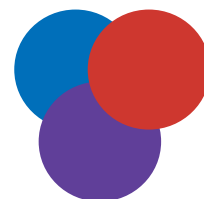


Sydney Distance Education Primary School Annual School Report



2015



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the community of Sydney Distance Education Primary School (SDEPS) as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Roberts'.

Robin Roberts
Principal

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Message from the Principal

The school continues to demonstrate its academic successes in all its endeavours. NAPLAN results are consistent with previous years' results, which is testament to an eager and engaged student body, supported by a committed and professional staff.

The school has maintained a leading role in the development of high quality resources for use by the Distance Education Network and beyond. Some of the highly complex projects undertaken have been extremely challenging, but the school has demonstrated that it is more than equal to such tasks.

Like any other high performing school there have been successes and setbacks throughout the year, but we have always managed to gain the best outcome possible. One of our many successes this year has been our involvement in the Moorbilla Choir. Our virtual choir was successful in bringing together our students in a common purpose and we were very pleased with our debut in this creative and competitive field.

There are often unforeseen events that occur and at the beginning of Term 4, 2015 we were informed that SDEPS will be relocated from our present site, as it is to be sold. We have been very happy here but we are sure that we will continue to deliver the same high standard of education wherever we are located.

I would like to thank each of our families for their continued support of our school and hope we can continue to serve you in the best way we can in all your future educational needs.

Robin Roberts
Principal 2000 - 2015

School background

School vision statement

To improve on our standing as the most innovative and academic Distance Education Primary School in Australia by carefully reflecting upon everything we do.

To provide unequalled support to our families while studying via distance education.

To provide our students with a comprehensive and complete range of educational experiences within a varied and global focus.

To continuously improve our learning materials, methods of delivery and reporting mechanisms to the benefit of all our families.

To ensure that all students studying via distance education are valued, supported and encouraged to achieve within a flexible, challenging and rewarding learning environment.

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 generally reach 400 students or more during the year.

SDEPS has a long held reputation for high quality teaching practices and learning resources resulting in outstanding student outcomes including the results in national assessments. The school uses innovative technologies to link with its many families throughout the world to provide challenging and engaging learning experiences. It is also a provider of learning resources to its sister distance education schools.



Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, our school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the elements of the School Excellence Framework.

Learning

At SDEPS there is school-wide, collective responsibility for student learning and success, with high levels of student, staff and parental involvement. Individual learning is an area in which the school has demonstrated excellence. Distance education is largely a partnership between the teacher, school and parent, ensuring there is a strong and supportive learning environment.

The school has established an active partnership and works collaboratively within the Distance Education (DE) Network. An outstanding element of this partnership has been the development of high quality curriculum materials to support and extend student learning. Quality practices are embedded in all learning materials to ensure that students, supervisors and teachers can provide meaningful feedback for present and future materials development.

Teaching

Teachers incorporate professional learning into their planning for individual student programs. Students are regularly assessed against identifiable learning outcomes and supervisors are active participants in this process. Teachers work in stage groups and across the school to ensure that best practices are shared. The school's professional learning opportunities are available to all staff to participate in and group training is a regular occurrence.

The school uses data to analyse teaching and learning to ensure that areas of concern are targeted and further developed. Careful instructional design, quality materials development and challenging, targeted outcomes ensure that teaching standards are maintained at the highest possible levels.

Leadership

The school is recognised as a leader in distance education pedagogy and learning materials development. The school readily shares its resources with other Distance Education schools which may lack the infrastructure and staff to undertake complex and demanding projects.

The school has an extended executive staff structure where responsibility and accountability is devolved and shared. Monitoring, evaluation and review processes are embedded and undertaken routinely by all staff. Administrative practices provide explicit information about the school's financial wellbeing and functioning. Processes exist for clients to provide constructive feedback on the school practices and procedures.

High level financial planning has ensured the capability of the school to respond to changing needs and new challenges in a timely manner when required.

Our self-assessment process will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

Strategic Direction 1

Teaching and Learning Resources

Purpose

To provide quality, engaging and scaffolded learning materials for all students across the DE network. To provide explicit and structured learning materials for all supervisors. To provide professional teaching resources that enable teachers to appropriately support students and supervisors, and to assess and report against the outcomes and content points in the NSW curriculum.

