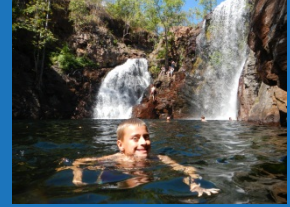


Sydney Distance Education Primary School Annual School Report 2014



School context

Sydney Distance Education Primary School (SDEPS) is a distance education facility catering for K-6 students who are unable to attend their local school due to distance or circumstances. The vast majority of students enrolled at SDEPS are travelling within Australia or overseas. Therefore, the school's mobility rate is extremely high and enrolments are generally 400 students or more during the year.

SDEPS has a long held reputation for consistently high quality teaching and learning resources and practices resulting in outstanding student outcomes such as in national assessments. The school uses innovative technology to link with its many families throughout the world to provide challenging and engaging learning experiences. It is also a major provider of learning resources to other Distance Education primary schools as a result of a recent agreement.

Principal's message

Student successes at this school continue to demonstrate that the quality teaching, diverse programs, and engaging learning resources remain our key strengths. The excellent commitment demonstrated by our teaching and student support is the cornerstone for all our achievements.

Some of our outstanding achievements have been the iPad Project in Stage2 that has indicated very high satisfaction rates among students, their families and their teachers. Our Learning Materials Production team has produced an enormous quantity of colourful and engaging resources as we ready ourselves for the introduction of the new NSW Mathematics Syllabus. We were also able to launch new initiatives in the area of languages with quality Italian and Japanese resources for beginners now being offered at the primary level.

As usual we appreciate the honest feedback from our families on how we may continue to improve in all of our services. We firmly believe that we are second to none in the provision of primary distance education in NSW. Suggestions, big or small are always welcome as we strive to better our ability to provide our families with the best in distance education learning.

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 new areas for development.

Robin Roberts

Principal



School Council message

2014 has been another high achieving year for the staff and students of SDEPS.

With our school population travelling, performing or facing challenges in medical and other circumstances, our NAPLAN results remain consistently above state averages. While maintaining adherence to the ever dynamic NSW curriculum expectations, student work continues to reflect the diversity of backgrounds and experience of our unique cohort.

We are exceptionally proud of our work in materials development, both in curriculum adherence and with a focus on digital modes of delivery. In 2014 our newly developed mathematics material began rolling out digitally to Stage 2.

It is anticipated that these materials may be adopted by the majority of Distance Education primary schools in NSW in 2015 and beyond, cementing our position as a key materials development resource provider. This initiative should develop beyond Mathematics into additional learning areas in the near future with the financial support of other Distance Education centres. The adoption of the eBackpack software should allow for ease of delivery and engagement for students and educators alike.

SDEPS is also pleased to be a pilot school for the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) web-based library service, 'Oliver'. This service,

centralises and integrates digital information technology resources across the state, and provides open access to shared catalogues, databases and hard copy resources.

On a personal note, I remain grateful and inspired to be able to be a part of a school community that values the provision of individually focused, constantly relevant and forward thinking education.

When life takes you outside the box, it's great to know your child's education will follow!

Valerie Foley

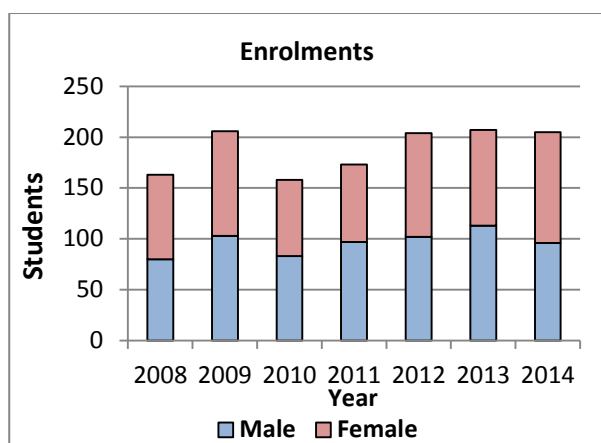
School Council Parent Representative

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

Gender	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Male	80	103	83	97	102	113	96
Female	83	103	75	76	102	94	109



Student attendance profile:

- Families are informed of the mandatory DEC attendance requirements upon enrolment. SDEPS Attendance and Participation Policy (2010) and the Attendance and Participation Guidelines for Parents/Supervisors (2011) are available when the student is enrolling.
- Supervisors are required to return a weekly attendance record to their student's teacher indicating periods of attendance. In case of leave, supervisors

are to add an explanation for non-attendance.

