Messages

Principal's message
Robert Townson High 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 offers 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 2009 targets and our targets for 2010.

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&C and/or School Council message
Our Parents and Citizens (P & C) meet every second Wednesday of the month during school terms.

Our Annual General Meeting takes place in March of each school year.

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

A second parental body operates within our school – our Uniform Shop committee. These parents staff and stock our uniform shop with all profits returned to the school. This year they donated $5000 to assist with school projects.

Robert Townson High School Parents and Citizens Association

Student representative’s message
The SRC meets every Monday and discusses fundraising and issues that can enhance students well being and the betterment of the school in general.

Funds were raised for Red Cross, Leukaemia Foundation, SIDS and the 40 Hour Famine.

School leaders play a greater role in assisting the junior school come to terms with issues and how to assist their peers.

SRC members attended leadership conferences and were able to use this information to assist the incumbent SRC. The SRC has also financially supported students representing Robert Townson High School in area, state and commonwealth sports competitions.

Ross Barker SRC Co-Ordinator

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
Student enrolments continue to be stable. Gender is split evenly between boys and girls.
Student attendance profile

Though student attendance continues to be below state trends, initiatives implemented over the year are beginning to have an effect. Attendance figures grew by 0.7 percent over the year.

Management of non-attendance

Students whose attendance is causing concern are identified and monitored. Each child is interviewed and parents are contacted to help identify the situation and we then work together to address them. The Home School Liaison Officer works as part of our attendance team to better aid communication between the school and parents and caregivers. All parents are informed of attendance requirements through our school newsletters.

Structure of classes

In the junior school, the curriculum was divided into two stages: years 7 - 8 and years 9 -10. In Years 7 and 8, all students follow a compulsory core curriculum determined by the Board of Studies. Classes were of mixed ability except for one class of higher achievers each year. In years 9 and 10, students undertook a core curriculum of English, mathematics, science, pdhpe, history, geography, plus two elective subjects. Classes were streamed in mathematics. All other subjects were of mixed ability.

The senior school was divided into the preliminary course (Year 11) and the HSC course (Year 12). English is the only compulsory subject. The large size of our senior school ensured that we were able to offer a wide range of traditional and VET courses.

Retention to Year 12

A significant proportion of our Year Ten students continue to seek employment and TAFE as a realistic options to their senior years of schooling. Each child is assisted by the school with the development of an individual post school pathways plan providing them with appropriate advice and opportunities for the future.

Post-school destinations

Surveys are undertaken each year to determine the destination of students after they leave school. Typically, about 30 percent of students completing Year 12 proceed directly to university studies. In 2009, 31 students were offered a position at a variety of universities. Students accepted offers in degrees such as: business and commerce, physical and health education, engineering, design, forensic science, policing, industrial design, medical science, international studies and law and others. Most students took up offers within University of Western Sydney and University of Wollongong. Several students took up offers with Australian Catholic University, Macquarie University, University of NSW and University of Technology Sydney.

About forty percent of students completing Year Twelve enrol in TAFE studying a variety of courses, including: Accounting, Fitness (personal training), Children’s Services, Graphic Design, Information Technology and Construction. Approximately 10 percent of students have taken up apprenticeships in fields such as electrical, plumbing, panel beating, construction and wall and floor tiling. Other students have gone to private colleges.

In 2009 about 20 percent of Year Ten students chose not to continue senior study at school. The majority entered into an apprenticeship, many of which originated from the School to Work experience program or employment and a small number of students left before the completion of the School Certificate each one of these students has been assisted into employment, a labour market program or a specialised TAFE program.
Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

Throughout 2009 students participated in a range of school based CET framework courses. They included:

Hospitality 21%, Retail Services 11%, Metals and Engineering 10%, Construction 9%, Information Technology 12%, Sports Coaching 7%

One student undertook a school based apprenticeship in Automotive and two students completed a Certificate II in Aged Care Nursing.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

100% of students gained the HSC or equivalent.

Staff information

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

Sixty eight teaching staff were employed in 2009 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. No teaching staff have indicated that they have an Indigenous Australian heritage.

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

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
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<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff (SASS)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
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</tr>
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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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Date of financial summary: 30/11/2009
Income $                      
Balance brought forward 232 601.18
Global funds 428 185.50
Tied funds 201 538.05
School & community sources 258 347.69
Interest 16 449.95
Trust receipts 26 899.14
Canteen 0.00
Total income 1 164 021.51

Expenditure
Teaching & learning
  Key learning areas 107 949.79
  Excursions 27 559.28
  Extracurricular dissections 142 431.16
Library 24 700.55
Training & development 10 690.17
Tied funds 260 668.79
Casual relief teachers 43 905.70
Administration & office 147 541.92
School-operated canteen 0.00
Utilities 111 057.14
Maintenance 60 849.89
Trust accounts 28 357.47
Capital programs 6 220.00
Total expenditure 971 931.86
Balance carried forward 192 089.65
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A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the Parent and Citizen’s body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
School performance 2009

Achievements

Arts

The senior visual arts students continued to excel in 2009 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 student Jana Cruz was selected for ArtExpress, an exhibition of outstanding art works by 2009 HSC visual arts students from schools across New South Wales. Jana’s work was displayed at Hazlehurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Wollongong City Gallery and Griffith Regional Art Gallery, and she has been accepted into the University of Western Sydney to study Art and Design.