Overall summary of progress

In 2015, the development of learning materials for students, supervisors and teachers was focused primarily on Mathematics. Staff were dedicated to the development of Mathematics units of work that would be engaging and scaffolded for students, explicit and structured for supervisors and appropriately set for assessment and reporting for teachers. The team involved was provided with ongoing professional development and feedback relating to their work and was set weekly working checklists to allow the development of units to meet targets.

Targets and goals were reviewed and adjusted half-way through the year to allow for quality units of work that would meet the Department of Education (DoE) standards. Stage 2 Mathematics became the primary target for completion by the end of 2015. It was decided in 2015, all units of work would have at least one accompanying teaching video to support student learning. This was achieved before the end of 2015 in Stage 2. In addition to units of work and video accompaniment, the Mathematics learning materials development team created an answer booklet for each year in Stage 2 and a glossary for Stage 2.

The development of these learning materials supports quality teaching and learning and has created units of work that are exemplary.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Mathematics for students at SDEPS

67% of Stage 2 students found the new Mathematics materials to be challenging. Almost 80% of students found the amount of work is always enough. 80% of students found the video accompaniment helpful. Only 17% of students needed additional assistance to complete the unit of work.

Mathematics for supervisors at SDEPS

80% of parents and supervisors surveyed found the layout made it easy to supervise. 72% of supervisors noted that the units of work challenged their student. An encouraging result from the surveys, was that almost 80% of supervisors felt their student's teacher was supportive. Also, all supervisors preferred the new Mathematics units compared to the old Maths Tracks units.

Mathematics for teachers at SDEPS

75% of teachers found it easier to provide feedback with the new Mathematics units. Almost 100% of teachers said that the new Mathematics program benefited their students' learning and development.

Mathematics progress in 2015 towards 2016

100% of Stage 2 completed. 50% of Stage 3 units panelled and edited. All Stage 2 units with video accompaniment sent to the DE Network for use and further feedback.

Next steps

- Complete Stage 3 units (pdfs) by the end of Semester One. Stage 3 units finalised and ready for ongoing video production in 2016
- ES1 and Stage 1 units written, desktop published and finalised in 2016
- ES1 and Stage 1 videos to be completed by the end of Term 4, 2016

Strategic Direction 2

Technology for Teaching and Learning

Purpose

As the school needs to shift to increased technology for teaching and learning, teachers, students and supervisors need to be supported in the development of their technology skills. Skill improvement offers the possibilities of increased student participation, peer collaboration, and improved student outcomes.

Overall summary of progress

Our school has made great gains in the adoption of digital teaching and learning methods. Stage 2 and Stage 3 students participated in the Interactive Digital Program (IDP), and we have begun a trial of Year 2 students using the IDP. By digitally transferring work, feedback is more prompt and relevant: 87% of parents and supervisors surveyed reported feedback was always or often returned promptly using the IDP. Stages 1, 2 and 3 participated in regular live lessons this year, allowing for direct student discussion and interaction. Student technology skills have increased, with all supervisors surveyed reporting improvement. Another goal of the IDP was to reduce teacher administrative tasks in order to increase teaching time. These benefits have begun to materialise.

Changes were made to the IDP in Term 4. These changes have had the benefit of increasing student engagement and providing better structural support for students and supervisors, whilst also allowing for more immediate feedback.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Increased engagement of students

- 58% of Stage 2 students and 34% of Stage 3 students participated in the Interactive Digital Program
- Learning materials have been structured to allow for creativity, interaction and to build a greater sense of daily student accomplishment

Increased technology skills

- 74% of supervisors reported that technology skills improved through participating in the IDP. The vast majority of students, supervisors and teachers expressed confidence in using the IDP

Improved feedback

- 87% of parents and supervisors surveyed reported feedback was returned promptly using the IDP

Reduction in teacher administration

- 30% of teachers reported the marking process to be significantly faster using the new IDP
- 92% of teachers indicated programming and transfer of schoolwork required less time

Increase in peer collaboration

- Regular live lessons were offered in Stages 1, 2 and 3

Next steps

- Continue to build and assess the Interactive Digital Program, making adjustments as necessary
- Use Zoom as our new live communication platform method, as well as providing the necessary support to teachers and students
- Develop quality collaborative tasks

Strategic Direction 3

Marketing and Promotion

Purpose

SDEPS provides innovative quality distance education to students who are residents of NSW.

It is important that all eligible students and families are aware of SDEPS as an option to meet learning needs and circumstances, especially if travelling.

SDEPS is committed to actively promoting its services to DoE regions, schools and communities.

We are constantly looking at ways to better connect, manage and share our achievements, while upholding our excellent reputation.