- During the period of enrolment, the student's teacher retains a record of the student's weekly attendance and communication as well as marks an attendance roll. If necessary, the specific details and requirements of the SDEPS policies are communicated by the teacher to the supervising parent or carer.

Management of non-attendance:

- Non-attendance is referred to as a minimum period of 4 weeks wherein there has been no communication from a supervisor in conjunction with no participation, no return of schoolwork and no reasonable explanation for this situation. Teachers are responsible for monitoring student attendance by keeping communication records for each student and a class attendance roll. Stage coordinators monitor these documents. Executive staff members are responsible for the compilation of data and follow-up procedures when a student has been identified as non-attending.
- Non-attendance results in three warning notices being sent to the student and supervisor. After a final warning notice, an application for the student to be part of a Home School Liaison or Aboriginal Community Liaison program is made to the Education Office of the originating census school for the student.
- Other appropriate agencies including the Child Well-Being Unit and the Department of Community Services may be involved if the situation warrants.

Workforce information

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

Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal PP3	1
Deputy Principal	1
Assistant Principals	2
Classroom Teachers	13
Teacher Part Time	0.3

Teacher Librarian	0.4
Teacher Learning and Support	0.4
School Counsellor	0.1
School Administrative Manager	1
School Administrative & Support Staff	4.112
General Assistant	0.3
Technology Liaison Officer	1
Total	24.612

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100%
Postgraduate	25%
NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation	15%



Professional learning and teacher accreditation

The key to the school's success lies largely with the quality of staff it engages each year. Major initiatives this year have included:

- Training in new NSW English and Mathematics Syllabus
- CPR training
- Various Technology courses such as In-Design and Adobe Connect
- Curriculum development writing
- NSW Teacher Accreditation sessions.

All staff members have participated in professional development activities throughout the year on staff development days, including the mandatory training activities, syllabus introductions and development of curriculum resources. Numerous staff members have also attended activities outside school hours. Most professional development courses attended are approved by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching

and Educational Standards (BOSTES) and therefore are included in staff mandatory training requirements.

Members of the executive have actively been involved in redefining the Distance Education Primary Network to improve the sharing of resources, staff development initiatives and professional dialogue. It is envisaged that the new network will have a significant input into professional learning in 2015.

Financial summary

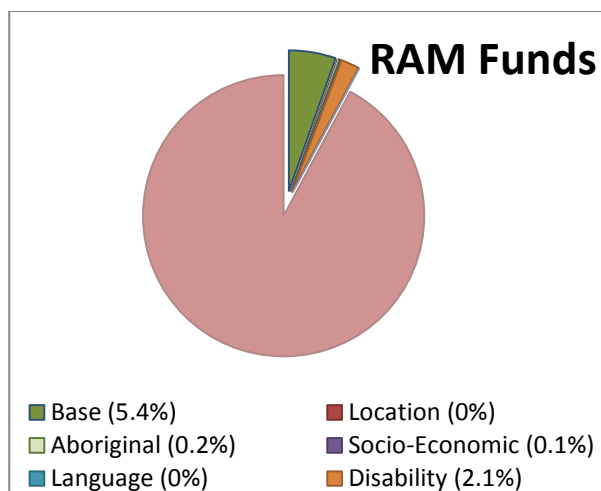
This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

	2014 Actual
Opening Balance	\$353,932.00
Revenue (10609)	\$2,406,819.00
Appropriation	\$2,351,397.00
Sale of Goods and Services	\$45,818.00
Grants and Contributions	\$966.00
Other revenue	
Investment Income	\$8,638.00
Expenses (106010)	\$2,230,381.00
Recurrent Expenses	\$2,230,381.00
Employee Related	\$2,094,926.00
Operating Expenses	\$135,455.00
Capital Expenses	
Surplus/Deficit for the year	\$176,438.00
Balance Carried Forward	\$530,369.00

Funds received through the Resource Allocation Model

Component	RAM	
Base	121,941	5.4%
Equity	55,098	2.4%
Location		0%
Aboriginal	4,430	0.2%
Socio-Economic	3,081	
Language		0%
Disability	47,587	2.1%
Targeted	26	0%

Other	2,080,929	92.2%
Total	2,257,994	



SDEPS has been saving funds with the intention of expending funds during 2015 on:

- Teaching and Learning Resources for the development of new curriculum materials
- Technology for Teaching and Learning to meet changing technology requirements
- Marketing and promotion to raise the school profile and enrolment numbers.