For the second year running, one of our year 11 students was accepted into the Intensive Studio Practice Course at the National Art School. With close to 400 applicants, Jasmeet Flora went though an extensive selection process by way of a practical portfolio to be accepted into this course. The National Art School has the longest continuing history as a public art school in Australia and looks for students who are achieving the highest level of excellence in visual arts at school, and who demonstrate a mature attitude to their studies. Over 100 eminent practising artists with established studios and experience in the arts industry lead by example and provide intensive tuition to students. It is a 60 hour NSW Board of Studies endorsed course for HSC visual arts students which runs in the July and October school holidays and aims to extend the students technically, conceptually and intellectually within their visual arts practice. Jasmeet’s chosen discipline was painting and she received a mark of 43 out of 50. This studio based methodology of learning assists in informing students’ future artistic practice and their studies of HSC visual arts.

Three year 11 students, Linda Dudek, Jasmeet Flora and Kristee Husband, were selected to participate in The Dobell School at the National Art School as they demonstrated a high level of knowledge and skills in visual arts, commitment and involvement in studying visual arts, and a capacity to work independently and with others over extended periods of time. The project is an initiative of the National Art School and the Department of Education and Training, and offers 75 Year 11 students from government schools in New South Wales the opportunity of a unique experience of working in a tertiary institution in programs conducted by practising artists. This year the program was titled “Draw Out Your Talent” and involved an intensive four day drawing workshop in the April school holidays to complement and extend the students’ art studies, culminating in a final exhibition.

Local author, illustrator and artist, Jo Oliver, presented a lecture on her artmaking practice to the Year 11 visual arts class. Jo has explored a number of forms of printmaking which she uses as illustrations throughout her picture book, Pilgrim. She explained to the students her process of illustrating her book and students were able to view some of the artworks in their original state. Being able to speak with a local practising artist provided students with the opportunity to see an artmaking process from beginning to end, and also provided inspiration for their own work. Students Sarah Coffey, David Keodara, Pera Nadji, Kyra Skidmore and Jarrod Steele entered their own lino prints into the student section of the 2009 Silk Cut Award for linocut prints in Victoria.

Robert Townson’s indigenous students were involved in an art project which ran over 6 weeks to coincide with NAIDOC week. Local artist Jan Shipley and her cousin Gwen Bache worked closely with the students to produce spiritual poles that are on display permanently in the front school garden. The motifs are representative of the Tharawal people and tell a story of the land, hunting and gathering and meeting places. This project helped our indigenous students to develop a greater understanding of their culture and to have pride in their heritage. A Smoking Ceremony was conducted to connect the poles to the ground, performed by Daryl Shipley and students Tristan Lloyd, Britney Bache and Dana Matthews. As part of the project, non-indigenous and indigenous students also worked together to produce a mural which is now on display in the library. These students, Katie-Anne Clarke, Ellen Cairns-Myers, Nicola Cataldi, Reanne Oliver, Sian Kuru, and Holly Craig, learnt about Aboriginal painting techniques and meanings of symbols as they produced their own story.

Students from various year groups entered their photographs into the Ingleburn Alive Festival Photographic Competition. The theme for this year’s competition was Astronomy, marking the 400th anniversary of Galileo turning a telescope to the sky. Pouteng Ros won the Year 9 High School Category and Jordan Gemmell was Runner-Up. Kyra Skidmore was Runner-Up in Year 11 and Kayla Wilson of Year 12 was Highly Commended. This is the fourth year running that
students from Robert Townson High School have won prizes in this competition.

Year 8 students Tayla Kuru, Emily Wardropper and Kellie Weinert represented the school by entering the artworks they completed in class into the Fishers Ghost Art Award at Campbelltown Arts Centre.

A number of students from Years 8 to 10 were selected to attend a range of gifted and talented visual arts workshops throughout the year. Year 10 students Kelsie Toohey and Ruby Bisson attended a University of Western Sydney Digital Master Class which was held in partnership with the NSW Department of Education and Training and ArtExpress. During the two day workshop program the students’ met and worked with experienced digital media academics and students from the School of Communication Arts which is a leading educator in the fields of digital arts and convergent media.

Year 9 students Zain Kruyer, Richard Phommaly, Scarlett Santillan and Lisa White attended ArtSmart which is a visual arts workshop held over four days at Campbelltown Arts Centre for gifted and talented art students in Years 9 and 10. Only 50 students from across the region are accepted into the program which is designed to nurture the students’ creative talent in visual arts, giving them the opportunity to gain new skills and experiences in art making with the expertise of contemporary practising artists. Students attended workshops in painting, printmaking, ceramic sculpture or digital media and their final artworks were displayed at Campbelltown Arts Centre. Zain, Scarlett and Lisa also had their works selected for the Director’s Choice Exhibition at Homebush which is the South Western Sydney Regional celebration of student, staff and community achievements.

Blake Crompton, Sean Juarez, Tayla Kuru and Emily Wardropper in Year 8 attended the Hot House Regional Visual Arts Workshop. The aim of the workshop is to expose talented art students in the middle years to new and challenging experiences that they would not normally have in the school situation with assistance from professional practicing artists. Sean, Tayla and Emily also had their work selected for exhibition at Director’s Choice.

The Year 9 Drama class performed “Princess” for selected Year 7 and 8 students, as well as for parents and friends at a special evening.

Students from the Year 9 visual arts class assisted with scenery while the Year 7 and 8 students who form the school’s technical crew assisted with sound, stage and lighting. Jesse Cramp, Robyn Holt, Justina Megaly and Ben Ramsdale were selected from the drama class to attend a gifted and talented camp to further develop their skills in performance.

