2007 Annual School Report
Robert Townson High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Our school at a glance

Students

Robert Townson High School was built in 1987 and services 930 students. Our school serves the communities of Raby, St Andrews, Varroville and Bow Bowing.

We are a comprehensive co-educational high school. Our school community values the wearing of full school uniform, appropriate social behaviours and a commitment to learning.

Our students participate in a wide curriculum which features academic and vocational study, sporting skills, extra curricula and leadership activities.

Staff

Sixty nine teaching staff were employed in 2007 allowing the school to offer a broad curriculum to cater for individual needs and requirements. The majority of our staff are experienced teachers. All of our staff are offered the opportunity for further training and development to meet their needs. As well as teaching staff we have support and guidance staff to assist students with issues that may arise.

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

Significant programs and initiatives

As part of our Middle Schooling commitment our school worked in cooperation with its two feeder primary schools in the operation of several programs in the areas of mathematics, computing, science, sport, history and student leadership.

During 2007 our school committed a large amount of its professional development funding to skilling teachers in the use of Information Communication Skills (ICT) in the classroom. This developmental program was completed in cooperation with St Andrews Public school and the student projects were displayed at a regional venue.

November of 2007 marked the school’s 20th anniversary and an open day of celebration was conducted. Past students, teachers school leaders and community members participated. Student work was on display in an open school forum followed by a formal dinner in the evening.

Student achievement in 2007

Literacy - ELLA

Year 7 student sat for ELLA and SNAP tests three to four months after starting high school. Year 7 students’ patterns of achievement in ELLA were similar to state trends however with fewer high Band results achieved when compared with the state trends.

Year 8 students demonstrated remarkable growth with our students achieving more proficient results than was demonstrated in the state pattern. Though more students achieved in the high Bands when compared with year 7 in 2007 and year 8 results in previous years, these results were still below the state average pattern. Girls generally achieved at a higher level than boys.

Numeracy - SNAP

The majority of our Year 7 students achieved in the elementary and proficient Bands. Fewer of our students achieved in the high Bands when compared to state trends.

Year 8 results demonstrated a significant general move towards the high Band however there was a significant growth in students achieving in the elementary Band. The number of students achieving in the high Bands continues to increase.

School Certificate

English results continue to follow state trends with our students achieving their strongest results in Bands 3 and 4. Though the number of students gaining the top band continues to rise the majority of our students continue to achieve results below state expected patterns. Science results follow a similar trend to that experienced by English however fewer Band 1 results were awarded compared to past years and the state trend. History students achieved a greater number of Bands 6 results compared to previous years however the majority of our students achieved results in Bands 2, 3 and 4. Geography results were lower in Band 1 compared to previous years and the state however the majority of our students were awarded Bands 2, 3 and 4. There was a significant growth in the number of Band 5 results awarded but the Band 6 results were less than reflected in the state pattern. Student growth in computing continues to follow state trends with 51 percent achieving high distinctions.

Higher School Certificate

Student achievement in the Higher School Certificate examinations was on average similar to state patterns. Our greatest achievements were experienced in biology, mathematics, general mathematics, industrial technology, music, pdhpe and visual arts. A large number of students continue to take advantage of our 6 frameworks of vocational subjects some of which use their results in the determination of their UAI.
Messages

Principal's message

Robert Townson High School was established in 1987 to serve the communities around Raby and St Andrews in the City of Campbelltown. The school has a strong commitment to providing the means by which all students can achieve their potential academically, culturally, socially and in sport. We encourage personal best from every student.

Our curriculum offer a diverse range of subjects and we cater for lifeskills, vocational and academic subjects. Within our school is a specialist unit for hearing impaired students in which we had 17 students ranging from Year 7 to Year 12.

We expect that our students will study diligently, wear school uniform and behave in a manner which brings credit upon themselves and their school.

The purpose of this report is to inform you of the achievements of the school, some significant programs and aspects of student performance. The report also includes information on the achievement of our 2006 targets and our targets for 2007.

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.

Warren Parkes

P&F message

Our Parents and Friends (P & F) meet every second Wednesday of the month during school terms.

Our Annual General Meeting normally takes place in March however due to a change in vacation time this meeting took place in May of 2007.

The elected committee oversaw the general operation of the P & F which included general school input, community feedback, fundraising and representation of the community.

Over the year we had two significant fundraising events. The first coincided with the schools 20th Anniversary celebrations in November. Here we conducted a successful raffle with an LCD TV, Playstation III, MP3 player and digital camera as prizes for the winner who was determined at the 20th Anniversary school assembly.

Our second event involved a BBQ held in our school grounds during the Federal Elections.

During the year our committee was also successful in applying for a $3000 government grant. Part of this money has been used for the purchase of a P & F BBQ and the remainder will be used for a portable public address system.

Mention should also be made of a second parental body which operates with our school – our Uniform Shop committee. These parents stock and staff our uniform shop, with all profits returned to the school. This year they donated $6000 towards the purchase of a security sound system to be used for increased student safety.

We look forward to another full and productive year in 2008.

Peter Hevey
President.

Student Representatives Council's message

The Student Representative Council started the year off by attending a Leadership Conference and six student members attended the Impact Leadership Conference later in the year. The students listened to inspirational talks and learnt about new programs that we can implement in our own school environment. Fundraising for the Leukaemia Foundation, an Easter Raffle, Red Roses and The World’s Greatest Shave are a few of the events held during the year.

School context

Student information

Student enrolment profile

In 2007 Robert Townson High School had 960 students enrolled from years 7 to 12 with the number of boys slightly larger than the girls.