Overall summary of progress

This year the enrolment at SDEPS continues to rise with our enrolment numbers reaching 233.

In 2015 SDEPS participated in a regional choir exposition. Students participated in a virtual choir that was attached to the Moorambilla Regional Choir. Singing lessons were delivered through Adobe Connect and students sent in video recordings of 'Keep On', a song from Music Australia's Count Us In initiative that promotes programs that are being run in schools. This Facebook page has over 3,000 followers. The SDEPS Virtual Choir Program provides cultural experiences to remote, travelling and overseas students.

Two executive members attended an in-service on social media.

Parents continue to be satisfied with our delivery of educational outcomes and they inform many prospective clients about our educational system.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

- Increased SDEPS enrolment enquiries and numbers
- Enrolment numbers rose to 233
- Promotional materials such as school bags were distributed to all students
- The SDEPS Virtual Choir included thirty students who recorded a song, 'Keep On', which was uploaded onto the Music Australia Facebook page
- Two executive staff attended a social media professional development course
- Investigate how to increase student and family memberships and interactions using SDEPS website

Next steps

- A committee will be re-formed to ensure increased marketing and promotions are continued
- Personnel will be assigned to establish a SDEPS Facebook page
- Personnel will be assigned to update the SDEPS website
- A video will be produced and distributed to schools in our enrolment drawing area and will be uploaded on the school's website
- An updated version of the school promotional brochure will be distributed to schools in our enrolment drawing area, to promote SDEPS
- The executive staff are to complete the online Social Media Tool Kit

Key initiatives and other school focus areas

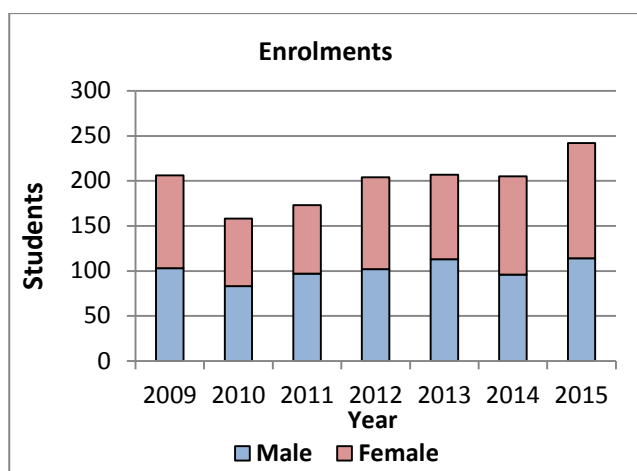
Key initiatives (annual)	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background funding 2 teachers attended a 1 day course – ‘Aboriginal Engagement’.	Strengthened partnerships and promoted genuine collaboration between school and Aboriginal families. Strengthened support for Aboriginal students at key transition points.	\$3,323
English language proficiency funding e-Books, Phonics Program, RAZ Kids A-Z, Reading A-Z, Reading Eggs. One teacher attended the ‘NSW Federation of Community Language Schools’ Professional Development Day.	Employed staff to meet the English language needs of EAL/D students. Resulted in effective reporting of English language learning outcomes to parents/families.	\$7,772
Socio-economic funding iPad program with iPads supplied at cost and the apps provided for free. Fees waived for Medical and Support Needs students. Taxis are provided to enable some family visits to the school. Home visits by teachers sometimes occur. School bags supplied.	Strengthened partnership between school and families. Improved students’ learning outcomes.	\$6,048
Low level adjustment for disability funding 1 teacher employed for 2 days per week.	Increased the level of students’ participation and engagement in learning. Enhanced students’ access to a wider range of curriculum learning experiences and specialist teachers.	\$49,492
Other school focus areas	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Quality Teaching Successful Students (QTSS)	The establishment of mentoring and coaching practices in the school to provide constructive feedback to individual teachers on lesson delivery via video.	.07 teacher

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	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Male	103	83	97	102	113	96	114
Female	103	75	76	102	94	109	128



Student attendance profile

- Students who enrol with SDEPS are required to complete and return programmed schoolwork to their teacher on a regular, fortnightly basis. Students or their supervisors complete daily attendance records and return these records with completed schoolwork. Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation for any incomplete program or make a request for leave.

- Teachers are required to monitor the communication, engagement and attendance of students. A roll is marked to register returned schoolwork, indicating attendance and participation. Communication records are kept by the teacher to reflect a student or supervisor's interaction with SDEPS.
- Upon enrolment at SDEPS, all families are provided with information regarding the school's mandatory attendance and participation criteria. In addition, families may review the SDEPS Attendance and Participation Guidelines for Parents/Supervisors (2011).



