
- Develop a school-wide lesson design based on models of best practice.
- Ensure all staff complete the EAL/D Hub training.
- Utilise the New North Education Initiative network for moderation.

## Student achievement and progress

A high proportion of students entering Year 7 are at or below the national minimum standard of achievement in NAPLAN<sup>2</sup> testing. Year 7 Intensive English Centre students, who transition to mainstream, undertake NAPLAN testing for the first time in Year 9.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Targeted student achievement tracking, analysis and assistance regarding progress toward Western Australian Certificate of Education, Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA), and Vocational Education and Training certification, enhance opportunities for success.
- Student progress (Year 7 to Year 9) was higher than like schools in all NAPLAN assessments in 2019, except spelling and writing.
- Targeted support programs assist with student progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The Learning Support program reflects student diversity and enhances support opportunities for students with learning difficulties.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Utilise diagnostic results from the Customised NAPLAN Analysis Platform to target areas of deficit for ongoing Individual Education Support Plans.
- Continue to timetable support for OLNA and NAPLAN preparation. Analyse data provided by SCSA<sup>3</sup> to assist students to develop numeracy and literacy skills.
- Continue to deploy funded resources to targeted students as a business plan priority.

## Reviewers

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Brett Hunt  
Director, Public School Review

Kelly Bennett  
Principal, Coodanup College  
Peer Reviewer

## Endorsement

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Based on this report, I endorse the commendations and recommendations made by the review team regarding your school's performance.

The timeframe for your next review process, focusing on the Teaching Quality domain only, will be Term 1, 2022.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for Term 1, 2024.



Melesha Sands  
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

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## References

- 1 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 3 School Curriculum and Standards Authority

