

Sydney Distance Education Primary School

Annual Report



2016



4586

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of Sydney Distance Education Primary School 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.

Robin Roberts, Principal SDEPS

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Message from the Principal

Sydney Distance Education Primary School (SDEPS) has always been an innovative and dynamic school with a view to continuous quality improvement. The school has a long and proud history of taking on new initiatives and challenges in order to continue to lead in our field of expertise.

We are grateful for the continuing support we receive from our diverse community spanning the globe. Our most important goal is and will always be to provide the best educational opportunities to all our families regardless of their circumstances or locations. The high academic standing and participation rates of our students indicates that the distance education mode of learning is working very well for our students.

During 2016, we were one of the first schools to be selected to undertake an extensive external validation assessment of our teaching, learning and leading. Naturally it was very pleasing to be confirmed by the external review panel that the school is indeed operating at a very high standard in all three main areas of their inquiry.

Our staff consistently demonstrates their creativity, dedication and resourcefulness in everything they do. It is because of them that the school remains at the forefront of educational change and development. I am grateful to be part of such a dedicated and professional team.

Robin Roberts, Principal SDEPS

School background

School vision statement

To improve on our standing as the most innovative and academic Distance Education Primary School in NSW 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 and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Overall SDEPS is achieving in the Dimension of Learning at the excelling level in three of the five elements. We believe that in the two elements where we are performing at the sustaining and growing level, our evidence is still quite strong. However, we believe we can still make further gains through new initiatives and by reflecting on practices and commencing new initiatives in the area of social media and peer interaction. Overall SDEPS, in the Dimension of Teaching, is excelling in two of the five elements. Improving our systems and practices will further increase our standing in this area. The production of new learning materials and introducing the best available technology to support teaching are important targets in the School Plan that are already reaping improvements in this domain. In the Dimension of Leading, SDEPS is excelling in three of the four elements. Strong, flexible and innovative leadership has enabled this school to be at the forefront of change and development in a rapidly changing distance education landscape.

Strategic Direction 1

Strategic Direction 1: Teaching and Learning Resources

Purpose

To provide quality, engaging and scaffolded learning materials for all students across the Distance Education Network.

To provide explicit and structured teaching and 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 2016, the development of learning materials for students, supervisors and teachers was focused primarily on Mathematics.
- By the end of Term 3, Stage 3 Mathematics was completed, including an answer booklet and a glossary.
- In Term 4, planning and development of units for Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 Mathematics commenced.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved student outcomes in Mathematics and other learning areas.• Increased student engagement and attendance.• Improved teacher understanding of the NSW syllabus.• Revision of outcomes addressed in teaching and learning resources.• Development of a new student report template.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance of Stage 2 and 3 materials - ongoing.• Stage 3 materials completed and published.• Existing materials across all Learning Areas reviewed and updated - ongoing.• Production of Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 maths materials - ongoing.• Whole school professional development on Numeracy and Literacy Continuums.• New school report template implemented in Semester 1.	<p>Equity funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal background loading (\$2389)• English language proficiency (\$8069) <p>SDEPS funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistant Principal position (\$115 000)• Two teaching positions (\$180 000)• Miscellaneous, e.g. printing (\$10 000) <p>DE Partner school contributions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Queanbeyan DEC (\$11 400)• Queanbeyan DEC (20 teaching days)• Dubbo SoDE (150 teaching days)• SASS administration position (\$45 000)• Teaching position (\$90 000)

Next Steps

- Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 to be completed by the end of Semester 1, 2017.
- Stage 3 units programmed and in use by all Stage 3 students during Term 1, 2017.
- Maintenance of Stage 2 and Stage 3 Mathematics materials will continue in Term 1, 2017.

Strategic Direction 2

Strategic Direction 2: Technology for Teaching and Learning

Purpose

To provide a simple, interactive digital platform for students, teachers and supervisors to engage in their learning.

To provide online lessons to build student participation and engagement, provide better learning support and improve student outcomes, and to develop peer collaborative skills.

To share professional teaching resources amongst Primary Distance Education (DE) Network schools.