For the very first time, Robert Townson High School was invited to participate in the OperaEd Project. This was a rare and exciting opportunity for thirty Year 9 students from the visual arts and drama classes. It began with introductory workshops at school about the opera, run by Opera Australia. Students then attended the Opera Centre where they met artists and technical staff from the production, observing the employment possibilities and the creative processes of a major arts organisation. They experienced the bump-in of the set in the afternoon at the Opera House which is a session normally closed to the public, then received “A” reserve tickets to see the opera, Aida, which was completely funded by Opera Australia and its patron Fred Street.

**Sport**

Students at RTHS participate in sport from Year 7 through to Year 12. Students have the opportunity to participate in established carnivals, (swimming, cross country, athletics), NSWCHS knockouts, grade sport and zone/regional/state sporting trials.

The school entered the following NSWCHS knockout competitions:

**Boys** - touch, soccer, hockey, volleyball, cricket, triathlon and rugby league.

**Girls** - cricket, triathlon, soccer, hockey, touch, volleyball and netball.

Outstanding sporting results for the year included:-

- Boys soccer - SSW regional finalist
- Girls soccer – won SSW region and went to the NSWCHS competition
- Girls cricket – SSW regional finalist
- Girls volleyball – SSW regional finalist
- Kellie Weinhart – NSWCHS cross country
- SSW region triathlon (12th)
- Paige McParland - NSWCHS hockey
- Tayla Kuru – gold medal HSWCHS diving
- NSWCHS swimming
Reece Halicek - NSWCHS athletics
Elise Lown - NSWCHS swimming

The school had two teams in the West Cup Rugby League competition. The 13’s coached by Mr Heap, were consistent all season. The 15’s coached by Mr Child, won their competition. Mr Kelava took six teams to the state futsal championship. Three teams made it through to their respective finals. Ms McKenzie and Ms Thompson took a number of teams to the Macarthur Netball Gala day and each team participated to the best of their ability. The team from Year 10 won their division.

The school also had a number of age champions at Macarthur zone major carnivals (swimming, cross country and athletics)

Students also helped out at PSSA Gala days (acting as referees and officials) and senior students were pivotal in the operation of RTPS major carnivals (various official and organisational roles). The major sporting awards for 2009 were:

Sportsman of the Year – Reece Halicek
Sportswoman of the Year – Tayla Kuru
Mitchell Beks Award – Joshua Curtin.

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 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 the assessments.

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

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7

NAPLAN testing shows a general improvement in Year 7 performance in all areas of literacy. Students’ weakest area was grammar and punctuation. In reading, students performed similarly to other schools in the area but in writing their performance was slightly better. Best performance was in spelling where their results were significantly above local schools and similar to the state average. Writing and spelling showed a noticeable performance improvement across all bands. The following graph demonstrates the schools’ performance in overall literacy. Our school’s red line continues to grow and now exceeds the regional average (green).

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

Our 163 year seven students this year had an average mark higher than the LSG (like school group). Compared to previous years we had fewer students in the lower Bands (4-6) and more in Bands 7 and 8.
NAPLAN testing shows a slight improvement in Year 9 performance in all areas of literacy compared to previous years. In spelling, punctuation and reading, results were below the local school average. In the area of writing students achieved their best results.

Faculties across the school are specifically addressing literacy in each program. The English faculty has introduced an intensive literacy program which aims to improve student performance in areas of weakness identified by analysis of NAPLAN testing.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

One hundred and sixty seven students sat the year 9 NAPLAN test and scored on par with the state average across Bands 7 & 8. Twelve students scored a Band 5 with one-third of students scoring a Band 6.

Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for Years 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.
Percentage of Year 7 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at and above minimum standard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
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<tr>
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Percentage of Year 9 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Certificate

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

English

Literacy test results showed a dramatic change from 2008. Four students scored Band 6 and 33 students scored Band 5 (23% in total). This is twice as many students in these bands than 2008. A slightly higher percentage of students scored in Band 4, our most frequent score (47.56%), and considerably fewer students scored in Band 3 than last year (24.39% as against 36.64%). A similar percentage of students scored Band 2 as last year (3.65%), no students scored in Band 1. Distribution of our scores follows the state pattern in general, but with significant differences. While we have fewer students in Band 6, the percentage in Band 5 has significantly increased. Maintaining the percentage of students in Band 4 demonstrates that we have made significant overall improvements, as students have moved from Band 4 to 5, and Band 3 to 4. The number of students in the two bottom Bands is not significant (only six in Band 2 and none in Band 1.)

Our middle group has performed extremely well, and top and bottom groups are also scoring well. Boys and girls score similar results, except for the highest performing group where almost all students are girls, and the lowest performing group were all boys.

English students outperformed those in other subjects in low, middle and top ranges.

Mathematics

One hundred and sixty three students sat the School Certificate mathematics examination, with nine students achieving a Band 5 or 6.

Compared to previous years we have decreased the percentage of students in Bands 1 and 2 and increased Bands 3 and 4. This put our school equal to the state average in Band 4 and above the state average in Band 3. The focus now is to keep moving students further into the higher Bands.

Science

One hundred and sixty four students sat for the science School Certificate examination paper. Generally, student performance was similar to previous years, though the candidature was slightly larger.

Students achieved results from Band 2 to 6. One student achieved Band 6 and 24 students achieved Band 5. This was a total of fifteen percent of the total candidature. Sixty five students achieved a Band 4. This was 40 percent of the school total and is significantly higher than the previous year's results.

The number of Band 3 students was greater than the state average. Fifty five percent of students were in Bands 4 to 6 which is lower than the states average. Sixty six percent of the students achieved a Band 3 or 4 which is significantly higher than the state value of 54%. Compared to last year’s results there were a similar number of students achieving Bands 5 and 6.

The majority of the students demonstrated state expected growth compared to their Year 5 achievement in the BST. A significant number of students performed better than the state expected growth.
Australian History, Civics and Citizenship

One hundred and sixty one students sat the School Certificate examination in Australian History, Civics and Citizenship in 2009. Three students achieved a Band 6 result. Nearly 12% of students achieved a Band 5 or 6 result in 2009 compared to six percent in 2008. Twenty one percent of students achieved a Band 1-2 result compared to 26.7% in 2008. There was significant improvement in the value added data for students who achieved in the highest performance band on the BST.

The faculty will now focus in 2010 on trying to improve student’s results in the middle performance bands. In 2009 special emphasis was placed on conducting more regular homework and revision tasks with the top class to attain more Band 6 results. In 2010 assessment tasks will be modified to more accurately reflect the work required for the final School Certificate examination. Lunchtime study sessions will also be conducted in Term 4 to help students prepare for the final examination.

Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship

One hundred and sixty one students sat the School Certificate examination in Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship. No students achieved a Band 6 result. Nearly eight percent of students achieved a Band 5 result compared to 22.35% of the state. Nearly 24% of students achieved a Band 1 or 2 result compared to 11.6% in the state.

The faculty will be focused on trying to improve value added data by utilising the same revision task and homework strategies that were effectively implemented in the history faculty during 2009. Modification of assessment tasks and lunchtime study sessions will also be conducted to help students prepare for the School Certificate examination.

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

Higher School Certificate

English

The two students in Extension 1 both scored Band E3.

In advanced English there were seven candidates. Two scored Band 5 and the remaining five scored Band 4. Only six marks separated all the students. Results were evenly spread between boys and girls.

In standard English two students scored Band 5, doubling last’s year’s performance. A much higher proportion of students scored in Bands 3 and 4 (34.56% and 49.38%), with significantly fewer students scoring in Bands 2 or 1. More closely following the state pattern, our school’s performance has lifted significantly, with the vast majority of students in the middle band, and fewer in both top and bottom bands. Results for the highest performing students were significantly improved over last year.

Students in standard English scored above the state average, more so than students in any other subject. Standard English students also scored better than groups of students in most other subjects. For such a large group, the improvement in results is outstanding. Value-added data shows significant growth for students.
across the bands, again most especially for higher-achieving students.

**Mathematics**

Students performed well in all four mathematics courses studied. Students sat for general mathematics (67 students), mathematics (thirteen students), extension 1 mathematics (four students) and extension 2 mathematics (one student). We also had a group of students who selected to study the Board Endorsed Course (BEC) of applied mathematics.

General mathematics performed similar to the past year’s group with an average of 63.8%. Our results reflect that many students opted for this course for various reasons such as gaining an ATAR rather than attempt the Board of Studies BEC that would have been more suitable to their ability.

The Mathematics students achieved significantly better than previous years performers. Their average of 76.7% put them ahead of our past students, our LSG (local school group) and also the state. Ten out of the twelve students scored in Bands 4 & 5 and their value added data was well above the state expected growth.

The Extension 1 students performed better than previous years and also outperformed the LSG.

**Science**

Twenty six students sat for the HSC in science in 2009 which was a decrease compared to the 2008 HSC candidature. Seven sat for chemistry and nineteen sat for biology.

Biology students achieved results from Bands 2 to 4. Thirty two percent of students achieved Bands 4 or higher which is lower than the state average. Seventy four percent of students achieved a Band 3 or higher. No students achieved a Band 1.

Chemistry students achieved results from Bands 3 to 4. This is higher than the state average. Forty three percent of students achieved Band 4 which is higher than the state average of 32%.

Compared to their performance in the school certificate, all chemistry and a majority of biology students demonstrated a minimum of state expected growth.

**HSIE**

Students sat for examinations in ancient history (30), business studies (21), economics (1), legal studies (17), modern history (27), history extension (2) and society and culture (6). The most important feature of the 2009 results was that every subject performed closer to the state average than in 2008.

Our modern history results showed some improvement. Unlike last year two students achieved a Band 5 result and the subject was two percent closer to the state average than in 2008. Nearly 40% of students received a Band 4 result which was above the state average of 37% and well above 2008’s results (nineteen percent). The faculty will now concentrate on trying to improve its overall value added data. Improvements will be made to the national studies topic which students usually find the most difficult to understand.

The results for ancient history improved slightly in 2009. The subject was three percent closer to the state average than in 2008. One student achieved a Band 6 result. Exactly 30% of students received a Band 4 result which was above the state average of 25%. There was also significant value added growth from the School Certificate for students who performed in Bands 3 and Band 5. Despite these improvements the students as a whole performed just below the state average. Staff will focus on encouraging students to study more at home. Regular homework based on past HSC questions will be a feature of the course in 2010.

Extension history experienced the best results it has had since 2006. One student achieved a Band 3 result.

Some significant improvements occurred in the HSC results for business studies. In 2008 students were performing over ten percent below the state average. In 2009 this was reduced to six percent. Just over fourteen percent of students achieved a Band 5 result and over 28% of students achieved a Band 4 result (just below the state average of 30.18%).

Slight improvements were made in regards to legal studies HSC results in 2009. In 2008 students performed 7.8 percent below the state average. This improved slightly in 2009 with students achieving 5.96 percent below the state average. Nearly eighteen percent of students
achieved a Band 5 result (below the state average of 30.52%) and around 35% a Band 4 result (below the state average of 24.69%). Just above 47% of students achieved a Band 2 or 3 result (above the state average of 27.49%). Value added data showed that significant growth occurred for students who achieved Bands 2 or 3 in the School Certificate. The faculty will now focus on trying to achieve more Band 4-6 results in 2010 by refining units of work, seeking advice from schools performing well in the local area and conducting lunchtime study sessions to help students with their preparation for the final examination.

For the first time the faculty also had students completing the society and culture course. No student studying this course achieved a Band 2 or 1 result.

One student completed the economics course via Open High School in 2009 supported by a member of the HSIE staff. This student subsequently came first in the Open High School course and produced a Band 5 result.

**Technology and Applied Studies**

Students sat for Higher School Certificate examinations in four subjects; community and family studies (26 students), engineering studies (7) and industrial technology-timber (9).

Community and family studies students achieved results across performance Bands 2 to 5. Three students achieved a Band 2 and the remained (23 students) were evenly spread throughout Bands 3, 4, and 5. Eight students received a Band 5 (31% of the students). For fifteen students (58%), community and family studies was their top result. The overall class result was in line with the state average performance.

Engineering studies students achieved results across performance Bands 3 and 4. The overall class result was at a level significantly below the state average performance.

Industrial technology-timber students achieved results across performance Bands 3 to 5. Two students received a Band 5. For five students industrial technology-timber was their top result. The overall class result was at a level slightly below the state average performance.

In general, TAS students achieved results that were consistent with or higher than their individual overall Higher Schools Certificate performances across the school.

**Creative and Performing Arts**

Twenty four students sat for examinations in two subjects, visual arts (22) and music 1 (2). All students but five achieved state determined growth in creative and performing arts subjects, and all achieved results of Band 3 and above.

In visual arts, one student received Band 6. Eighteen per cent of candidates achieved Band 5, below the state pattern of achievement. The majority of students (68 per cent) achieved Band 4, and no student achieved less than Band 3. With the exception of five students, all students met minimum state determined growth, with five students demonstrating growth well above the state. For 82% of students, their visual arts mark was their highest subject mark in the Higher School Certificate. The students who received the lowest results of Band 3 did not study Stage 5 visual arts. The faculty will continue to look into how to better prepare senior students who have not completed the visual arts course in Stage 5, as this is impacting on results. The area of artmaking is of particular concern as this is a skills based outcome that takes time to practise and develop. The faculty will continue to offer the photography, video and digital media course and visual design as subjects which offer a breadth of curriculum to our visual arts students, and also act as alternative subjects to non visual arts students.

In music 1, students achieved Band 4 and 5. Every student achieved state determined growth with one demonstrating growth well above.

**Vocational Education and Training**

Fifteen students elected to sit for the hospitality examination. Five scored Band 5, eight Band 4 and two Band 3.

Seven students elected to sit the information technology examination. One scored Band 5, three Band 4 and three Band 3.

One student elected to sit for the metal and engineering examination and scored Band 3.
Seven students elected to sit the retail services examination. Five scored Band 4 and two 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 ATAR to undertake the examination as the examination is not compulsory.

PDHPE
There were fourteen students who sat the 2 unit pdhpe examination. Over 85% of candidates achieved a Band 4 or higher. Six candidates received a Band 5 and one candidate received a Band 6. No students received a Band 1. Students did better in this subject than any other subject within the school. Students achieved higher than state average growth.

The pdhpe faculty will aim to continue to improve our results through assisting students with appropriate subject selection, study hints, revision classes outside of class time.

Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education
The focus areas for indigenous education for 2009 had been improving numeracy and literacy skills and developing greater cultural awareness. We also continued with the 2008 focus area of improving student engagement and retention.

From the NAPLAN testing results, our indigenous students are below state averages for students in Year 7 and equal with state averages in Year 9. Students who were below state average were identified and linked with weekly tuition. Six students received an hour of both literacy and numeracy tuition one morning weekly from external tutors.

Students in senior years were also able to access funding for tuition in their own selected areas. Eight students sought support in areas such as mathematics, English, information technology, ancient history and some sciences.

Personal learning plans were developed or updated for all indigenous students. The plans cater for the individual needs and interests of each student and offers support in areas of concern. The plans are updated annually to cater for the changing needs and demands of students.

After several group meetings with all students during Term 1, it became apparent that the students themselves wanted to get more information on their own history and culture. An aboriginal art program was developed to help meet this need. Through community involvement and the use of a very talented, local Aboriginal artist an artistic piece was designed, developed and presented to the school based on the theme Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. The project was unveiled with an indigenous smoking ceremony, cultural dance and a BBQ.

The art project involved community members and a follow up excursion to the Australian Museum where students viewed Aboriginal art and took part in an indigenous art workshop. The art project also led to more community links with the school and started to foster a sense of community within the school.

Four senior students began their traineeship with the A.E.S (Aboriginal Employment Strategy). The students were recognised by the AES at their annual dinner and Alichia Connor represented the school at the dinner as one the model trainees. A number of students who will be seniors in 2010; have applied for the AES traineeships.

Breanna and Jessica Collier have both, once again, excelled in sport. In 2009 the girls were in the NSW cricket team that won the Imparja Cup again. Breanna also won an SSWR Aboriginal
Student Achievement Award in sport. Jarrod Confoy (Yr.8) was also successful in winning an SSWR Aboriginal Student Achievement Award. Jarrod's area was numeracy.

Other significant events for indigenous students included: NAIDOC Week celebrations, subscription to the National indigenous Times, Healthwise at the Tharawal community and the teaching of traditional indigenous games to all Year 8 students at the school.

2009 Australian Defence Force Long Tan Leadership and Teamwork Awards

These awards were designed to promote personal development, leadership and teamwork in senior secondary school students. Students were selected based on criteria such as: values, problem solving, community involvement, communication, resourcefulness as well as leadership and teamwork. Congratulations to Skye McParland Year 12, Blake Shuttleworth Year 11, and Aneesa Kryer Year 10 who all received a certificate and a cheque to go towards their studies.

Australian Defence Force Technical Scholarship

These scholarships were introduced for students intending to pursue an ADF general entry technical trade career after completing Year 12. The DTS rewards technically savvy students for staying on at school and studying specific subjects. Successful Year 11 applicants received $2000 and in Year 12, $3000. Congratulations to Jason Martino, Bradley Brooks, Odin Loch and Andrew North.

Multicultural education

Muslim Mentoring

The Muslim mentoring program continued in 2009. One period per week, two of our former school captains – Ummu Matthews and Zunaid Moosa run a mentoring program for Muslim students who attend on a voluntary basis. This adds to the scripture offered by other faiths, and provides an opportunity for both Muslims and those with questions about the Islamic faith to further their knowledge and understanding. It has proved popular with students and offers students mentoring regarding the many religious and non religious issues that concern them. This year, a highly successful collection of foodstuffs, toys and funds held during Ramadan donated much needed goods to The Australian Zakat fund, broadening the school's contribution to charitable projects.

Respect and responsibility

Our community had identified that our children need to further develop the values of respect and responsibility. Explicit teaching of these social skills and values was undertaken on a daily basis by the teachers and incorporated into everyday lessons.

Other programs

Hearing Impaired Unit

Throughout 2009 the Hearing Support Unit at Robert Townson High School catered for the needs of 18 deaf and hearing impaired students from Year 7 to Year 12. This year one student completed the HSC and 2 students successfully completed their school certificate.

The unit runs a highly flexible program that offers an Individual Educational Plan for each student. The program for each student is delivered through individual and small group instruction, as well as integration into mainstream classes. Based on individual educational needs students participate in regular, stage appropriate curricula as well as Life Skills programs which include community access, participation and travel training, work experience and job coaching and TAFE delivered programs.

The Campus Coffee shop that was established by the support unit staff in 2006 continues to offer students across the school the opportunity to develop job skills in a well supported environment while continuing to offer staff and senior students “a great cup of coffee”.

Innovation was again a hallmark of the Support Unit in 2009 with our students being involved in a trial of live, in-class captioning. If this technology proves to be viable and successful and may be adopted across the country to better support the education of deaf students.

Nine HIU students attended the annual Deaf camp that is sponsored by the Lions Clubs of NSW. The students spent an exhausting week at the Sport and Recreation Camp at Narrabeen participating in range of indoor and outdoor activities. This camp is the highlight of the year for many of our students as it brings together Deaf students from all over NSW and is an opportunity to establish great new friendships and to re-establish some old ones.

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A highlight for 2009 was Lisa White’s success in the SmartArts program. Lisa, who was in Year 9, was selected to take part in this program and her talent was further recognised by the inclusion of her art work in the 2009 Directors Choice Exhibition at Homebush which showcases the best students the region has to offer in the area of Creative and Performing Arts.

In November the capacity of the unit was increased with the establishment of a third class. The unit will now be able to support 27 students when full. The increase in the number of students also entitled the unit to one more fulltime teacher and teacher’s aide, a part-time teacher and a Head Teacher position. This now means that the HIU is one of the largest faculties in the school, one of the largest deaf educational facilities in NSW and will continue to be a very well received and positive presence at Robert Townson High School.

**Vocational Education and 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 an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) if the student undertakes the Higher School Certificate examination.

Taylee Seach in Year 11 was selected as VET student of the year at RTHS for studying hospitality. She was awarded a prize by Macarthur Workplace Learning Program for her efforts over the year.

Many 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 ten students attended a Macarthur Area Careers Expo where they were able to talk to industry representatives and representatives from TAFE, university and private providers. Students were able to participate in a variety of activities and network with students from other schools.

Four students were successful in winning Vocational Education and Training Awards. The award winners are Yr.12 students who have shown excellence, commitment and passion in their chosen industry area of study. Students were presented with awards and prizes at the South Western Sydney Regional VET evening. Congratulations to students in the following frameworks.

- information technology - Kristopher Button
- metal and engineering - Muhammad Malik
- retail services - Douha Aychan
- school based apprenticeship and traineeship - Adin Rogers.

**Progress on 2009 targets**

**Target 1**

**Improve student attendance**

Students will meet state expected patterns of attendance in Years 7-12. This will be achieved over three years. Each year attendance patterns will increase until they meet state expectation.

Our achievements include:

- Written notification by departmental letter to parents of attendance requirements for students identified as causing concern were issued.
- A regular “Attendance Blitz” with Home School Liaison Officers interviewing students with below 85% attendance.
- The development of pastoral roll classes in 2010 specifically targeting students with attendance concerns.
- A teacher allocated to check attendance and lateness, to liaise with parents and to improve attendance rates.
- A measurable improvement in attendance rates of about 0.7% was achieved.

**Target 2**

**Improve student numeracy results**

Students entering high school in Year 7 are, on average, below the state expected level of numeracy development. When assessed again in Year 7 and 9 this gap has increased further for many students. Student numeracy results will increase to state determined levels of growth over three years.
Our achievements include:

- Staff meetings and staff development days used to provide training workshops for all staff on incorporating numeracy developmental strategies in lessons.
- Faculty presentations of numeracy lessons used in classrooms to whole staff.
- Development of a numeracy committee run by two head teachers to oversee the incorporation of numeracy in classrooms.
- Measurable increase in student awareness of numeracy “moments” in all lessons.
- A numeracy mentor class operated each day.
- STLA and support teachers and classroom teachers use NAPLAN data to specifically target students with low scores to provide individual support.
- Faculties analyse NAPLAN data to specifically target areas of cohort weakness.

**Target 3**

*Improve the school’s culture by explicit teaching of expectation*

There is a general feeling that student commitment to learning and societal values has deteriorated over the last few years. Accordingly future whole school surveys will show that students value learning and act in a way that shows respect for themselves and the school.

Our achievements include:

- Explicit teaching of social skills and values using developed workbooks each fortnight in class.
- Continued development of further lessons to be delivered by staff over 2010.
- Introduction of a more consistent reward structure using Positive Behaviour in Schools certificates to reward student success.
- Reduced rates of school suspension by approximately 30%.

**Key evaluations**

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2009 our school carried out evaluations of its School Culture and Numeracy.

**Educational and management practice**

**Culture**

The provision of effective and relevant professional training and development is a key undertaking for schools. The Staff Matters project (a Federal Government initiative) as a support program for staff produced a key finding that teachers needed planned and coordinated training and development appropriate to experience and stage in teaching career. In 2009 a Professional Learning Team (PLT) was established to coordinate the training and development needs of all teaching staff in an equitable approach. The team was made up of experienced teachers, head teachers and deputy principals. Surveys were conducted before and after training courses, including school development days to determine ongoing actions and planning by the PLT.

**Findings and conclusions**

At the beginning of 2009 the areas identified as requiring professional development and training as identified by staff included: classroom management, ICT strategies in the classroom, literacy and numeracy in the classroom, NSW Institute of Teachers accreditation, CV writing, Connected Learning strategies, leadership capability, quality teaching, student engagement and retention, backward mapping and assessment tasks. A calendar and full program of professional learning activities were designed and implemented to provide for staff needs. These experiences included school development days, an Early Career Teacher program, after-school workshops on CV writing and an executive conference. Links were made with Robert Townson Primary School and Macquarie Fields TAFE where teaching strategies and ICT skills were the focus of training and development with the help of skilled teachers as tutors. Other professional learning experiences included individual programs for teachers such as curriculum development, ICT, student wellbeing and management, school leadership and Positive Behaviour in Schools (PBIS).

The PLT aimed to provide a comprehensive program of professional development for all teachers with varying levels of experience.
Professional learning and training included laptop learning where members of the PLT visited Corpus Christie High School in Wollongong to observe techniques and strategies in learning, using laptop computers. Members of the PLT visited Arthur Phillip High School to observe best practice in introducing laptop learning for Year 9.

Data from surveys conducted with staff concerning the relevance of school development day Term 2 content which focused on numeracy, literacy and faculty programming, indicated that 77% of teachers considered the professional learning experiences were either excellent or very good in influencing their teaching practice. An executive conference was conducted in Term 2 which focused on Staff Matters data, managing the diverse needs of teachers, the NSW Institute of Teachers requirements for Early Career Teachers and professional supervision of Early Career Teachers. Data indicated that 73% of the executive teachers at the conference felt the experiences were useful at enhancing their school leadership skills. School development day Term 3 focused on numeracy, laptop learning & ICT. Survey data gathered from staff indicated that 62% of teachers considered the experiences either excellent or very good for their teaching practice.

In 2009 the introduction of two extra professional development days at the end of the year enabled the provision of further training and development activities for staff. The two days focused on Duty of Care, Code of Conduct, Child Protection, sport training and procedures and literacy and numeracy curriculum development across KLA’S with a focus on utilising NAPLAN data to inform teaching and learning experiences. Data collected at the end of these development days indicated that 71% of teachers felt the teacher professional learning experiences provided by the PLT in 2009 were excellent or very good.

A Professional Learning Policy was also developed by the PLT in 2009 as part of the school’s commitment to best practice in training and development.

Future directions

The final survey of staff needs in professional development and training took place at the end of 2009 with the outcome being to identify priority areas for 2010. Over 70% of staff expressed an interest in enhancing their skills in connected learning experiences for students including laptop learning skills. Approximately 54% of staff wanted to develop further skills in engaging students at school. Around one third of staff expressed an interest in further developing CV writing skills, hand held technology skills, quality teaching in schools and transition pathways for disengaged students. The PLT will focus on these areas in 2010.
Educational and management practice

Curriculum Numeracy

Background

Numeracy is a state and national priority learning area for students. National testing is carried out in Year 7 and 9 to evaluate levels of achievement and appropriate numeracy growth from Year 7 to Year 9.

Evaluation of results over the last 3 years indicated students enter Year 7 with numeracy skills below state average. This gap between our students in Year 7 and the state average, generally grows for our low achieving students as they move to Year 9. As a result we continue to re-evaluate our programs and resources with a view to reducing this gap.

Findings and conclusions

To teach numeracy effectively we assess students’ current levels of understanding as well as teacher skill and knowledge across the school. Data from 2008 indicated that a significant number of staff incorrectly believed numeracy was and should be taught by the mathematics department. NAPLAN data is being used to focus staff training on specific topics that tested poorly. Training and development activities are conducted to help staff identify the areas of numeracy skills in their subject that connect to the school’s numeracy priority.

The Numeracy Committee started with Measurement and Data which was identified as the topic applicable across most key learning areas. Staff training then moved on to topics such as Space and Number. Training of these skills is given by sample lessons and supply of resources.

Future directions

All teaching staff are given access to SMART data a software that analyses student performance, as well as a summary analysis of NAPLAN results. The Numeracy committee then prioritise focus areas to help and support faculty programming. The Teacher Professional Learning Budget has also been used to fund training opportunities for staff. In roll call each day a numeracy class will offer numeracy mentoring for Year 7, 8 and 9 students who performed well below state expected levels of growth. Faculties will continue to develop and implement numeracy teaching programs related to their area of teaching.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

Their responses are presented below.

In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. This took the form of surveyed responses, informal and formal meetings, community meetings and written requests.

Their responses are presented below.

- Grounds and buildings are well maintained.
- Plenty of extra-curricula opportunities for students exist.
- We are very happy with the breadth of curriculum that our students can choose from.
- Staff are quick to act on any student welfare issues.
- Teachers expect high standards of their students.
- Parents support the school’s uniform policy however they question the value of the ties.
- The teacher aides do an outstanding job.
- Parents appreciate the issues related to filling teaching positions of long term absences however it is desirable to have an appropriate teacher on these classes as soon as possible.
- Students would like to be better prepared in year 10 for the year 11 workload.

Professional learning

Staff are given continual access to a wide range of professional learning opportunities in line with the school management plan and departmental targets. In 2009 expenditure breakdowns are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Teachers</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy / Numeracy</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Teaching</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus Implementation</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare and Equity</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The large increase in expenditure for Literacy and Numeracy reflects the school’s and department’s priority. In line with new legislation for compulsory schooling until the age of 17, Welfare and Equity as well as Syllabus Implementation funds were used to provide appropriate teacher training to meet future student needs.

School development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2010

Target 1

*Improve student Literacy results in line with a State expectation of growth.*

A significant number of students entering high school in year 7 are below the state expected level of literacy development. When assessed further by NAPLAN in year 9 this gap has widened for a significant number of students often disengaged from learning. The school is incorporating a three year plan aimed at improving to increase results to state determined levels of growth.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Operation of peer reading groups each day.
- Continuation of whole school reading focus every roll call.
- Specific KLA developed teaching and learning programs which target literacy. Faculties to report back at staff meetings and staff development days.
- Detailed analysis of NAPLAN data by STLA and faculties to continue specific improvement programs for identified students.
- Literacy school based committee to oversee further developments and assist in teacher professional learning.
- Time allocated from English classes to explicitly teach NAPLAN areas as well as develop creative writing skills.

Our success will be measured by:

- Effective literacy programs operating
- Improved literacy results over 3 years

Target 2

*Improve student numeracy results in line with a State expectation of growth.*

A majority of students entering high school in year 7 are below the state expected level of numeracy development. When assessed further by NAPLAN in year 9 this gap has widened for a significant number of students often disengaged in learning. The school is incorporating a 3 year plan to increase results to state determined levels of growth.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Operation of Numeracy mentor group each morning.
- Detailed analysis of NAPLAN data by STLA and faculties to continue specific improvement programs for identified students.
- Numeracy school based committee to oversee further developments and assist in teacher professional learning
- Teaching staff numeracy skills to meet student needs.
- Staff training on development numeracy teaching programs.

Our success will be measured by:

- Improved numeracy results over 3 years.
- Effective numeracy programs operating.

Target 3

*Improve student attendance rates*

Student attendance in recent years has fallen due to lateness, fractional truancy and general leave. Further legislation introduced in 2010 requires students to attend school until the age of 17.

The school is continuing its 3 year plan for students to meet state expected patterns of attendance for years 7 to 12. Each year attendance patterns will increase until they meet state expectations.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Newsletters and correspondence to parents advising them of attendance requirements
- Meetings with students and parents when attendance becomes a concern.
- Close co-operation with the home school liaison officer in identifying and supporting students with attendance problems.
- Two specific roll groups that support and advise students with attendance and lateness concerns.
- Allocation of school resources to use a teacher to monitor student attendance and communicate any concerns to families.

Our success will be measured by:
- A reduction in absenteeism across all years

**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.

Warren Parkes (Principal)
Kim Chapman (Deputy Principal)
Robert Morrow (Deputy Principal)

The school executive team and program coordinators

**School contact information**

Robert Townson High School
Thunderbolt Drive, RABY NSW 2566
Ph: 9824 7777
Fax: 9820 2921
Email: roberttown-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: http://www.roberttown-h.school.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 8575

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: