

Gympie State High School

School review conducted 3 to 6 May 2022

Every Queensland state school is reviewed by the Department of Education at least once every four years. School reviews provide important feedback to support schools in continuing to deliver quality education and improve learning outcomes for students.



Review highlights

- ✓ Honouring the past and building the future.
- ✓ An inclusive culture that values diversity.
- ✓ Skilled and dedicated staff who care for students.
- ✓ A Rural Industry School of Excellence program showcasing strong community partnerships.



Consultation



Total of 247 interviews



13 community members and stakeholders



94 school staff



105 students



35 parents and carers

Each school review generates a number of key improvement strategies to inform continuous improvement in all state schools. The next steps are...

- ➔ Collaboratively explore contemporary, evidence-based teaching practices to develop a suite of high-yield signature pedagogical strategies that promote quality practice and suit the school's context.
- ➔ Further enhance the instructional leadership capabilities of key members of staff to drive a culture of learning, with a particular focus on coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, and quality assuring agreed teaching strategies across the school.
- ➔ Build a culture of continual reflection on teaching practice through a systematic process of leaders regularly observing classroom teaching and providing formal feedback to all teachers.
- ➔ Quality assure the implementation of agreed behaviour processes across the school to promote consistency of practice.
- ➔ Deepen teachers' knowledge, understanding and capability in best practice high-yield differentiation to meet the diverse needs of all students, including high achieving students.

For more information about school reviews, go to www.schoolreviews.education.qld.gov.au

Gympie State High School

Executive Summary





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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Gympie State High School** from **3 to 6 May 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 Lead Principal to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Julie Warwick	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Sean Maher	Peer reviewer
Rob Slater	Peer reviewer
Valerie Hadgelias	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Indigenous land name:	Ka'bi Ka'bi
Location:	Everson Rd, Gympie
Education region:	North Coast Region
Year levels:	Year 7 to Year 12
Enrolment:	1145
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	12 per cent
Students with disability percentage:	14.3 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	944
Year principal appointed:	2015



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, three deputy principals, Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), 11 Heads of Department (HOD), Business Manager (BM), two guidance officers, school-based psychologist, Youth Support Coordinator (YSC), 52 teachers, nine administrative officers, nine teacher aides, two canteen staff, cleaner, 35 parents and 105 students.

Community and business groups:

- Nolan Meats Gympie director, State of Origin Road trip representative and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) treasurer.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal One Mile State School, principal Jones Hill State School, principal Tin Can Bay State School, principal James Nash State High School and principal Gympie West State School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Gympie, North Coast Region Community Education Counsellor (CEC), Lead Principal and Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural affairs representative.



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Tradition plays an important role in the life of the school that has educated generations of local children since 1912.

The school motto of *'Ecollegio Metallisque Aurum'* translates as *'gold from the school as well as the mines'* paying homage to the city's rich gold mining history. The gold theme underpins the school's positive education model with the GOLD acronym articulating key focus areas of 'Growth, Opportunity, Love, and Diversity' to support the creation of 'flourishing students, staff and schools'. The colours of maroon and gold have been associated with the school since its foundation. The school vision statement is to build *'...a learning community that grows young people of integrity, compassion and wisdom who honour our past and build our future'*.

Many students and parents express appreciation for school leaders and the dedication of teachers and non-teaching staff members.

An optimistic and respectful tone pervades the school community, and a sense that all students will be cared for and supported in their learning and wellbeing is apparent. Many students and parents speak of the dedication of staff and their willingness to go 'above and beyond' for students. School leaders articulate strong teaching practices occur across the school and staff members express high levels of confidence in school leaders. Positive relationships between members of the school community predominate and staff describe a strong sense of collegiality and high levels of morale.

School leaders recognise the impact that highly effective teaching has on student learning outcomes.

Staff turnover has resulted in a substantial number of teachers yet to be familiar with the New Art and Science of Teaching¹ (NASOT), with a broad range of other pedagogical strategies being used in classrooms, impacting consistency of practice. Leaders express the need to re-establish a school-wide approach to pedagogy. The leadership team recognises an opportunity to develop a new, consistent approach to teaching and learning that fully supports the implementation of a quality curriculum. Leaders express the belief that the exploration of current research on effective teaching can positively contribute to building a culture of inquiry and innovation, and promote student engagement.