Overall summary of progress

- Significant gains in the adoption of digital teaching and learning methods have been made this year.
- The school-wide rollout of video-based communication software has had a major impact on student outcomes, by offering real-time online learning experiences, peer collaboration and direct teacher-to-student interactions.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved engagement of students• Improved technology skills of students• Increase in peer collaboration based on number of collaborative tasks sent, and participation rates in these• Reduction in time taken to provide feedback in the teacher to student learning cycle• Increased number of online lessons• Improved quality of live lessons.• Improvement in teacher access to materials, developed from teacher feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We had approximately 60% of our Year 2 - 6 students involved in the interactive digital program.• We averaged over 6 online lessons per week in Term 4, 2016.• Some collaborative tasks were completed during Stage online lessons.• There were also several virtual excursions undertaken with external providers to increase quality of and engagement with online lessons.• Established the DE Teaching and Learning Exchange (DETALE) portal to share developed resources among Primary DE Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment (iPads, computers, servers, etc) (\$18 872)• Subscriptions and technical services (\$8819)

Next Steps

- Maintain and expand the use of online lessons to foster student collaboration, and student-teacher interaction.
- Continue to support and make improvements to the Interactive Digital Program.
- Deliver Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 Mathematics learning materials to the Primary DE Network.

Strategic Direction 3

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 families are aware of SDEPS as an option to meet their learning needs and circumstances.

SDEPS is committed to actively promoting its services to Department of Education areas and 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

- The formation of a new Marketing and Promotion Committee took place in 2016.
- Committee members continued with the ongoing task of developing a range of school promotional products for distribution to enrolled families and significant visitors.
- The profile of SDEPS was promoted through a variety of avenues. At a national level, SDEPS was promoted through student participation in a program developed by Music Australia and by participation in three virtual excursions with NSW and interstate education providers. SDEPS was promoted at an international level through hosting a Korean delegation.
- SDEPS continues to explore the use of social media for marketing and promotional purposes via SDEPS YouTube channel and the school website.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased SDEPS enrolment enquiries• Increased SDEPS student enrolments• Increased SDEPS promotional materials produced, and media articles published• Increasing student and family memberships and interactions using SDEPS Facebook groups and website• Increased marketing and promotions skills developed within SDEPS workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Marketing and Promotion Committee formed.• 290 enrolments - increase of 25% from 2015.• 500 new schoolbags were purchased.• Microfibre cloths were purchased with school logo.• Decks of playing cards with school logo were purchased as part of SDEPS Maths kit.• A review of the school website began.• mySDEPS YouTube channel launched.• SDEPS profile was promoted through participation by students in events at a local, national and international level such as a Virtual Choir, virtual excursions and talking to a Korean Education delegation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotional materials (\$11 749)

Next Steps

- SDEPS school brochure to be updated
- Updated SDEPS website to be launched in 2017
- Promotional materials to be distributed to families
- New student folders with school logo to be created for students' school work
- Continue to target students for enrolment in Greater Sydney, including the Wollongong and Newcastle areas.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading	One unit for each stage was redeveloped to reflect Aboriginal learning perspective. Funds used for Strategic Direction 1: Teaching and Learning Resources.	• Aboriginal background loading (\$2 389.00)
English language proficiency	Funds used for Strategic Direction 1: Teaching and Learning Resources.	• English language proficiency (\$8 069.00)
Low level adjustment for disability	One teacher employed for 2 days per week, as an Assistant Principal, involved with the students' participation and engagement in learning.	• Low level adjustment for disability (\$51 587.00)
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Funding is based on a teacher at 0.07. The provision of constructive feedback to individual teachers on lesson delivery via video.	• Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) (\$7 141.00)
Socio-economic background	All school fees are waived for Medical and Support Needs students.	• Socio-economic background (\$5 225.00)
Support for beginning teachers	Beginning Teachers have a reduced number of students in their classes to enable them to interact closely with their Stage Coordinator.	• Support for beginning teachers (\$13 378.00)

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	113	96	114	139
Girls	94	109	128	151