[Graph showing student enrolments for years 2003 to 2007]

Seventeen students were also enrolled in the school’s Hearing Impaired Unit. The total number of students is slowly decreasing over time which is a direct result of the changing demographics of the area.
Student attendance profile

Our students and the greater community generally value education and as a consequence attend school regularly. Our attendance profile generally demonstrates far greater attendees than state and regional averages.

Retention to Year 12

Our retention figures show a result slightly below state and regional averages however the pattern is only a few percentage points lower. A significant proportion of our students continue to value an early start to their vocation and the practical skills that can be offered at TAFE. Our school continues to work with post compulsory age students in the development of appropriate school to work program which meets their needs.

Post-school destinations

Surveys are undertaken each year to determine the destinations of students after they leave school.

Typically about 30 per cent of students completing Year 12 proceed directly to University studies. In 2007, 23 students were offered a position at a variety of institutions. Students accepted offers in degrees such as Business and Commerce, Health Science, Applied Science Engineering, Teaching and Arts.

Students undertaking TAFE Studies post year 12 30-40 percent of the senior student leavers.

Each year about 20 percent of Year 10 students choose not to continue senior study at school. The majority enter into an apprenticeship, many of which originate from the School to Work experience program or employment.

A small number of students leave before the completion of the School Certificate. Each one of those students has been assisted into employment, a labour market program or a specialised TAFE program.

RTHS has selected students for the Australian Defence Force Leadership and Teamwork Award who have demonstrated commitment in areas such as leadership, teamwork, community involvement and values. Bradley Martino Yr.12, Mitchell Bradley Yr.11 and Lucyna Krzewski Yr.10 were the award winners for 2007.

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff attendance

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as Sick Leave, Long Service Leave and Military Leave. In 2007 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department of Education and was measured at 94.6%. Though this figure seems satisfactory it should be noted that several staff were affected by long term and debilitating injuries and illnesses over the year.

Teacher qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.
A full copy of the school’s 2007 financial statement is tabled at the School Parents and Friends meeting. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2007**

**Achievements**

**Arts**

The senior visual arts students continued to excel in 2007 and the school community celebrated the success of these Year 12 students at an exhibition of their HSC artworks in the Library for parents and friends to view. Year 12 students Alyse Graham and Star Santillian were selected for Art Express, an exhibition of outstanding art works by 2007 HSC visual arts students from schools across New South Wales. Alyse’s work was displayed at David Jones and Star’s at the College of Fine Arts.

Both Year 11 photography classes held a joint exhibition of their landscape photographs taken at the Blue Mountains. All students framed and hung their work, with more than 50 parents and friends attending the evening to view the works. Year 12 photography student Phonthawat Srisongkhram entered his digital photographs into the Ingleburn Alive Festival Photographic Competition, winning the high school category. Year 12 visual design student Tobi Skerra presented his claymation video at the Glenwood video competition.

A number of students from Years 8 to 10 were selected to attend a range of gifted and talented visual arts workshops and camps throughout the year. Year 10 students Kayla Wilson, Monica Renn and Mariah Calman attended the South West Sydney Regional Art Camp at Wedderburn. Mariah’s work was selected for the Director’s Choice Exhibition at Homebush in December. Year 9 students Tori Fishpool, Jarrod Steele, Lee Attard and Linda Dudek attended the ArtSmart gifted and talented workshop. All students’ artworks were displayed at Campbelltown Arts Centre, and both Tori’s and Jarrod’s works were selected for the Director’s Choice Exhibition at Homebush. Peter Renn and Luke Ware in Year 8 attended the Hot House program for junior gifted and talented students and had their work exhibited at Campbelltown Arts Centre.

All students in 7E attended a four week gifted and talented art and drama workshop at Campbelltown Arts Centre. This was a collaborative middle schooling project between the school and the gallery. Students brainstormed the topic of bullying, designed and painted props, and put together a script and performance. Student items were performed at the Arts Centre for the South Western Sydney Region School Education Director, and also at a Year 7 formal assembly for students and parents.

Our junior visual arts students also worked on a range of projects for the greater school throughout the year. A Year 9 visual arts class completed six murals for the entrance to the visual arts block. Year 9 and 10 visual arts students assisted Miss Wood with the design and painting of sets for Robert Townson Primary School’s entry into J Rock, winning the Award of Excellence for Set, Design and Function.

To celebrate the school’s 20th anniversary, all students and staff participated in making a clay tile. These tiles were assembled by Miss Wood into large lizard murals and placed around the school, further enhancing the school’s environment.

The music department administered a range of performing arts activities in 2007, band being a continued focus. The band, which features brass, woodwind, percussion and keyboard, aims to develop gifted and talented musicians at all levels of experience. Integral to the development of the band as a performing ensemble is its range of performance engagements throughout the school year, including Variety Night, the Year 12 Graduation assembly, the Year 6 into Year 7 enrolment day assembly, Presentation Night and the 20th Anniversary Formal Assembly.
The annual Variety Night was an opportunity to showcase the considerable talent of musicians, dancers and actors in the school. These included the Year 11 and 12 music classes, the Year 10 elective music class and many other students from Year 7 to 12.

Year 12 music students also performed at the HSC visual arts exhibition night, and some acted as tutors in drums and guitar for our junior students during lunchtime workshops throughout the year.

Besides on stage performance ensembles, Robert Townson High School has an experienced and loyal group of students who form the sound, lighting and stage crew. This technical crew formed the backbone to all presentations, from school assembles, to the Talent Quest and Variety Night, and also assisted Robert Townson Primary School with their sound and lighting requirements for their musical performance in 2007.