Management of non-attendance:

- Teachers, stage coordinators, executive staff and the learning support team are involved with the management of non-attendance.
- Non-attendance is determined by a student not participating in the programmed schoolwork and not returning completed schoolwork without explanation for a minimum period of 4 weeks.
- Once a student has been determined as being in breach of the attendance requirements, a series of three attendance warning notices are issued to the parents/carers. If necessary, the Education Office in the area of the student's originating census school will be notified and an application forwarded to the Home or Aboriginal School Liaison Officer. Other agencies such as the Child Wellbeing Unit and the Department of Community Services may be notified, if appropriate.



Workforce information

Reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.



Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Deputy Principal	1
Assistant Principals	2
Administrative Manager	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	15
Teacher Part Time	0.4
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.4
Teacher Librarian	0.6
School Counsellor	0.1
School Administrative & Support Staff	4.917
General Assistant	0.3
Clerk Grade 3-4	1
Total	27.717



Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100%
Postgraduate degree	24%

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

In 2015, staff at SDEPS was given the opportunity to engage in professional learning activities and courses. All mandatory courses were completed including: Child Protection, Code of Conduct, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, Anaphylaxis, and e-Emergency Care. Elective courses helped to develop teachers and administrative staff in their field of expertise. Some of these courses are listed below:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Museum of Contemporary Arts Teacher Education Sessions
- Intercultural Communication: More than flags and festivals
- Managing Anxiety Disorders
- Leading a School Choir in Primary School
- Building Understanding of Aboriginal Culture
- Music – Count Us In
- The App Guide to Emotions and Autism
- Engaging Students with Disabilities
- Trauma and Learning
- Plugging into Nature: iPads and Science

Professional learning is strongly encouraged at SDEPS and executive staff will continue to be aware of upcoming courses and target these to both administrative and teaching staff.



Financial information

Financial summary for table for the year ended 31 December 2015

	2015 Actual
Opening Balance	\$530,369
Revenue	\$2,772,709
Appropriation	\$2,653,442
Sale of Goods and Services	\$99,800
Grants and Contributions	\$11,484
Other revenue	
Investment Income	\$7,984
Expenses	\$2,960,593
Recurrent Expenses	
Employee Related	\$2,754,038
Operating Expenses	\$206,555
Capital Expenses	
Surplus/Deficit for the year	\$187,884
Balance Carried Forward	\$342,486

The information provided in the financial summary is current at the date shown. This summary includes reporting from 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2015.

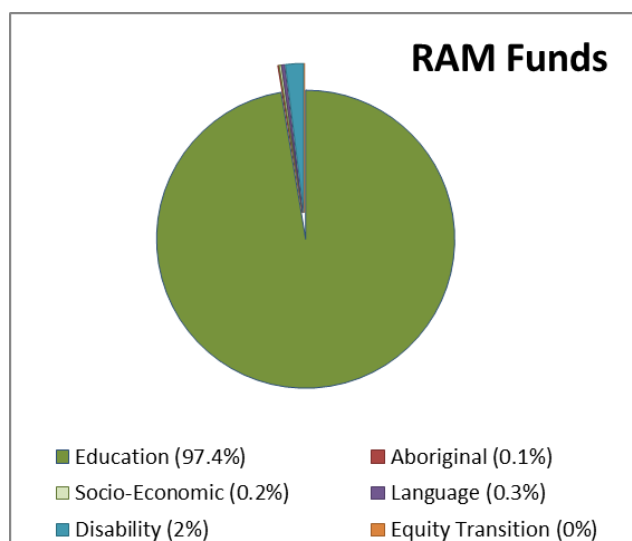
The RAM data is the main component of the "Appropriation" section of the financial summary above. A full copy of the school's 2015 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Funds received through the Resource Allocation Model

Component	RAM
Base	124,769
Equity	66,635
Location	0
Aboriginal	3,323
Socio-Economic	6,048
Language	7,772
Disability	49,492
Targeted	26

Other 2,331,248

Total 2,522,677



School Performance

School-based assessment

University of NSW International Competitions

The students at SDEPS achieved outstanding results in the University of New South Wales (UNSW) English and Mathematics competitions.

This year, 18 of our students participated in the UNSW International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS), Mathematics competition.