Student attendance profile

Enrolment guidelines at SDEPS state that enrolled students must be supervised to complete schoolwork, must return work regularly and satisfactorily engage in communication with the school. A student is assessed as in full attendance after a minimum of programmed schoolwork has been completed and received by the teacher. Supervisors are required to complete and return a Weekly Attendance Record, apply for leave or an adjusted program and provide an explanation for an incomplete program. Supervisors are able to review the SDEPS Attendance and Participation Guidelines for Parents/Supervisors (2016) after enrolment. All aspects of attendance are monitored by teachers including supervisor communication and student engagement in all areas of the curriculum including online activities. The regular return of completed schoolwork is marked on a roll. Any concerns regarding attendance are discussed with executive staff. Documentation kept by teachers to indicate communication and engagement is checked twice a term by executive staff.

Management of non-attendance

Non-attendance can be defined as four weeks of poor/nil participation in a student learning program, including poor/nil communication from the student and supervisor to the teacher. It is mandated at SDEPS that teachers pro-actively manage and document a student's attendance, as well as non-attendance. After four weeks, the stage coordinator, learning support team, school executive, principal and/or the School Education Office of the student's originating census school may become involved in the management of a student's non-attendance. Management techniques may include revising the program in consultation with the supervisor, contacting the student's emergency contacts and issuing a series of three warning notices. In consultation with the Learning and Wellbeing Officer, an application can be made to the Home or Aboriginal School Liaison Officer for possible action. Other actions may include notification via the Mandatory Reporting Tree, involvement of agencies such as the Child Wellbeing unit and/or Family and Community Services. Students with whom there is no further communication are listed on the Missing Students Register.

Structure of classes

At SDEPS, an average class consists of no more than fourteen students for each teacher and caters for all abilities.

Classes at SDEPS are organised according to stage levels with each stage having a coordinator to set priorities and monitor progress. The majority of classes at the school comprise no more than two grades. All students regardless of class or stage receive a personalised learning program based on their needs and interests.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Classroom Teacher(s)	15.6
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.4
Teacher Librarian	0.8
School Administration & Support Staff	6.22
Other Positions	0

Workforce retention

SDEPS continues to benefit from a very stable workforce. During 2016 there were no resignations and only one compassionate transfer to be effected for the following school year.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	37

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

In 2016 staff at SDEPS were involved in a myriad of professional learning opportunities.

Mandatory training was completed for Code of Conduct, Anaphylaxis, Child Protection, eEmergency Care, Sustainability and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation. Staff also completed Disabilities Standards, at levels appropriate to their roles undertaken in the school.

Professional development courses on the Literacy and Numeracy Continuums were attended by staff who then in-serviced colleagues and ran writing workshops resulting in the development of assessment materials for use throughout the school. The teachers became more familiar with using PLAN by attending 'PLAN: Moving from Best Start'. Many of the teachers networked with teachers from other DE Centres by attending the DE Symposium - 'Ignite! Inspire! Succeed!'. An educational tour at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney was the first in a series of modules to be undertaken by staff for the creative development of resources in this Learning Area.

As the department moved to the new MyPL system, many teachers took the opportunity to do the Basic User Training course provided online. 'ASPIRE - Introduction to building a personal leadership framework' and 'ASPIRE - Diagnostic Mapping' were leadership courses undertaken in 2016. Other courses attended by staff include: Port Jackson Innovation Sharing Day, Learning and Support Induction, Gifted and Talented Kindergarten Resource Package Teachers Course and Twice Exceptional Students.

An Anti-Racism Contact Officer training course was attended by the nominated school ARCO. Some executive staff attended the Performance and Development Framework update, gaining information on the new staffing agreement. The whole school participated in 'Module 1 – Building an Understanding of Aboriginal Culture'. Teachers seeking accreditation attended 'Accreditation at Proficient Teacher Level' courses. Some teachers are working towards higher level accreditation as Highly Accomplished Teachers or Lead Teachers.