Sport

Students at Robert Townson High School participate in sport from Year 7 through to Year 12. Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of sporting activities. Sport for Year 7 is integrated into their curriculum and students got the chance to experience a variety of sports and learn and practice the skills associated with the sport. Students in Years 8 – 11 are given the chance to play in a grade sport team, competing against other schools in the Macarthur Zone. All students have the opportunity to represent the school in NSWCHS knockout competitions.

The school has entered the following knockout competitions:

Boys - Touch, Soccer, AFL, Hockey, Volleyball, Cricket, Triathlon, Netball and Rugby League.

Girls - Cricket, Triathlon, Soccer, Hockey, Touch, Volleyball and Netball.

We have also sent a number of students to Zone, Area and State carnivals in swimming, cross country and athletics.

The school had two teams in the West Cup Rugby Round Robin Competition. Mr Garland coached the U13’s which made the grand final of Division One. Mr Child coached the U15’s who were semi-finalist in their competition. Ms Martin took eight teams to the annual Macarthur Netball Gala Day and each team participated to their best ability.

Students also helped out at PSSA Gala Days, acting as referees and officials.

The major sporting awards for 2007 were:

Sportsperson of the Year: Brad Lewis
Mitchell Beks Award: Ramon Gilarte
SSW Area Blue: Brad Lewis (Swimming)
Macarthur Zone Blue: Tarryn Etcel (Softball) and Brad Lewis (Swimming)

NSWCHS Age Champion: Brad Lewis

Academic

Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy development continues to be a whole school priority with the Literacy Team utilising the STLA (Support Teacher Learning Assistance) faculty support and community support to implement programs driven by ELLA results. ELLA results demonstrated a similar pattern to last year with the school performing 0.6% below the Regional results.

Literacy – ELLA Year 7

- 182 students sat for the test with 5% achieving low, 16% achieving elementary, 58% achieving proficient and 20% achieving high. 79% of the Year 7 population met the State Benchmarks for Literacy
- Year 7 boys were 1.3% under the regional score and girls performed better than the boys at .03% below the regional score. The girls performed better than the boys in Language, Reading and Writing.

Literacy – ELLA Year 8

- 162 students sat for the test with 1% achieving low, 12% achieving elementary, 57% achieving proficient and 30% achieving high. Our results show that there has been a considerable shifting of our results into higher Bands.
- Year 8 results improved by 1.6% when compared with their results from last year with girls slightly outperforming the boys. Our greatest improvement was in the area of Reading which reflects the reading intervention program operating in the school for Year 7 and 8.

Numeracy

Numeracy continues to be a priority for the whole school. Our programs have been adopted across all Year 7 levels and developed using needs identified from SNAP test data.

Year 7 SNAP Results

- 183 students sat the exam with students achieving 9% in low, 40% in elementary, 38% in proficient and 13% in high Bands.
Year 7 numeracy results were overall below state and regional results and below the previous years cohort. Boys were significantly lower than last year’s cohort and girls were slightly lower.

The weakest strand for both boys and girls was Measurement.

The strongest strand was Data with students performing above the regional standard.

Girls performed above regional results in Number, Data and came very close in Patterns, algebra and space.

Boys were below regional results in all strands.

While a larger percentage of students scored in the low band (9% compared with 4% the previous year), we also had more students in the high band (13% than in the previous year of 11%).

Year 8 SNAP Results

For Numeracy results overall Year 8 performed better than last year’s cohort but were still below state and regional averages.

Results in Space and Data improved when comparing to last years’ cohort however it represents the weakest strand for this years’ group.

Girls out performed the region in Number and performed better than the boys in all strands.

Even though 4% of Year 8 scored in the low band (from 11% to 24%).

Academic

In the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate, the performance of students is reported in performance Bands ranging from Performance Band

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

Growth trends across all areas continue to follow state expected patterns. Though the number of students obtaining the top Bands increases and the lowest Bands decreases generally our students achieve results in the middle performance bands. The pattern of growth for mathematics, science and civics is less than that of the state. English and Computing exceed state patterns of growth.

School Certificate

English

English Literacy results continued the encouraging improvement shown since 2005. One more student scored Band 6, and there was a noticeable improvement in the number of Band 5 results. Band 4 and 5 results once again are above State averages.

Only 13 out of 157 students scored in the two lowest bands, a significant improvement over last year, and also a better result than the State average.

Results indicate that we are continuing our shift from lower to higher bands, each year showing a noticeable improvement since 2005. Overall our top 25 percent of students scored in the lower end of state averages, our middle group scored in the state average range, and our lowest 25 percent of students scored in the highest 25 percent of their state range.

Results were evenly distributed between boys and girls.

Mathematics

One hundred and fifty six students sat the School Certificate mathematics examination, with 4 students achieving a Band 6. This is twice the number compared with 2006. We had 13 students achieve a Band 5. This was a significant increase compared with 2006 with 11% of our candidature achieving a Band 5 or 6.

Twenty one students achieved a Band 4 and 67 students achieved a Band 3 forty nine students scored a Band 2 and only one student scored a Band 1.

Compared with their performance in the BST, students in the upper and lower bands showed significant improvement compared with previous years.

Science

One hundred and fifty seven students sat the School Certificate science examination with students achieving results between Bands 1 (1) and 5 (19). This pattern of achievement is less than the state pattern for higher bands however fewer of our students achieved Band 1 than the state pattern showed.