A full copy of the school's 2014 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

The information provided in the Financial summary is current at the date shown. This is the latest financial information available for 2014, prior to the change-over in financial systems for our school.



School performance 2013

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

The Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards competition attracts over 10,000 entries in Australia. This year was the thirtieth anniversary of the competition. It provides an opportunity for our students at SDEPS to participate in a national competition and to express their ideas creatively through poetry. The students are provided with suitable units of work to develop their literacy skills through poetry writing. Students are then inspired to write poems of varying styles. In 2014 the theme was 'What Shall I Tell You', a verse poem inspired by James Leroy Flecker. There were 26 entries from SDEPS students ranging from Kindergarten to Year 6. The judges were impressed with our poems, with each student receiving an award.

NSW Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC)

In SDEPS students are encouraged to participate in the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge each year. This challenge aims to instill the love of reading for pleasure and leisure in students and allows them to experience quality literature. In 2014, 47 students participated in the challenge. Many students received awards and all students received a certificate of participation signed by the Premier for having read the required number of books.

External Assessments

The students from SDEPS achieved outstanding results when they participated in the University of New South Wales (UNSW) International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS). These tests are independent evaluations of students' skills and knowledge in core learning areas and provide insight into students' understanding. These were particularly challenging test papers, attempted by over 374,000 students from Australia and the Pacific. Students from SDEPS achieved outstanding results.

This year, 22 of our students participated in the UNSW ICAS Mathematics Competition:

- The competition was completed by over 140,000 students in Australia.

- Our students' overall results were of a very high standard, several points above the NSW and ACT mean in all classes.
- 14 of our students secured distinction, credit or merit awards

Similar excellent results were recorded in the UNSW ICAS English Competition:

- Of our entries, 13 students secured high distinctions, distinctions, credits or merits.
- Our overall school result was several mean points higher in comparison to the NSW and ACT scores.



Academic Achievements

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 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 these assessments.

Year 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3).

Year 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5).

The *My School* website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link <http://www.myschool.edu.au> enter the school name in *Find a school* and select *GO* to access the school data.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

SDEPS is situated on Eora land, belonging to the traditional landowners, the Gadigal clan.

SDEPS is committed to improving the educational outcomes and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students so that they may excel and achieve in every aspect of their educational endeavours. In 2014, the Aboriginal Education scope and sequence was implemented across all stages and resulted in an increase in Aboriginal content across all student programs. New learning material produced in 2014 is aligned to NSW syllabus outcomes with respect to Aboriginal perspectives. The development of a calendar of Aboriginal events has ensured that all students are able to be more involved in events such as National Sorry Day and Harmony Day.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

SDEPS continues to support multicultural awareness and understanding of Australia's diverse cultures. SDEPS considers itself to be a global school and many of our students reside in non-English speaking countries. During 2014, SDEPS has maintained its high standard in integrating multicultural education content and perspectives through all curriculum areas. On March 21st this year our students participated in Harmony Day activities on Edmodo. Harmony Day is a day of respect for all cultures and people of the world.

NSW government schools value the cultural diversity of their communities and promote the tolerance and understanding which maintain community harmony. A staff member has been appointed and trained as an anti-racism contact officer.

The staff and students at SDEPS come from a variety of cultures. We have never had any experiences of racial intolerance. All teaching and non-teaching staff contribute to the eradication of racism by promoting acceptance of Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.



Empowering Local Schools National Partnership (ELSNP)

All funds have been expended. A number of positions were created, such as Technology Learning Facilitator, to enhance student learning.

Equity Funding

In line with the Local Schools, Local Decisions education reform, SDEPS received equity funding which enabled the following strategies and improvements:

- developed and sustained a positive and inclusive school culture
- improved the quality of teaching and learning
- improved students' learning outcomes
- personalised learning and support reflecting student needs
- Learning and Support teacher employed for 2 days per week to work with individual students and their teachers.

School planning and evaluation 2012-2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- surveys of parents/caregivers, students and teachers as to the effectiveness of products, practices and programs
- evaluation of developed learning materials in terms of BOSTES and DEC requirements
- commitment to continuous improvement in all areas of teaching and learning.

