# Townsville State High School

## Executive Summary

Education Improvement Branch

Queensland Government

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Townsville State High School** from **7** to **9 June 2022.**

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 Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

An action plan will be developed and submitted to the EIB and region within six weeks of the school receiving the report.

For more information regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB website.

## 1.1 Review team

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| Alan Smith | Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair) |
| Anthony Lanskey | Peer reviewer |
| Ken Rogers | External reviewer |

## 1.2 School context

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| **Indigenous land name:** | Wulgurukaba and neighbouring Bindal people |
| **Location:** | Boundary Street, Railway Estate |
| **Education region:** | North Queensland Region |
| **Year levels:** | Year 7 to Year 12 |
| **Enrolment:** | 793 |
| **Indigenous enrolment percentage:** | 22.7 per cent |
| **Students with disability percentage:** | 12.6 per cent |
| **Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:** | 932 |
| **Year principal appointed:** | October 2015 |

## 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, three deputy principals, Business Manager (BM), nine Heads of Department (HOD), two guidance officers, 28 teachers, 15 teacher aides, four administration officers, eight cleaners, schools officer – grounds, Community Education Counsellor (CEC), information technology support officer, canteen convenor, School Based Youth Health Nurse (SBYHN), 60 students and 11 parents.

Community and business groups:

- Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president and four representatives of the Clontarf Foundation.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Belgian Gardens State School principal, Hermit Park State School principal, Aitkenvale State School principal and Stanton Lodge Head of Special Education Services (HOSES).

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

**The school has been proudly providing the young people of Townsville with a secondary education since 1924.**

The school's motto, *'In Meloria Contende'*, translates to 'Strive for better things', with the principal commenting that this statement honours the rich history and proud traditions of the school. Staff members are committed to contributing positively to students' learning and development, and describe school leaders as being committed, united, and cohesive. The principal articulates that 'the performance of students is important to us and the pursuit of excellence across our curriculum is a key focus'.

**A respectful culture is apparent across the school community.**

Staff members articulate care in developing meaningful relationships with students to support their education, with many students and parents speaking of the commitment of staff. Parents express appreciation for the care and support staff display for their child and indicate that staff are approachable to discuss their child's progress. Staff members demonstrate genuine care and dedication towards students. Strong collegiality amongst staff is apparent.

**Learning walls are utilised across the school, with take-up apparent in all learning areas.**

Many teachers speak positively of learning walls and describe how students access these to support articulation of what they need to be able to know and do. Consistently, these contain 'Know, Do, Think About' tables using a school template, task sheets and marking guides, modelled responses at both A and C levels, and annotated student work showing alignment to the marking guide. Students indicate that they appreciate teachers explicitly deconstructing modelled responses, and the continual reinforcement of the full and appropriate use of cognitive verbs.

**Members of the leadership team demonstrate a strong conviction that high quality teaching is key to improved student learning.**

School leaders identify the value of a consistent whole-school approach to teaching and learning. Teachers identify the need to select pedagogy that engages all students. The principal acknowledges the importance of building capacity and deepening practice. Executive leaders articulate that the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR)[1] model is an essential aspect of the school's approach to pedagogy, and have communicated an expectation that teachers will use the GRR model when providing input and output every lesson. Teachers articulate that they endeavour to make regular use of GRR when scaffolding student learning. A systematic process to provide all teachers with the

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[1] Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2013). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility.* Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD).

opportunity to be observed and receive feedback from school leaders on their implementation of strategies aligned to GRR is yet to be apparent. Many teachers indicate that they would value the opportunity to receive such feedback on their practice.

**The school has collaboratively developed a whole-school curriculum plan that provides a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery.**

Heads of Department (HOD) speak appreciatively of the Professional Development (PD) provided to improve their skills as curriculum leaders. In turn, they have worked with teachers in their faculties to build strong curriculum expertise across the school. Leaders are aware of the importance of providing a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of all students. Teachers and school leaders indicate that implementation of planned and documented curriculum is variable. The importance of high levels of student engagement and quality learning outcomes for all students is consistently referenced by staff members.

**The school has enacted a student code of behaviour outlining clear expectations and systems of operation using the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) philosophy.**

Students and staff are able to identify the school's behaviour expectations of *'Learn, Respect, Be safe'*. Data related to student behaviour is systematically collected and analysed by Year Level Coordinators (YLC), with the PBL committee previously playing a role in this function. Many staff identify consistency of implementation of agreed behaviour management processes and procedures by all staff is yet to occur. Staff express a desire to reinvigorate the PBL process across the school to support consistency of practice regarding behaviour expectations.

**The principal identifies the importance of instructional leadership, and is committing resources and time to ongoing capability development across the leadership team to support the successful implementation of all school priorities.**

The Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) for 2022 is aligned to the school's strategic plan. The theme for the current year is 'consistency is key.' A total of five strategies are identified in the AIP, including consistent approaches to leadership, teaching and learning practices, student output, using data, and use of Consistent Classroom Practices (CCP). Staff members generally indicate that the school's Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) is 'consistency'. A shared understanding of the EIA is yet to be apparent, with many staff members identifying a perception that the EIA is too broad.

**School leaders and teachers are committed to inclusive practices.**

Differentiated teaching, engaging learning opportunities, and targeted support for students are identified by staff members as essential for maximising student outcomes. There is recognition that although students are at different stages in their learning and may be progressing at different rates, every student is capable of successful learning if motivated and provided with appropriate learning opportunities and necessary support. Targeted intervention includes a literacy group and a homework program. Several staff members express concern at the limited availability of tailored, early and sustained intervention. Some

express the view that a more intense focus on such intervention would positively impact on student behaviour and attendance.

**Leaders endeavour to utilise available human and physical resources to meet student needs.**

The leadership team provides the professional resources staff members require to support teaching and learning. Discretionary funds are directed towards improving academic achievements for every student, with this commitment reflected in the investment in student wellbeing and support services. Many staff identify the provision of technology as necessary to effectively deliver curriculum-based programs. They express a belief that improved access to technology will enable them to enhance students' digital capabilities and support a seamless transition into senior secondary. Access to cloud-based resources is identified as a requirement by many teachers.

**Leaders and teachers are committed to collegial engagement and intentional collaboration to strengthen effective pedagogical and curriculum practices to maximise student learning.**

Teachers articulate that they are committed to improving their teaching expertise. The principal places a high priority on identifying, employing, developing, and retaining the best possible teachers and staff. Teachers express appreciation for the informal sharing and support they receive from colleagues, especially through staffroom cohorts. A range of PD opportunities have been provided to teachers to continue to build the collective capability of the teaching workforce.

**The school encourages student voice through a variety of student committees, such as the senior and junior student councils, and provides a range of leadership development opportunities for students.**

There are currently 49 students holding leadership positions and all have engaged in leadership development through programs such as YLead. Students indicate that they have a voice in the school's direction and are consulted on changes that impact on learning and school culture. Student leaders attend Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) meetings to report on student views and request support for fundraising initiatives. There is a sense of shared pride and ownership of the school.

## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Systematically enact a formalised approach for observation and feedback from school leaders to teachers regarding their use of agreed pedagogical strategies drawn from GRR.

Quality assure the delivered curriculum for consistency of planning, assessment, moderation and reporting.

Collaboratively develop strategies to reinvigorate PBL, and quality assure the systematic enactment of agreed behaviour management processes and expectations across the school.

Refine the EIA, and communicate particular improvements being sought, and measures to gauge progress.

Collaboratively develop a strategic approach to the delivery of targeted intervention to support students' literacy and numeracy.

Investigate strategies that enhance access to digital infrastructure, and improve capabilities of staff and students.