

Elizabeth College

External School Review Report 2021



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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education is committed to supporting and improving the educational outcomes and achievements of Tasmanian Government School students.

The purpose of the External School Review (the Review) is to support schools to raise student achievement and sustain high performance. The process is transparent and contributes to the realisation of the department's *Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Learners First: Every Learner, Every Day* to inspire and support all learners to succeed as connected, resilient, creative and curious thinkers.

The External School Review Framework underpinning the Review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT). The tool brings together the findings from international research into the practices of highly effective schools and school leaders and is aligned to the department's improvement approach. The Framework focuses on the practices proven to impact positively on achievement outcomes for all students at the classroom level. It is not intended to document every aspect of the school's processes, programs and outcomes.

The overarching review question is "how well does this school improve student achievement, growth, wellbeing, equity and engagement?"

This External School Review Report outlines aspects of the school's performance verified through the review process. It also recommends key improvement strategies for the school to include in school improvement planning in consultation with Learning Services and the school community.

This Review was conducted in May 2021 by:

- Jason Szczerbanik, External School Review Leader
- Grant Armitstead, Principal Peer Reviewer
- John Thompson, Principal Peer Reviewer
- Natalie Odgers, Principal Peer Reviewer

DISCLAIMER

The Department of Education does not endorse any commercial organisation, product or service mentioned in this report.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Location	Elizabeth Street, North Hobart 7000
Year levels	Year 11 – Year 13
Enrolment	839
Year opened	1911
Principal	Dr Dianne Purnell
Year principal appointed	2010
Indigenous enrolment percentage	4.87%
Students with a disability enrolment percentage	3.81%
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value	997
Full-time equivalent staff members	91.70 FTE

CONTRIBUTING STAKEHOLDERS

The External School Review panel met with the school leadership team, teacher assistants and over 90 per cent of teachers. The panel also met with parents, members of the School Association and the community.

The panel visited every classroom and met with student groups from across the college.

The following table will guide percentages for statements made in this report:

No	Few	Some	Many	Most	All
0%	1–20%	20–50%	50–75%	75–99%	100%

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

School Improvement Plan (SIP)	Attainment data
School Annual Review	Attendance data
Student, staff and parent satisfaction and wellbeing surveys	Retention data
ASPIRE	

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

In a review of student attainment data, the panel observed a neutral five-year trend in the percentage of students achieving the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE). In 2020, 75 per cent of students achieved the TCE.

The panel noted a downward five-year trend from 2016-2020 in the percentage of students who achieved an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). In 2020 the rate was 38 per cent.

In a review of direct retention data, the panel observed there has been a stable five-year trend in direct retention at the college. The panel noted Year 11 and 12 direct retention rates tracked below the state rate in 2020.

A review of School Satisfaction Survey results indicates overall positive levels of staff and parent satisfaction agreement ratings. The panel noted the overall ratings from the staff survey were above, and the parent ratings were below, the average rate for the state in 2019.

The college attendance rate for 2020 was 77.7 per cent. It should be noted this rate may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel observed this rate has remained relatively stable and noted it has tracked above the average Tasmanian college attendance rate since 2014.

A review of Student Wellbeing Survey data from 2020 indicated overall high levels of student wellbeing. When compared to all Tasmanian schools a greater percentage of students reported higher levels of school climate and emotional engagement with teachers. A smaller percentage of students reported medium to high levels of wellbeing in cognitive engagement and school climate when compared to similar schools in 2020.

School Improvement Planning shows the priority areas of engagement, wellbeing, pedagogy and developing links with the Hobart City Partner Schools.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES

During the Review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing to college improvement at Elizabeth College:

- The leadership team have led and established a foundation for college improvement particularly in the area of staff wellbeing.
- The college is driven by a deep belief in the college and a strong collegial approach. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships across the college. These relationships are used as an enabler for learning.
- The college has been successful in maintaining learning environments which are safe, respectful and inclusive. All classes observed were calm and orderly.
- There is a happy and optimistic feel to the college and a strong sense of pride and belonging. All students who met with the panel spoke highly of the college and its staff.
- The college has introduced programs and strategies to identify and address the needs of students in the college and are sourcing and applying resources to meet those needs. Tailored, early and sustained interventions are in place for students requiring additional support.
- Staff highlighted the extensive support they received from the leadership team and the high level of organisation across the college.
- All staff, students and parents communicated a positive college culture. The college ethos is built around high expectations and a commitment to growth for all students. Staff at the college tell stories of significant improvement in individual student participation and attainment.

LINES OF INQUIRY

In considering the college's data, supporting documentary evidence, a presentation by the principal and input from Learning Services, the panel explored the following lines of inquiry to evaluate the college's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance.

During the External School Review process, the panel focussed on four key areas from the National School Improvement Tool:

Domains 3, 7 and 8: How effective are whole college practices in creating learning environments where all students are engaged and challenged to maximise learning outcomes?

Domain 2: How effective is the college in monitoring, reviewing and supporting each student's learning pathway to optimise success?

How effective are whole college practices in creating learning environments where all students are engaged and challenged to maximise learning outcomes?