Many students demonstrated significant growth since completing their BST however other students did not achieve growth consistent with their peers and the state.

Australian History, Civics and Citizenship and Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship
One hundred and sixty two students sat both of the School Certificate examinations. A similar pattern of achievement to science was evident for our students however students achieved Band 6 results in both history (4) and geography (1).

**Higher School Certificate**

**English**

Students attained good results in all three English courses studied. Only three students studied extension 1, and students scored one Band 3 and two Band 2 results. In advanced English, the twelve students achieved two Band 5 (16.66%) and ten Band 4 results (83.33%). No students scored in any lower Band, although these results were slightly below State averages. In both of these courses the results were evenly distributed between boys and girls. The top student in extension 1 was female and in advanced was male.

Standard English students once again scored above the State average. No student scored Band 5, as we have managed previously, but our Band 4 results are close to the State average (34.44% against 35.19%). In Band 3, our percentage results were just under State average (35.55% against 39.08%), with Bands 3 and 4 being the most common result (69.99%). Noticeably more students scored in Band 2 than in the previous years. Only 4 students scored Band 1. Approximately 29% of students scored in the lowest two bands, an improvement on last year. Poorer performing students in Standard English tended to be boys, and students from NESB backgrounds.

**Mathematics**

Students performed well across the 3 mathematics examinations. Student sat for general mathematics (63 students), mathematics (12 students) and extension 1 mathematics (1 student). Again we had a group of students (27) who selected to study the Board Endorsed Course of applied mathematics.

In the general mathematics course 52% of our students achieved in the Bands 4 and 5 and 44% in Bands 2 and 3. We had only 2 students achieve a Band 1. Overall the candidates in general mathematics showed significant growth compared with the School Certificate data.

For the 12 students studying mathematics, all students achieved Bands 3 to 5 with 25% attaining a Band 5, 42% a Band 4 and 33% a Band 3.

Our extension 1 candidate achieved a Band E3, the second highest band and he too showed value added when compared to his School Certificate performance.

Mathematics on a whole performed below the state. Students in mathematics were the third highest performing KLA in the school after creative arts and pdhpe.

**Science**

Thirty six students sat for the HSC in science which was a significant decrease in students compared to the 2006 HSC candidature. Seven sat for physics, nine sat for chemistry and twenty sat for biology examinations.

Biology students achieved results from Bands 2 through 6. Two students achieved Bands 5 or 6. Sixty five percent of students achieved Bands 4 or higher which is slightly higher than the state average of sixty two percent. Only thirty percent of students received Band 3 or less which is a lower result compared with the state average.

Chemistry students achieved results from Bands 2 through 4. Seventy seven percent of students achieved Bands 3 and higher. Fifty five percent of students achieved Band 3 which is significantly higher than the state average.

Physics students achieved results from Bands 1 through 4. Three of the seven students fell within 1 mark of the next higher Band. Fifty seven percent of the candidature achieved Band 4 which is well above the state average of 33 percent.

Compared to their performance in the School Certificate examination the majority of biology, chemistry and physics students demonstrated a minimum of state expected growth. Biology students performed comparatively well compared with to other subjects across the school and performed at around the state average pattern of expected growth.

**History**

Students sat for examinations in ancient history (37), modern history (9) and extension history (1). For the first time in many years no students achieved Band 6. Value added growth was mixed with some students from each band achieving some degree of value added since the School Certificate examination. All results were below state average.

The same units were taught with good success in 2006 with the same teaching staff and the ancient history results were amongst the best overall results for any subject in the school that year. We will be looking closely in 2008 to see if the 2007 results were an aberration or an indicator of a need for change in material taught, teaching methods or the need for better matching of students to subjects.
Social Science

Students sat for examinations in business studies (24), legal studies (18) and economics (8). The majority of all students achieved academic growth since completing their School Certificate consistent with predicted state growth patterns. Six students achieved results that placed them in the top 25 percent.

Economics

Again all students achieved academic growth consistent with state trends since completing their School Certificate examinations. Five students achieved not less than Band 5 and with one exception all student HSC results were greater than 79 percent.

Legal

Eighteen students sat the HSC examination in legal studies all receiving between Band 2 (one student) and Band 5. There were ten female and seven male students.

All students achieved academic growth consistent with state trends since completing their School Certificate. More than half the class achieved Bands 4 and 5. Student’s average yearly performance in this subject continues to rise.

Creative and Performing Arts

Twenty one students sat for examinations in two subjects, visual arts (11) and music 1 (10). Results in creative and performing arts subjects were consistent with state trends, with all students but one achieving at least at state determine growth, and all achieving Band 4 or above. Students performed better in the Higher School Certificate in visual arts and music than compared with all other subjects in the school.

In visual arts, 45 per cent of candidates achieved a result not less than Band 5, more than the state result of 40 per cent. No student achieved less than Band 4. With the exception of one student, all students met a minimum state determined growth, with four students well above the state determined patterns of growth since completing the School Certificate. The faculty will continue to offer the photography, video and digital media and visual design courses as subjects which further extend our visual arts students, and also act as alternative subjects to non visual arts students.

In music 1, all students achieved Band 4 and above. Two students achieved Band 6 which was above state average. Every student achieved at least state determined growth with three students demonstrating growth well above the state.

Technology and Applied Studies

Students sat for the Higher School certificate examinations in three subject: community and family studies (15 students), engineering studies (7 students) and industrial technology – timber (11 students).

