

# Brisbane School of Distance Education

## Executive Summary





## Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation. This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.





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## 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Brisbane School of Distance Education** from **16 to 20 September 2019**.

The report presents an evaluation of the school's performance against the nine domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Deputy Regional Director to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

### 1.1 Review team

Paul Pengelly	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Stephen Bobby	Senior reviewer, SIU
Andrew Oliver	Peer reviewer
Julie Pozzoli	Peer reviewer
Tony McGruther	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Cnr Cavendish Road and Stanley Street East, Coorparoo
<b>Education region:</b>	Metropolitan Region
<b>Year opened:</b>	1988
<b>Year levels:</b>	Kindergarten to Year 12
<b>Enrolment:</b>	3430 – head count 2260.2 – FTE
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	5.70 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolment percentage:</b>	23.60 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	1035
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2016
<b>Day 8 staffing teacher full-time equivalent (FTE):</b>	209.93
<b>Significant partner schools:</b>	Capricornia School of Distance Education (SDE), Charters Towers SDE, Cairns SDE, Mt Isa School of the Air, Longreach SDE, Charleville SDE, Queensland Children's Hospital, in addition to over 300 state, independent and Catholic primary and secondary schools across Queensland
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Institute of Culinary Excellence (ICE), State Member for Greenslopes, Federal Member for Griffith, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), Queensland Government, University of Queensland (UQ)
<b>Significant school programs:</b>	Student council, student leadership development, Champions strategy, Ready Reader program, Swim School program, regular enrichment days, registered training program, student wellbeing, Mentoring Beginning Teachers (MBT) program, staff induction program, coaching and Teacher Collaboration Time (TCT)



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Executive principal, five heads of school, 23 Heads of Department (HOD), Business Manager (BM), Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), 98 teachers, 11 teacher aides, three guidance officers, schools officer, canteen convenor – ICE, 15 administration officers, two pathways officers, 38 students and 31 parents.

Community and business groups:

- Seven community partners.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Five primary partner school principals.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State member for Greenslopes, Federal Member for Griffith and Deputy Regional Director.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2019	School data plan
Investing for Success 2019	Strategic Plan 2017-2020
School Opinion Survey	School Data Profile (Semester 1 2019)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2019	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	Professional development plans
School pedagogical framework	School newsletters and website
Explicit Improvement Agenda 2019-2020	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
Report card and NAPLAN update Semester 1 2019	School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
Headline Indicators (April 2019 release)	





## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

**The executive leadership team and staff have built and are maintaining a positive culture that promotes learning and develops relationships that foster and are responsive to the needs of the students and their families.**

Staff members articulate that the school is known broadly in the wider educational community as the school of choice, embracing social inclusion and diversity. Staff recognise that students present with a diverse range of cultural, social, emotional and academic backgrounds. The leadership team and teachers welcome all students and their families. A comment frequently relayed by parents is that the school is a place that ‘works’ for their child when most other educational settings were incompatible with their specific needs. It is a school that cares, with a backbone of high expectations.

**The executive principal is driving a powerful narrative of ‘*each student succeeding*’, through the enactment of school vision, mission, values and strategic priorities, as the foundation for future improvement.**

School leaders and staff have established high expectations for student attendance, learning, and engagement. They identify a quantifiable link between levels of online lesson engagement and student achievement. Attendance and engagement are closely monitored, with early intervention strategies helping to build positive learning behaviours. Expectations regarding attendance, learning and engagement are regularly communicated in newsletters, through social media and school notices. Students, staff and the wider community articulate powerful resonance with the school’s inclusive culture, and identify the importance of high levels of attendance, self-discipline and personal effort to support success in learning.