Financial information (for schools fully deployed to SAP/SALM)

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

	2016 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	342 485
Revenue	3 055 099
(2a) Appropriation	2 951 667
(2b) Sale of Goods and Services	80 735
(2c) Grants and Contributions	16 115
(2e) Gain and Loss	0
(2f) Other Revenue	0
(2d) Investment Income	6 580
Expenses	-3 025 002
Recurrent Expenses	-3 025 002
(3a) Employee Related	-2 841 419
(3b) Operating Expenses	-183 583
Capital Expenses	0
(3c) Employee Related	0
(3d) Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	30 096
Balance Carried Forward	372 582

	2016 Actual (\$)
Base Total	390 496
Base Per Capita	11 118
Base Location	0
Other Base	379 378
Equity Total	67 270
Equity Aboriginal	2 389
Equity Socio economic	5 225
Equity Language	8 069
Equity Disability	51 587
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	2 378 520
Grand Total	2 836 288

School performance

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.

Student results in reading again reflected the high academic standard that our students are capable of achieving. In Year 3, 96% of our students were in the top two achievement bands. In Year 5, 88% of our students were in the top two achievement bands. Both these results were better than those schools who are statistically similar to our school. Full results can be found on the My School website.

In the area of numeracy our school students were able to demonstrate excellent results. In Year 3, 77% of our students were in the top two achievement bands. In Year 5, 76% of our students were in the top two achievement bands. Overall, both results were better than those schools who are statistically similar to our school. Full results can be found on the My School website.

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Click on the link <http://www.myschool.edu.au> and insert the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Parent/carer/supervisor satisfaction

Technological innovation has enabled teaching programs to be delivered to students online and in real time. This has improved the response time for feedback from teachers to students and supervisors. 92% of supervisors reported that their student receives feedback within a week to a fortnight of returning their completed schoolwork. After receiving feedback, 100% of supervisors followed-up with their student with regards to what the teacher had suggested. Teachers are also able to provide online teaching lessons to a group of students or individual students. 73% of supervisors rated their student's online lessons as either good or excellent.

Student satisfaction

SDEPS allows students to engage with their peers or with their teacher online and in real time. The most popular format was the virtual excursion which was watched by 60% of those students who had internet

access. Of those students who were able to access online sessions, 100% evaluated their lessons as either good or excellent. 88% of students appreciated the praise they received from their teachers for their efforts and for their schoolwork.

Teacher satisfaction

SDEPS allows teachers to provide feedback to students in a variety of ways. 57% of teachers return all work to students using a range of digital technologies, such as eBackpack and Google Drive. As feedback is an essential part of the teaching, learning and assessment cycle, 100% of teachers provide students with strategies for improvement, with over 50% of teachers also giving direct support and feedback to supervisors. 63% of teachers at SDEPS have been with the school for over 2 years, and 100% of teachers rated their professional satisfaction with teaching at SDEPS as satisfactory or better.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

SDEPS is situated on Eora Land, belonging to the traditional landowners, the Gadigal clan. In 2016, school targets in relation to Aboriginal education were met. Staff underwent one professional learning session in line with mandatory requirements set down by the NSW Aboriginal Education Policy. All teaching staff underwent training in Module 1 – Building an Understanding of Aboriginal Culture. In addition, two staff members attended an information afternoon for teachers and staff responsible for Aboriginal education. The Aboriginal scope and sequence was delivered across all stages and resulted in an appropriate level of Aboriginal content across all student programs. Teaching and learning materials produced in the school are in line with the NSW syllabus outcomes with respect to Aboriginal perspectives. The implementation of a calendar of Aboriginal events has ensured that students are able to be more involved in events such as National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. All Aboriginal students continue to be provided with Personalised Learning Pathways as required by the NSW DoE Aboriginal Policy.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

In 2016 SDEPS has continued its commitment to integrate multicultural education content and perspectives across all Learning Areas. The teaching staff have demonstrated their knowledge of the unique backgrounds of their students and have adjusted their teaching to meet students' individual needs and diverse cultural, social and linguistic characteristics. SDEPS has appointed and trained one staff member as an anti-racism contact officer (ARCO). SDEPS continues to support cross cultural awareness and the understanding of Australia's diverse cultures. SDEPS prides itself on being a global school catering for the different cultural backgrounds in the community.