Community and family studies students achieved results across performance Bands 2 through 5. One student achieved a Band 2 and the remainder (14 students) were evenly spread throughout Bands 3, 4 and 5. Value Added data indicates the overall class performance was slightly below the state pattern of expected growth.

Engineering studies students achieved results across Bands 1 through 3. Whilst the majority of students produced results within the state average range the value added performance was below state growth patterns.

Industrial technology – timber students achieved results across performance Bands 2 through 5, with 73% of candidates scoring either Band 4 or higher. The value added results for this group of students was significantly higher than the state growth pattern.

PDHPE

There were seventeen students who sat for the 2 unit pdhpe examination, 88% of candidates achieved a Band 4 or higher. Two students received a Band 6 and 6 achieved a Band 5. Students did better in this subject than in other subjects within the school. Students achieved higher than the State average pattern of growth since completing the School Certificate.

The pdhpe faculty will continue to assist students by offering study booklets review/study sessions, use of teachers with specialist skills in topic areas and incorporating the quality teaching model into all lessons and tasks. Students will be made aware of the work requirement involved in the course and appropriate subject selection will be encouraged.

VET

Four students elected to sit for the business services examination. Fifty percent scored Band 4 and 50% Band 3.

One student elected to sit for the construction examination and scored Band 5.

Five students elected to sit for the hospitality examination. Fourteen percent scored Band 5, fourteen percent scored Band 4, 50% Band 3 and 22% scored Band 2.

Twelve students elected to sit for the information technology examination. Eight percent scored Band 5, 42% scored Band 4, 33% scored Band 3 and 17% scored Band 2.
One student elected to sit for the metal and engineering examination with one scoring Band 2.

Five students elected to sit the retail operation examination. Twenty percent scored Band 6, 20% scored Band 5 and 60% scored Band 3.

To improve student results in the future the VET teachers will encourage only the students who wish to include the course as part of their UAI to undertake the examination. The examination is not compulsory.

National benchmarks

Benchmark Information

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum desirable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages. These are referred to as national benchmarks.

The performance of the students in our school in the Year 7 English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and the Year 7 Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) is compared to these benchmarks. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these benchmarks are reported below.

| Percentage of Year 7 students meeting national benchmarks |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Reading         | Writing        |
| School          | School         |
| 2006            | 2006           |
| Reading         | Writing        |
| School          | School         |
| 79.9            | 81.3           |
| 93.9            | 84.6           |
| 63.4            | 53.5           |

* National benchmarks were not available at the time of printing this report.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

The focus for 2007 was having Aboriginal students at Robert Townson High School more engaged in the school curriculum and educational activities run through and by the school. Students were involved in a number of school and community based activities.

Over a 1/3 of our indigenous students accessed tutoring for further development in Maths, Science and English. The tutoring was offered to students in Yr. 9, 10, 11 and 12.

We had more than 20 students from Years 7, 8 and 9 attend an Area organised Traditional Indigenous Games. Student were taught the games and completed in a mini carnival against other local schools. Due to the popularity of this event and the amount of excitement and fun it generated, many traditional Indigenous Games have been incorporated into the Year 7 integrated sport program.

Breanna Collier once again excelled in sport. In particular, she was selected for the SSWA girl’s cricket squad, for the second time. She was also selected to represent NSW in the first female Indigenous team (they have a carnival in Alice Springs in 2008).

Jessica Collier was also selected for the NSW Indigenous cricket squad that will complete for the Imparja Cup in 2008. Jessica who is also a talented country singer was part of the Indigenous Vocal Identification program and attended Indigenous workshops held by the Talent Development Project. She has also performed and won placing at the Tamworth Country Music Awards.

A number of our Yr 10, 11 and 12 Indigenous students attended the Jumbunna Careers Day/Market at UTS. Students found the day informative and interesting.

Links were also established with the Australian Navy through an initiative from the Macquarie Fields Police Local Area Command that involved two Year 7 students.

At the end of 2007 a committee was formed involving members of the school and community to address specific problems encountered by indigenous students in the middle school curriculum. The committee has begun planning for a Year 8 Day of Exploration and Celebration.

Multicultural education

During 2007 we continued with the HECTIC (Hope, Empower, Change, Teamwork, Inspire, Courage) program which was initiated in 2006. The team of teachers, police, TAFE and Campbelltown Diversity centre worked with different groups of stage 5 students to address misunderstanding and dispel racial stereotypes.

The positive outcomes of this program have ensured its continual occurrences as part of the school’s multicultural program.

The Islamic Youth Centre worked with 2 separate sexed Muslim groups to address community issues and develop greater understanding of their religion. Students of non-Muslim faith were welcome to attend and positive relationships between these students were forthcoming. Issues of racial tolerance and school discipline
punishments have reduced as a result of these programs.

To further support a more harmonious student body, two trained ACRO’s (anti-racism co-ordinators) continue to work with individual students and larger groups.

**Respect and responsibility**

The focus for this year has been the development of appropriate programs for identified students in need of supportive strategies to increase resilience and well-being. A strengthening and focus on extending existing programs which utilise the services of inter-agency groups has enhanced equity and distribution of resources. Mentoring provides the key link between all programs under the welfare area. Our school also implemented the following interagency programs.

**Youth Pathways** - a Mission Australia joint initiative has operated in the school over twelve months to support students referred by the school learning support team.

**Macarthur Diversity Services** - a community program that targets students from NESB backgrounds and supports students in the transition from school to work.