**The school leadership team is united and committed to continuous improvement to teaching practices across the school.**

A consistent mantra of ‘*each student succeeding*’ is driving a powerful message regarding high expectations for learning throughout the school. A comprehensive pedagogical framework P-12 is developed to accurately represent the expected teaching cycle and stages. The IMPACT model is identified within the framework as a suite of pedagogical practices to support teaching and learning. This model was developed specifically for the Brisbane School of Distance Education (SDE) approximately 10 years ago, and is not commonly referenced by staff as a current pedagogical practice. Teachers are optimistic of, and express eagerness for, developing signature school-wide pedagogical practices to support 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning, within the context of a ‘School of the Future’.



**School leaders are united and committed to the implementation of a strategic whole-school approach to improving student learning outcomes, and have established a dynamic and inclusive learning culture.**

Teachers and leaders describe a strong affinity with the documented strategic agenda and are able to identify some of the five key strategic focus areas. Most consistently identify one or two of the improvement areas as the defined focus. These responses vary across, and within, faculties and sectors. Some disparity amongst staff members exists regarding understanding the exact meaning of each priority, what individual roles would comprise, and how individual and collective progress towards achievement of identified priorities is to be measured. Teachers and leaders suggest that a clear narrative capturing the full scope of the improvement agenda is yet to consistently emerge. Some teachers and leaders speak of a need for further refinement and precision regarding the improvement agenda, to ensure clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in delivering the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA), to develop consistent engagement and practice, and to efficiently target support and capability development.

**The executive principal is working to build a cohesive, confident and enthusiastic teaching team through fostering strong relationships and developing a culture of continuous professional improvement.**

The school leadership team recognises the importance of providing strong instructional leadership. Teaching staff are open to constructive feedback and some provide informal feedback to colleagues. The school has a program of observation, and feedback aligned to the Annual Performance Review (APR) process. Some teachers articulate being observed by members of the middle leadership team at least twice per year. They suggest that the rigour and timing of this process vary across the school. Some teachers indicate that the feedback provided is frequently general in nature and they would welcome identification of more specific areas for improvement.

**The school's expressed intent to move from a curriculum-driven school to one responsive to individual student need reflects a commitment to differentiated learning and teaching.**

Teachers speak of a number of ways in which they apply online learning tools and techniques to differentiate their teaching. Teachers and teacher aides display a considerable range of personal competency in specific tools and practices for differentiating learning. They refer positively to the further potential of these tools and techniques to engage the diverse range of students in learning specifically tailored to their needs. They seek to further strengthen capability in their use and in the identification of student need. Many seek opportunities to share expertise.





***'Knowing the Child'* and *'Each Student Succeeding'* underpin the emphasis placed by the whole school community on creating, developing and sustaining strong partnerships between the school, parents and the student.**

School community members all comment positively on this aspect of the school culture that is viewed as a strength and acknowledged as an essential precursor for student success at the school. Staff members recognise the role social interactions and celebrations play in enhancing school, parent and student engagement. Enrichment days are held once a term and provide the opportunity for student, staff and parent interaction, training for home supervisors, and involvement in activities for students. Staff, parents and students attribute very high value to these days and celebrations, and express a desire for greater frequency.

**The leadership of the school articulates a clear belief that reliable and timely review of student performance data is critical to their instructional leadership roles.**

The school has a clear statement of intent encompassed within high level strategic documents for all levels of the school to 'know our students'. Leaders have established three key strategies for data processes, namely, the discussion of datasets, the analysis and application of data across data cycles, and the facilitated conduct of 'deep dive' data queries. It has developed and is implementing a plan for the systematic collection and analysis of data.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Reflect the school's commitment to '*Innovation, Inspiration and Inclusion*' in development of agreed signature school-wide pedagogical practices to inform 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning within the context of the 'School of the Future'.

Further refine and clarify the scope of the identified EIA and its measurement in terms of improved student outcomes, to enhance school-wide understanding of, commitment to, and communication of identified priorities.

Quality assure a systematic approach to school-wide observation and feedback, coaching and mentoring, as a key driver for implementation of the agreed 'School of the Future' pedagogies.

Further enhance the capability of teachers and teacher aides to understand the implications of the specific medical, psychological and learning needs of students, to design appropriate adjustments and to utilise the most effective online learning tools in their delivery.