School planning 2012-2014: progress in 2014

School priority 1

Curriculum and Assessment

Outcomes from 2012–2014

To increase the amount of teaching and learning resources available. To develop general assessment materials for each stage.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- Multiple interactive, multimodal units were developed for implementation in Term 1, 2015. These units are aligned to the new NSW English, Mathematics, Science and Technology and History syllabus documents and incorporate assessment activities that reflect student outcomes in each stage.
- Current English units have continued to be realigned and updated to support teaching of the new NSW English syllabus, in order to incorporate current teaching practices and to achieve consistency in design and usability across the school.
- Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 3 materials for English, Science and Technology and History have been prioritised for 2014.
- Stage 2 materials for Mathematics have been prioritised for 2014.
- Developed materials have been showcased to staff through staff meetings and professional development sessions.
- Feedback was sought from teachers, students and parents to improve the effectiveness of materials.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- develop a specialised syllabus development team
- conduct a learning needs analysis
- prioritise stage level learning material needs
- develop a whole school implementation plan
- showcase developed materials
- Evaluate developed materials by seeking teacher/student/parent feedback.

School priority 2

Literacy

Outcomes from 2012–2014

To professionally develop teaching staff on the new NSW syllabus for English.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- All teaching staff participated in ongoing professional development on the NSW syllabus during 2014.
- Staff involved in materials production have continued to attend professional development on the NSW English syllabus during 2014, in order to ensure authentic implementation of the syllabus in newly developed materials.
- Stage coordinators and teachers have been extensively consulted by the materials development team to determine stage needs for literacy resources.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Materials Production Group is to coordinate a whole school professional development approach through shared responsibility.
- Survey stage needs for literacy resources.
- Seek additional support from district and other agencies e.g. BOSTES. Use school staff development days to introduce the syllabus and to support staff.

School priority 3

Numeracy

Outcomes from 2012–2014

To professionally develop teaching staff on the new NSW syllabus for Mathematics.

To create teaching and learning materials for Mathematics including units of work and accompanying teaching videos.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- A systematic production process has been implemented with key personnel working on organising curriculum content, writing, graphic designing, editing, film production and digitising mathematics units.
- Further refining and enhancement of the unit template based on consultation between the Mathematics Writing Team and feedback from parents and students who have undertaken to trial units.
- Members of the Mathematics Writing Team have been involved in professional learning through 'Syllabus Plus K-6 Series for Maths' Adobe Connect live sessions. This has developed an understanding of the new syllabus including key concepts, working mathematically skills and language features to enable teachers to deepen their knowledge of the new syllabus and plan for teaching and learning.
- The Mathematics Writing Team has delivered professional learning to all staff for the new NSW K-6 Syllabus for Mathematics using the department online courses and other documentation.
- The Mathematics Writing Team has trained all staff members in understanding and writing mathematics units based on the new format and structure. All teachers have been involved in working collaboratively in stages to write and produce mathematics units and videos.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Create a mathematics focus group to guide the development of a mathematics strategy and learning materials.
- Create a dedicated team to write new mathematics learning materials.
- Trial materials with students.
- Seek feedback from teachers, parents and students.
- Ensure there is student involvement in project and shared responsibility.
- Seek additional support from schools, districts, BOSTES personnel, Mathematics consultants etc.

Parent/caregiver, student and teacher satisfaction

In 2014, the school sought the opinions of parents/caregivers, students and teachers about the school.

The responses are presented below.

Parent/caregiver satisfaction:

- 90% of parent/caregivers stated they were satisfied with the engagement and progress of their student(s).
- 65% of parent/caregivers agreed the amount of work was appropriate for their student(s).
- 92% of parent/caregivers said the learning program met the needs of their student(s).
- 92% of parent/caregivers stated they would recommend SDEPS to others.

Student satisfaction:

- 74% of students stated they enjoyed being a student at SDEPS.
- 80% of students said they learnt a lot at SDEPS.
- 87% of students stated the amount of schoolwork they received was appropriate.

Teacher satisfaction:

- 92% of teachers stated they enjoyed working at SDEPS.
- 76% of teachers agreed their teaching skills have been challenged and improved by working at SDEPS.

Future directions

Although 65% of parents and caregivers agreed the amount of work was appropriate schoolwork, there is room for improved attention by teachers to ensure that there is an awareness and expectation about the quantity of schoolwork.