Observations and strengths:

- The panel observed evidence there exists in the college a commitment to every student's success. Over the course of the Review, many staff shared stories of significant student improvement.
- All staff at the college articulated building positive and caring relationships was critical for successful learning. This was supported through conversations with students, staff and parents. Interactions between staff, students and parents are caring, polite and inclusive.
- The college places a high priority on student and staff wellbeing. The college has in place processes to provide academic and non-academic support to address individual needs for students in identified priority groups.
- Most students and staff have an obvious sense of belonging and speak highly of the college. Students reported there is a happy and optimistic feel. Some staff identified at times they felt they worked within silos.
- Over the course of the Review, the panel noted all classes observed were calm and orderly.
- Through discussions with the leadership team and staff, the panel heard the college had implemented a range of strategies to effectively transition most students into meaningful pathways.
- The panel noted college leaders and teachers have given a high priority to understanding and addressing the learning needs of all students in the college. The panel noted the college has implemented a number of strategies to support retention, engagement and attainment, eg ECAAD, Pathways, I Class, Enrichment, tutorials and Student Services. In discussions with students, most spoke positively of these programs in improving their levels of engagement and attendance. Data tracking of students involved in these programs shows increases in levels of engagement, wellbeing and retention.
- The panel heard the college had implemented an enrichment program. Many students who met with the panel spoke positively of the program.
- Through discussions with staff and parents, the panel heard the college deployed staff in ways which make best use of their expertise.
- Through discussions with the leadership team and teachers, the panel heard the college was refining its approach to curriculum documentation through the development of scope and sequence documents aligned to TASC and VET requirements. Many teachers who met with the panel articulated a

commitment to working with other staff to ensure consistency in curriculum planning and sharing of resources.

- College leaders have communicated their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the college. Staff are encouraged to incorporate elements of the High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) in their classrooms. The panel heard Learning Area Managers have the responsibility to support staff in implementing the HITS. The panel heard Learning Intentions and Success Criteria have been a focus of this work.
- During class observations the panel noted a level of variance in the use of the HITS. This was affirmed through teacher and student discussions. The panel heard at the time of the Review the college did not have a documented whole college position on the kinds of teaching they wish to see occurring in every classroom other than reference to the HITS.
- The panel heard some staff were involved in Formative Learning Walks. The panel heard this work is in its early stages. The panel also noted the intention of the walks allowed teachers to observe the practice of colleagues to reflect on their own practice. Some teachers indicated a desire to receive feedback on their teaching practice.
- The panel heard teachers strive to be experts in subject knowledge and this is valued by parents and students.
- The panel heard time is provided for teachers to work together. The panel noted the processes and accountabilities (ways of working) differed across Learning Area Teams. Through discussions with staff, the panel heard these meetings were largely operationally focussed. The panel also noted the significant number of part-time staff provided some challenges in coordinating opportunities for collaboration as noted in the SIP.
- The panel noted the college has a documented Professional Learning Plan. Most staff identified this plan has included learning about the HITS.
- Through discussions with staff, the panel heard the different levels of courses offered across the college was a key differentiation strategy.
- Many students identified varying levels of ICT use to enhance teaching and learning. Students expressed a greater desire to have access to learning materials online and greater consistency in practice in respect to assignment submission.

Opportunities:

There are opportunities in the college to:

- Unite college leaders in their commitment and actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the college.
- Develop with all staff a shared understanding of evidence-based quality teaching practices, aligned to the DoE Pedagogical Framework.
- Develop the capacity of all leaders to be instructional leaders to drive growth in teacher practice.
- Support all teachers to embed quality teaching practices in all classrooms.
- Establish effective staff collaborative inquiry processes to support continuous improvements in teaching and learning across the college.

Recommendation 1

Co-construct and implement a teaching and learning framework which identifies the evidence-based strategies used at Elizabeth College to maximise student learning.

Recommendation 2

Establish effective staff collaborative inquiry processes to support continuous improvements in teaching and learning across the college.

How effective is the college in monitoring, reviewing and supporting each student's learning pathway to optimise success?

Observations and strengths:

- The panel observed the college has implemented a range of strategies to monitor student progress. These strategies operated at a teacher, Learning Area and whole school level. From discussion with teachers, students and parents, the panel heard teachers and Home Group Teachers closely monitor and intervene to ensure students are supported in their learning.
- Staff and students were affirming of the multiple layers of support for students in respect to personal issues and learning concerns.
- Students who met with the panel valued the range of subjects which were available. The panel also noted the number of students undertaking VET courses has increased.
- The panel observed the college has responded to an increase in the demand for specialist support – particularly in the area of wellbeing. The panel noted the college has invested significantly in additional staff in the Student Services area and Teacher Assistants. Students who met with the panel spoke highly of the work of this team.

Opportunities:

There are opportunities in the college to:

- Continue to respond to student need through the allocation of resources to support the learning needs of all students. This can be enhanced by providing further opportunities to collect and respond to student voice.
- Strengthen the relationships with high schools to ensure effective student transitions with a particular focus on students requiring higher levels of adjustments.

Recommendation 3

Respond to student need through the allocation of resources to support the learning needs of all students. This can be enhanced by providing further opportunities to collect and respond to student voice.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2021

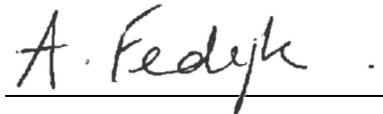
At Elizabeth College a high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff and students. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and college leaders. The college has been successful in maintaining an environment which is respectful and inclusive.

The External School Review makes the following recommendations to further improve student learning outcomes:

1. Co-construct and implement a teaching and learning framework which identifies the evidence-based strategies used at Elizabeth College to maximise student learning.
2. Establish effective staff collaborative inquiry processes to support continuous improvements in teaching and learning across the college.
3. Respond to student need through the allocation of resources to support the learning needs of all students. This can be enhanced by providing further opportunities to collect and respond to student voice.



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