¹ Marzano, R. J. (2017). *The new art and science of teaching*. Hawker Brownlow Education.



School leaders are united in their commitment to further improvement in learning outcomes for all students.

Leaders speak with great pride in relation to recent gains in school performance data. Many members of the school community highlight the visible role of the principal in leading the improvement agenda. The principal indicates that since the last review a range of strategies has been employed to foster a collective commitment from school leaders towards driving the school's improvement agenda and focusing on excellence in teaching, learning and leadership. The principal articulates a belief that a continued focus on instructional leadership will support the building of a leadership team that works widely across the school in strong alignment to drive the improvement agenda.

School leaders are committed to supporting the teaching team to continually refine and develop their professional practice.

Many teachers indicate that they would value the opportunity to have their teaching observed and to receive detailed feedback to support them to further hone their skills. More formal observation and feedback processes to support a consistent whole-school approach to pedagogy are yet to be included in the collegial engagement framework. Many staff indicate that they recognise the value in reflecting on their own practice through engaging in one-to-one professional dialogue.

The school's 'Gold' Positive Education Framework is enacted to support positive behaviour and student wellbeing across the school.

Significant improvements in student behaviour outcomes are apparent over the past three years. The school's 'Gold' Positive Education Framework is enacted to support positive behaviour and student wellbeing across the school. A list of non-negotiables developed collaboratively by staff articulates agreed school-wide behaviour expectations and is visible across classrooms. Many staff express a belief that greater consistency in relation to teacher adherence to the non-negotiables in all classes would contribute to further improvement in student behaviour. Some teachers seek further clarity regarding whole-school processes for supporting positive behaviour including roles of school leaders and expectations of teachers. Many members of the school community identify a need for a continued focus on improving student behaviour to further strengthen the learning culture.

An explicit expectation that differentiated teaching and learning will be used to support the learning of every student is apparent.

Leaders recognise the importance of teachers understanding and addressing the needs of individual students in their class. Differentiation has been the topic of several recent Professional Development (PD) presentations. A differentiation folder is located on SharePoint and contains a range of resources to support differentiation practice. The Data Informed Differentiation placemat supports teacher planning. The degree to which differentiated teaching and learning occurs varies. Some teachers convey confidence in their skills in this regard with others expressing a desire to further build their capability in catering for the full range of students.



The leadership team is committed to providing an inclusive culture to support engagement and learning for the full range of students.

Leaders articulate the belief that every student is capable of successful learning. Valuing of diversity is apparent across the school and staff members recognise that some students require significant adjustment to their learning programs to maximise their engagement and success at school. The Learning Partnerships Program (LPP) supports students with disability and students with learning difficulties. It facilitates these students' access, participation, and engagement in the curriculum alongside their peers. The program aims to build an inclusive culture that removes barriers and supports the success of all students.

The broader community speak about the Rural Industries School of Excellence as a hallmark program of the school and region.

Partnerships to support program delivery include the University of Queensland (UQ). Strawberries and squash that are planted, harvested and packaged by students are sold at Brisbane markets and local produce shops. Chicken produce is purchased by local families and staff. The school has established a long-term partnership with Nolan Meats that includes opportunities for student work experience, part-time employment, support for school staff with cattle management expertise, and opportunities for students to gain skills in meat quality assessment. The school is well known across the region for its success in various agricultural competitions including the Intercollegiate Meat Judging Competition and the Gympie Show.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Collaboratively explore contemporary, evidence-based teaching practices to develop a suite of high-yield signature pedagogical strategies that promote quality practice and suit the school's context.

Further enhance the instructional leadership capabilities of key members of staff to drive a culture of learning, with a particular focus on coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, and quality assuring agreed teaching strategies across the school.

Build a culture of continual reflection on teaching practice through a systematic process of leaders regularly observing classroom teaching and providing formal feedback to all teachers.

Quality assure the implementation of agreed behaviour processes across the school to promote consistency of practice.

Deepen teachers' knowledge, understanding and capability in best practice high-yield differentiation to meet the diverse needs of all students, including high achieving students.