Program evaluations

Science and Technology

Background

The learning area of Science and Technology was the focus for this year. This learning area was identified as needing a significant expansion of current learning materials. Existing units also needed updating to reflect the new syllabus for implementation in 2015. Teachers at SDEPS participated in the development of Science and Technology resources to meet the needs of Stage 2 and 3 students.

This resulted in the production of high-quality Science and Technology units of work focusing on a range of topics across K-6.

Findings and conclusions

Parents/ caregivers, students and teachers were surveyed. All three groups indicated they were satisfied with the Science and Technology units.

Of the supervisor surveys returned, 90% or more agreed that:

- the science units contain a variety of quality activities
- the units promoted engaging activities for their student through Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- the units had a balance between practical and theoretical activities.

40% of supervisors indicated that their student could be further challenged in Science and Technology activities.

Of the student surveys returned, 90% or more indicated that they:

- enjoy Science and Technology activities
- participate in practical activities in Science and Technology
- develop new skills by completing Science and Technology activities.

Students also agreed that they could be further challenged in Science and Technology activities.

Teacher surveys returned agreed that the newly developed units were of a high standard. Teachers indicated a need for additional professional development in this learning area.

Future directions

The supervisor responses to the survey provided an overwhelming endorsement of the new materials. As well, the survey results provided by the students were also very positive.

A review and expansion of the materials throughout next year will continue. Challenge tasks will be progressively embedded within the units. Professional development in this learning area will also be reviewed and encouraged.



Management

Background

The management of SDEPS is undertaken by the Principal, the members of the Executive Staff, the School Administrative Manager and the School Administrative Support Staff (SASS). SDEPS is one of the 229 schools who are involved with the Local Schools Local Decisions (LSD) and the Learning Management Business Reform (LMBR) pilot group of schools.

2014 has seen many changes in school management, due to the LMBR, mainly in the areas of financial management regarding budgeting, school fees and contributions, ordering and payment of invoices and processing of Government grants and funding.

The processing of enrolment enquiries and approved enrolments has also had some major changes this year, with the introduction of a new student administration database, also as part of the LMBR.

SDEPS lodged a successful expression of interest to be one of the Lighthouse schools for the new library system, 'Oliver'. There has been a great deal of preparatory administrative work setting this up for implementation early in 2015.

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) is also a major part of management of SDEPS and every DEC school. All staff must undergo training in WHS and the school management must keep track of all the mandatory training undergone by teachers and SASS. Any WHS incidents, accidents or dangerous situations must be closely monitored and managed.

Findings and Conclusions

Parents/caregivers, students and teachers were surveyed about their satisfaction with the quality of management at SDEPS. The responses are presented below.

Parents/caregivers:

- 87% agreed that the school measures the success of its programs.
- 97% stated that the educational needs of all students are met by the school.
- 100% confirmed that the school cares about the students.

- 95% affirmed that the school is well organised.
- 95% verified that the school communicates effectively with students and parents.

Students:

- 85% of parents/caregivers agreed that the school measures the success of its programs.
- 82% verified that the educational needs of all students are met by the school.
- 95% attested that the school cares about the students.
- 90% confirmed that the school is well organised.
- 86% corroborated that the school communicates effectively with students and parents.

Teachers:

- 92% confirmed that the school is continually looking at ways to improve its performance.
- 76% agreed that the school continually makes minor changes to its programs to improve what it does.
- 69% verified that the school makes major changes from time to time to improve what it does.
- 61% attested that monitoring and evaluation of the school's plans, policies, programs and practices are planned and ongoing.
- 69% stated that students' interests, needs, abilities and systemic requirements determine the curriculum and school organisation.

Future Directions

The level of satisfaction with the current management of SDEPS was positive across all surveyed groups. It has been noted in the teacher survey response that monitoring and evaluation of school's plans and policies could be more frequent.

Future Directions

2015-2017 School Plan

NSW DEC is implementing a new school planning process for 2015-2017. The new plan will be published on the school's website from the beginning of Term 2 2015.



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.

Mrs Valerie Foley, School Council President

Mr Robin Roberts, Principal

Ms Nina Macleod, Deputy Principal

Ms Anna Miller, Assistant Principal

Ms Elisabeth Hampton, Administrative Manager

Mr Dylan Robson, Relieving Assistant Principal

Mr Jeremy Hubbard, Relieving Assistant Principal

School contact information

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Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/high-performance/annual-school-reports>