- The exam was completed by 334,000 students from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region
- Our students results were of a very high standard, several points above the NSW and ACT mean in all classes (Years 2 - 6)
- 12 of our students secured high distinctions, distinctions or credits

Similar results were recorded in the UNSW ICAS, English competition.

- Our overall school result was several mean points higher in comparison to the NSW and ACT scores
- These were particularly challenging test papers, attempted by 403,000 students from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region
- A high percentage of our students scored high distinction, distinction or credit

Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

This year was the 130th anniversary of Dorothea Mackellar's birth; it is refreshing that we continue the legacy of this cultural icon. In 2015 the theme was 'The Open Door'. This competition inspires students to develop their creative writing and love for their country. Throughout Terms 1 and 2 students completed poetry units to develop poetry writing skills. The students at SDEPS increased their ability to paint a picture with adjectives and rhymes. The students have used this competition as a platform to express themselves with artful insight.

There were 20 entries from students ranging from Kindergarten to Year 6. The judges were impressed with our students' quality work.



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.

The *My School* website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Click on the link [My School](#) and insert the school name in the *Find a school* and select *GO* to access the school data.



Parent/caregiver, student and teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Parent/caregiver satisfaction

- 95% of parents/caregivers felt the learning program met the needs of students
- 90% of parents felt the teachers provide encouragement and praise
- 77% of parents/caregivers felt the feedback was useful to them

Student satisfaction

- 75% of students stated that they enjoyed being a student at SDEPS
- 75% of students said their learning improved
- 75% of students said the amount of work was enough with easy-to-follow instructions

Teacher satisfaction

- 91% of teachers enjoyed teaching at SDEPS.
- 82% of teachers felt they were a valued staff member
- 70% of teachers felt their teaching skills improved

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education

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

In 2015, school targets in relation to Aboriginal Education were met. Staff underwent at least one professional learning session in line with mandatory requirements set down by the NSW Aboriginal Education policy.

New learning material produced by the Materials Production Group is in line with new NSW syllabus outcomes with respect to Aboriginal perspectives. The development of a calendar ensured that students are able to be more involved in events such as National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.

All Aboriginal students have been provided with a Personalised Learning Plan as required by the NSW DoE Aboriginal Education Policy.

Multicultural Education and Anti-racism

During 2015 SDEPS has maintained its commitment to engaging students' intercultural understanding in all Learning Areas. Two teachers from our school attended a day long professional learning course entitled 'Intercultural communication: More than flags and festivals'. The aim of the course was to offer support to teachers to embed intercultural understanding in the programming for all Learning Areas. "Students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to understand their own identity in relation to others from different cultures and backgrounds" - NSW Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards (BOSTES).

SDEPS has a trained anti-racism contact officer (ARCO) on staff. NSW government schools value the cultural diversity of their communities and promote the tolerance and understanding which maintain community harmony. All teaching and non-teaching staff at SDEPS contribute to an awareness of racism by promoting acceptance of Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. SDEPS is a global school and continues to support cross cultural awareness and understanding of Australia's diverse cultures. The school has a population of staff and students from non-English speaking backgrounds and who speak English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D). Students were encouraged to participate in activities for Harmony Day in 2015, a day of respect for all cultures and people.

Other school programs

Jump Rope for Heart

In 2015 students from SDEPS participated in the Heart Foundation's Jump Rope for Heart initiative. This is an exciting and non-competitive program which encourages children to become more active through skipping, learning new skills and raising vital funds for heart research and community health programs.

The Jump Rope team provided resources and support to implement the program and in return SDEPS asked that students seek sponsorship for their involvement. The sponsorships raised over \$700 for the Heart Foundation. This was not compulsory at SDEPS.

Not only did the children increase their fitness levels but the teachers at SDEPS were involved, developing their skills and fitness and building team spirit.



Premier's Reading Challenge

At SDEPS students are encouraged to participate in the Premier's Reading Challenge each year. This challenge aims to instil the love of reading for pleasure and leisure in students and allows them to experience quality literature. In 2015, 60 students participated in the challenge. Four students received a gold award and 28 students received a certificate of participation signed by the Premier.



Virtual Choir

This year there was a choir committee that led to the formation of a virtual choir. Two staff members attended a course entitled 'Leading a School Choir in Primary School' at The Centre for Professional Learning. Thirty students participated in singing lessons. This resulted in them learning a variety of songs. We recorded the students singing 'Keep On' from Music Australia's Count Us In. This was uploaded onto Music Australia's Facebook page.