**Raby Youth Centre** - addressed a problem focusing on supporting girls at risk of leaving school early. The goals were to examine risk-taking behaviours such as drug education, assertiveness training and career planning. (An art education program with a local artist mentoring talented students with a three day art camp will take place in 2008, sponsored by Raby Youth Centre).

**Work Education** - this curriculum-based program is a school priority as it incorporates links between TAFE and industry to support students in the school to work transition.

Mentoring – students have been trained as mentors to assist in the transition of students from primary to high school. Teachers have been trained as mentors to support students in Year 7 through a roll call pastoral care approach.

Values and Ethics – a TAFE accredited Outreach course undertaken by thirty-six students and staff as an extra curriculum program to examine and discuss the values of public education.

**Other programs**

**Vocational Education & Training**

Vocational education has become an important part of the senior curriculum. Students who successfully completed a two-year VET course could qualify for up to a TAFE Certificate III, enjoy advanced standing at TAFE and improve their employment opportunities. VET subjects studied at school or TAFE contribute towards the award of the HSC and a University Administration Index (UAI) if the student undertakes the Higher School Certificate examination.

A total of 43 students attended either Campbelltown, Liverpool, Macquarie Fields or Padstow TAFE to study a range of VET courses including; accounting, property services, childcare, aeronautical skills, airbrushing, vehicle maintenance, beauty therapy, hairdressing, horticulture, welfare and community services. Two hearing impaired students undertook TAFE courses in discrete classes where extra support was available.

Anthony Johnston in Year 11 was selected as VET student of the year at RTHS for studying business services and construction. He was awarded a prize by Macarthur Workplace Learning Program for his efforts over the year.

All Year 10 students completed at least one week of supervised work experience in an industry of their own choosing. Students were required to arrange their own work experience placement using their resumes prepared in career education lessons. The school directly assisted a very small number of students who were unsuccessful in finding work placement or whose work placements were cancelled due to employer circumstances. During their work experience, students were required to keep a work diary and were visited by a member of the teaching staff.

Prior to work experience all Year 10 students attended a Macarthur Area Careers Expo where they were able to talk to industry representatives and representatives from TAFE, University and private providers. They were also able to attend a variety of lectures, including apprenticeship and traineeships, grooming/presentation skills, in industries where there are job shortages and job related skills. Students were able to choose their activities and network with students from other schools.

Three students were successful in winning awards and prizes at the South Western Sydney Regional VET evening. Students won awards in the following frameworks: Milan Mackic - metal and engineering, Sabina Hamilton business services administration and Brendan Curtain - industrial technology.

The School to Work program involved all students in Years 9 and 10. Students were required to compile a summary of work related skills and experiences gained through their studies and extra curricular experiences. This information was kept in their Employment Related Skills Log Book which the students were able to take home. This program should ensure that students are well prepared when they apply for employment.
Progress on 2007 targets

Target 1

Target 1: Improvements in Literacy and Numeracy

The following Literacy programs or initiatives operated in 2007:

- Peer Tutoring in Reading for Year 7.
- A home reading scheme for all Year 7 students in terms one and two.
- Daily focus on reading.
- Focus on Language Program in terms three and four.
- A student literacy database used to track student’s progress. The database is used to select students for literacy support and as a communication tool to assist KLA’s with programming.
- Literacy strategies embedded in Faculty programs.
- An increase in the lower achieving group in SNAP.
- Teaching programs which incorporated numeracy.

Our achievements include:

This year our school implemented a range of literacy and numeracy initiatives aimed at improving student results in year 8. In all four areas assessed by the ELLA test - Literacy, Language, Reading and Writing year 8 girls achieved a result equal to or greater than the regional average. This was a significant growth in all areas since 2006. With the exception of writing boys failed to meet regional averages. Numeracy results improved since last year however in general student growth in this area is still below regional and state expectations.

Boy’s education will feature as an item for improvement in 2008.

To improve general numeracy this year we operated a year 8 numeracy tutoring group during roll call. Students in Year 8 were identified by their SNAP data and paired with trained Year 9 students to focus on key concepts including number, space, patterns and algebra.

We also target high performing Year 10 mathematics students by placing them in the Year 10 numeracy groups to support students in their School Certificate preparation. These groups operated during roll call and targeted strategies for approaching School Certificate questions, particularly non-calculator skills and multiple choice questions.

Over the year the Regional Numeracy Consultant worked with staff in KLA groups to develop lessons that identify numeracy strategies that can be incorporated into faculty programs.

As part of our Middle Schooling priority we undertook an initiative in numeracy to focus on the space strand with two year 7 classes and two year 6 classes from Robert Townson Primary School. Teachers worked together to develop a series of lessons for stage 3/4 to teach concepts of space, specifically platonic solids.

Target 2: To develop a continuum of Learning from Kindergarten to Year 12.

To reduce student disengagement from their learning in stage 4, teaching programs and methods will be developed which result in engagement and interest in schooling.

Our achievements include:

- Middle school programs were developed and operated over the year in mathematics, computing, science and history.
- Year 7 were surveyed about school engagement and the results were positive.
- Staff mentors were appointed to all year seven classes to aide in transition and communication processes for high school.

Target 3: To improve the general welfare of staff and students

Student welfare and discipline issues utilise an increasing amount of all teachers’ time. The number of students placed on suspension and expulsion continue to rise and some students continue to participate in behaviour which places themselves and others at risk.

Our achievements include:

Overall the suspension rates fell to 84% of 2006’s figure. Our middle schooling initiatives had a significant effect on Year 7 with their suspension rate falling to approximately one half of the previous Year’s figure. This same trend was replicated in Year 9 and our senior students continue to have little to no impact on these figures. Parent responses to implemented programs have been positive.
Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2007 our school carried out evaluations of school culture.

Educational and management practice - Culture

Background

The School-Link MindMatters Buddy Support Scheme was a major program of review undertaken to combine the resources, skills and knowledge of the South West Area Health Scheme and the school to support staff and students well-being through a mental health focus. The Buddy Support Scheme has its origins in the national Mindmatters health framework.

MindMatters is a resource framework that supports secondary schools in promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of all members of the school community. It recognises the connections between curriculum, policies, practices and partnerships and encourages a coordinated approach to the promotion of mental health and resilience within the school context.

The whole school framework adopted by MindMatters supports other education initiatives undertaken by Robert Townson High School such as Quality Teaching and the National Safe Schools Framework. The aim of the program undertaken by the school, using the StaffMatters resource, was to focus on ways to improve staff wellbeing and increase job satisfaction for staff. A grant of money has supported implementation of the program.

A core team of staff members and parents undertook the MindMatters training, looking at teaching practices which promote and enhance student engagement so that the focus is on teaching for mental health rather than about mental health. The core team recognised that for student health and wellbeing to improve, the mental health needs of staff had to be prioritised. Using the StaffMatters resource and support persons from the South West Area Health Team, staff were surveyed to determine their needs and areas for development.

Findings and conclusions

Using a StaffMatters diagnostic survey which 46 teachers completed, some of the findings provided direction for discussion and action by the school. For the question of feeling valued by the school, a small number of teachers felt valued (17), while others were unsure (8) or reported feeling not valued (9). For the question of support by the administration team in the school, staff reported feeling generally concerned with supporting the mental health needs of staff (15) with others reporting that they were either unsure (16) or disagreed with the level of support (10). The question of whether students are encouraged to participate in school life by offering a wide range of activities that account for their interests, saw a majority of staff responding positively (23) with some unsure (10). School culture was another area identified by the survey. For the question of whether a culture of positive collaboration exists at the school, there was a split in the responses from those who strongly agreed (8) and agreed (18) while some staff were unsure (9). For the question of whether building positive relationships with students is fundamental to effective teaching and learning, the majority of responses were positive with a large number of staff strongly agreeing (29) and agreeing (13).

Future directions

The community identified a range of initiatives that would help improve school culture from the surveyed findings. As a result, areas such as school culture, communication and student welfare have been targeted for review and development in 2008. We will define the three management areas and develop programs accordingly. A strong partnership has been developed with School-Link, non-government agencies and the school buddies which provides opportunities for staff training and development and new student and parent training programs. A second grant of funds will support the continuation of the MindMatters and StaffMatters programs throughout 2008 with the aim being to train selected staff in such programs as Youth Mental Health First Aid training, an accredited fourteen hour course to better support students’ well-being.

Curriculum Transition to High School

Background

As part of a Quality Teaching and Learning Project at St Andrews Public School and Robert Townson High School in 2006 and 2007 a study was carried out by Dr. Ted Booth, an academic partner to our two schools who worked with a team of teachers from both schools to help determine student perceptions on the transition from primary to high school and the effectiveness of programs later developed to reduce anxiety leading up to and during the transition.

Three assessments were completed by the year 6 students at St Andrews. One of the self-assessments measures the student’s attitudes to changing school and was completed again by the
Year 7 students at Robert Townson High School at the end of Term 1 2007.

The purpose of the survey was to provide a measure of student attitude change through the stage transition (3 to 4) and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the enhancements to the transition program.

Findings and conclusions
Overall there was a positive attitude reflected in the core questions about coming to high school. Students made statements such as “really interesting”, “doing well”, had a sense of “personal excitement”, “liked being at this school” and “felt they were part of their new school.

The Year 7 girls were more positive than the boys on the ‘transfer experience’ to high school.

Female students were ‘less worried’ about being in high school and not as ‘scared’ about being in high school compared to their male peers. Homework was a real concern for some of the males compared to the female students.

Boys were having the toughest time in managing the academic demands of high school whereas the majority of the girls had a more positive perception of their school experience and coping with the academic and homework demands.

Girls were more circumspect on their level of social integration and managing without their primary school friends. The possible dislocation of friendship links did not appear to ‘phase’ the majority of boys.

The St Andrews students also reported, on average, that they were ‘working harder’ and ‘doing better’.

Future directions
It is clear that a yearly focus on supporting year 6 students in their transition to high school needs to continue. We will use this data to help provide information to students and parents on the transition process.

The Robert Townson High School transition team will visit with the year 6 students and give specific details about high school life. We will also maintain and implement further transition programs that aim to reduce transition anxiety and develop a desire to attend high school.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2007 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

Curriculum
Middle Years ICT Pedagogy Project

Background
RTHS has long recognised the importance of students acquiring valuable technology skills. There are three separate computer laboratories and one technology learning centre in the Library. With the help of consultants from the Department of Education, five teachers from four different faculties (Mr Kapitanow (team leader), Mrs Martin, Mrs Milne, Mrs Stamoudis and Mr Sharan) completed a detailed project investigating the use of computers at RTHS in 2007. The project team focused on trying to improve student engagement and learning outcomes through the introduction of backward mapping and contemporary computer software within the classroom. It also wanted to produce long term benefits to the school by substantially increasing teachers ICT skills across all the faculties. Staff, parent and student surveys regarding these matters were completed before and after the faculties conducted specially designed ICT lessons with a Year 7 class.

The History team member decided to incorporate ICT lessons using the Internet and Photo Story 3 within a unit of work on Ancient Egypt. There was special emphasis placed on researching and plagiarism issues. The Science team members designed ICT lessons integrating experiments with spreadsheets and Photo Story 3 in a unit of work on Matter. The TAS members used blogging as an ICT tool within a unit of work on Creative Designs.

Findings and conclusions
Students felt more comfortable about what was expected from them in class as a result of the team using backward mapping. Before the project 14.29% of students believed they had no idea about how they were being assessed. After the project this fell to just 3.70% of students.

Parents overwhelmingly believed the program was a success. Just over 83% of parents heard their child mention the ICT lessons in a positive way. All the parents believed the program had increased their child’s computer skills. Student surveys indicated a tremendous growth in computer skills. The amount of students without important multimedia, graphics, computer research and spreadsheet skills fell across the group involved.

Some outcomes included:

The amount of students who were unaware of copyright / plagiarism issues fell from 20% to 0%. The amount of students who could not design a multimedia presentation dropped from 32% to 3.85%. The amount of students who could not move, resize, reshape and crop graphics fell from 28% to 3.85%.
Teachers ICT skills were also enhanced as a result of the project. The team’s multimedia, graphics and word processing skills had increased to such an extent that all of them felt comfortable in-servicing other staff members. A staff meeting demonstrating the importance of computers in the classroom was conducted in Term 4. The level of confidence with ICT skills was also demonstrated in the fact that the Year 7 class’ computer time within the classroom increased from roughly 25 minutes a week before the project to just over 230 minutes a week. Many team members subsequently refined or designed new ICT lessons for different classes and years following the completion of the project. Year 9 history students for example were introduced to a web page design unit of work.

Future directions
The success of this project has led to a renewed commitment amongst staff to improve computer skills at RTHS. The school will conduct future “hands on” training for teachers to encourage further development of ICT lessons. The project team also conducted parent and student surveys to provide future direction of ICT programs within RTHS. Parents want their child to learn how to create movie files (83%), design web pages (75%), construct spreadsheets (67%) and spend time blogging (42%). Students want to create movie files (77%), design web pages (62%), engage in blogging (62%) and construct multimedia slideshows (58%). The Project team has made sure that they have received the necessary training in all of these areas so that the school (via in-servicing and the team project members formulating new lessons) is in an ideal position to address the instruction of these ICT skills using MovieMaker, blogging, FrontPage and Photo Story 3.

Professional learning
As the School Management Plan is revised and updated, staff are given continual access to a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities. In 2007 expenditure breakdowns are as follows:

- Beginning Teachers: 6%
- ICT: 38%
- Literacy/Numeracy: 1%
- Quality Teaching: 16%
- Syllabus Implementation: 2%
- Career Development: 21%
- Welfare and Equity: 16%

Average annual expenditure was $707 for teaching staff.

The school’s major expenditure was ICT which included a working group of 5 staff developing a program for Middle Schooling ICT Pedagogies. Continued Numeracy consultancy support has offset costs considerably in this area of the budget.

2008 breakdowns will vary as more early career teachers are appointed to the school.

School development 2006 – 2008
As per state requirements, our school has developed and implemented a three year school plan. We have developed management plans in the areas of Academic Growth, Welfare and Equity, Community Partnerships, Systems Improvement, Preparing for the World of Work, Information Communication and Developing Foundations. This plan is available by contacting the school and requesting a copy.

Targets for 2008

Target 1
Our students are to meet regional targets in Literacy and Numeracy.

High Schools have year 7 students for only three months prior to the new commonwealth tests-National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) which will require a close working relationship with out feeder primary schools to help meet this requirement.

As 2008 will be the first year that year 9 will participate in a state/national external testing program we will incorporate preparation and practice programs into our school management plans as resources become available.

Our success will be measured by:

- Students participating in Year 8 numeracy tutoring program operated by trained year 9/10 mathematics mentors with a focus on key concepts including number, space, patterns and algebra.
- Sharing Literacy and Numeracy Data with our feeder primary schools.
- Literacy and Numeracy Improvement programs implemented for targeted year 7 students.
- Review existing programs, particularly Numeracy Roll Call, to ensure students in Year 9 are given opportunities for support and preparation for the new National Assessment tests.
- Operate Year 7 and Year 8 Literacy support groups.
• High performing Year 10 mathematics students placed in numeracy groups to support them in their School Certificate preparation particularly non-calculator skills and multiple choice questions.

Target 2
Improve Aboriginal and Multicultural Education.

Our goal is to improve the education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders (ASTI) students and provide a richer curriculum for ASTI and Multicultural students.

Robert Townson caters for a diverse range of cultural background and over the last two years the number of students identifying themselves as ASTI has increased to over 2.5%. Accordingly we will focus resources to ensure these students are being catered for.

Our success will be measured by:

• Establishing individual education programs for all ASTI students.
• Developing and implementing student extra curricula programs for ATSI students.
• Targeting individual ATSI students with resources and programs that allow them further growth and development.
• Develop and implement programs which promote understanding of multiculturalism.

Target 3
Improve General School Culture

This year we will address areas identified by the school community that will help improve general school culture.

Our success will be measured by:

• Beginning each week with a staff communication session identifying ongoing issues and informing staff of variations for the week ahead.
• Have staff identify areas of the students welfare policy that need to be reviewed and begin evaluation and redevelopment of those areas.
• Have the school re-development expertise and accreditation in the “Staff Matters” area of the commonwealth’s “MindMatters” program.

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: