A draft discussion paper for

State School Teachers' Union Cottesloe Golf Club Monday 9 September 2013

Leadership Vision

Achieving School Improvement

John Young Clarkson Community High School

About Clarkson Community High School

Clarkson Community High School is located in the Northern outer coastal suburbs of Perth, Western Australia. Many of the students entering the school as new enrolments are assessed as achieving at significantly below national minimum standards set by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. For example, in one year the national benchmark standard for mean performance in most areas tested was approximately 540. Students entering Clarkson were 60 below the mean in reading, 73 below in writing, 74 below in spelling, 46 below in numeracy and 85 below in grammar. Students entering our school require engagement and a learning environment that encourages and develops excellence and achievement. Providing this environment has required a significant learning journey.

The work of Fullan, Hill and Crevola in "Breakthrough" is one of the perspectives that informs planning at Clarkson and underpins our School Accountability to Improve Learning (SAIL) initiative, to engage students in learning and to embrace improvement and opportunities for excellence. This program is an evidence-based approach to improving literacy and numeracy. This data-driven approach continues to produce improvement in academic performance. Clarkson also developed an extensive positive behaviour support plan, 'Cooperation and Respect for Everyone' (CARE), to foster a supportive learning environment in all areas of the school and to foster optimism, trust and respect. This program continues to produce improved behaviour by students. Yet, as the programs developed, improvement in learning and engagement was not as comprehensive and interwoven as we expected. Behavioural engagement was improved, but cognitive engagement ("a student's psychological investment in their own learning") and emotional engagement (when students "feel included in the school and feel an emotional bond with the school, its teachers and their peers") were still developing.

The learning place at Clarkson has constantly improved in the last five years through a concerted effort to create a pleasant learning environment, effective policies and programs and processes that are producing positive outcomes. These methods have been common-sense selections and are good practice in effective schools, but it was often difficult for us to describe why they worked together to create a synergy at our school. The moment of clarity came when we investigated Invitational Education as a means to engage our students and found the concept that unified all of our existing ideas into a simple whole: the starfish analogy in Invitational Education. This powerful analogy provides us with the means to discuss the intentionality of each of our efforts and the importance of intentional invitation of students to engage in our school and their education. The journey continues for us, but now with a clearer sense of how Invitational Education provides a valuable methodology to achieve our goals and provides us with clarity of thinking to bind together the initiatives we have developed at a school level to produce better outcomes for our students.

References:

- 1 Fullan, Michael, Hill, Peter, Crevola, Carmel (2006) 'Breakthrough', Corwin Press
- Finn, J D and Zimmer, K S (2012) 'Student engagement: What Is It? Why Does It Matter?", in *Handbook of research on student engagement* S Christenson, A L Reschly and C Wylie, Eds, Springer, p 97-131
- 3 Western Australia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2013)

A snapshot of Clarkson Community High School Academic Achievement

16%

28% 34%

'My School' profile

VET in schools 2011

Post-school destinations

Students in employment

Students at TAFE/vocational study

Students at university



Students 2012	
Total enrolments	808
Girls	384
Boys	424
Full-time equivalent enrolments 🔼	808
Indigenous students	7%
Language background other than English 3	8%
Student attendance rate	0%

VET III 30110013 ZV11	
Vocational Education and Training (VET)	
VET enrolments	392
School-based apprenticeships and traineeships	4
Sonior eccondary outcomor 2011	
Senior secondary outcomes 2011	
Year 12 results	
Senior secondary certificate awarded	96
Completed senior secondary school	111

Clarkson students have not excelled in NAPLAN testing. What is not obvious in the NAPLAN data is the constant improvement after students enter the school and significant improvements in engagement, attendance and participation.

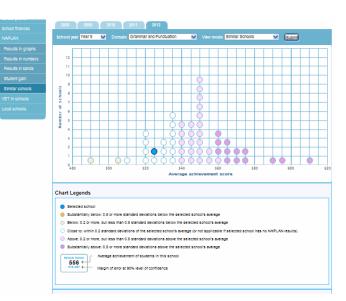
Low levels of literacy and numeracy still present significant on-going challenges for learning, but coherent and consistent leadership vision and the building of expertise in the teaching teams create a school environment targeted to meeting the needs of our students.

Many of the students entering Clarkson CHS have academic achievement that is well below the norm for high schools in WA.

The academic standard our Year 8 entry has an impact that ripples through all years at the school and a profound effect on Clarkson's achievement levels and the learning programs that can be offered in the school.

In a school with these factors it is essential that there is a clear leadership vision focusing on excellence. Building an effective and expert teaching team is a vital part of this vision.

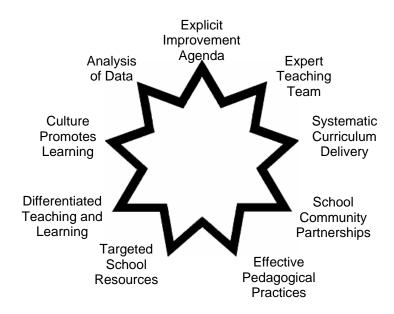
It is clear in such a situation that a definition of excellence and success based solely on attainment of academic standards will be problematic. A more encompassing vision of success is required, one that includes constant personal improvement and attainment of individual goals by students, as well as attainment of strong self-confidence and engagement in the learning process.



Leadership in Improvement of Teaching Practice

The National School Improvement Tool identifies nine areas to consider in the improvement of teaching practice in schools in Australia.

National School Improvement Tool



These elements of effective teaching are already intrinsic to most schools in Western Australia. Clarkson's focus has been on integrating these elements via a process of Invitational Education into a shared leadership vision supported by effective teaching teams.

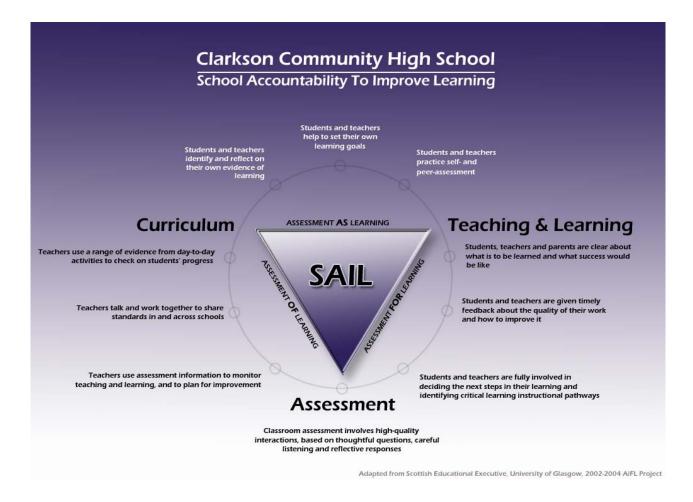
How do we judge effective teaching teams? Is it by academic results only, or are there other equally important factors to consider when we discuss effective teaching practices and success by students?

Answering these questions and providing engagement for students is part of the journey undertaken by Clarkson Community High School. We have built a consensus vision of leadership for effective change and engaged teachers in creating a teaching environment where there is a high level of teacher interaction and support in determining how we develop and implement the most effective teaching practices for our students.

Clarkson's Leadership Vision

A consistent vision, developed and refined over several years, underpins the leadership strategies at Clarkson. The key to the vision is identifying the needs of our students and developing programs that assist teachers and students working in the presence of targeted content to raise standards and achievement.

Accountability drives the model. Administrators are accountable for providing leadership vision and support and teachers are accountable for setting literacy and numeracy targets using SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely) targets and informing the school vision. The connection between leadership vision and SMART targets drives education discourse and research in the school.

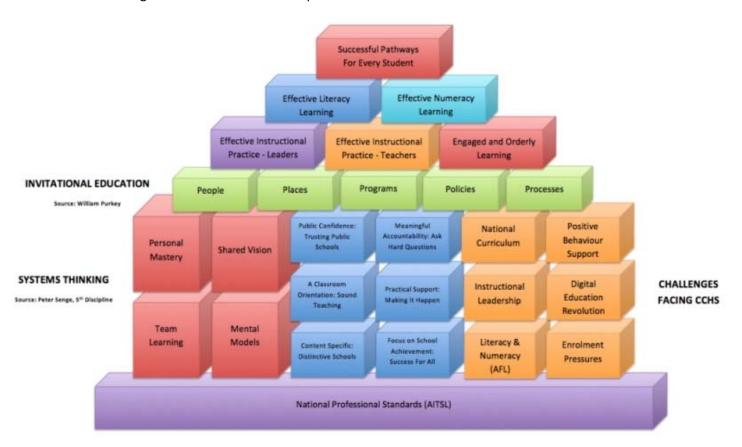


CLIPS (Critical Learning Pathways) are the focus for teaching. Teachers use SAIS and NAPLAN data to inform CLIPS, as part of an evidence-based approach that "provides teachers with some ideas about the components of the curriculum that represent the next logical steps to teach in line with the notion of proximal development." (Vygotsky, 1978). The result is the use of data to drive instruction that is more focused to the needs of our students at Clarkson.

This interaction forms the basis of an informed dialogue between teachers and the leadership team. Teachers are informed and knowledgeable about the students in their classes and this is the first step in an accountability process where teachers are active participants in research and practice to improve outcomes for students at Clarkson. There has been a significant body of research undertaken and written by teachers at Clarkson and this research informs the school plan and school processes.

Structuring a Leadership Vision

A shared knowledge by all staff of the complex influences within the school is essential to support a consensus leadership vision and the building of expert teaching teams. Identifying and defining the challenges facing the school, then creating the systems-thinking required to develop solutions is a key part of effective change and distributed leadership.

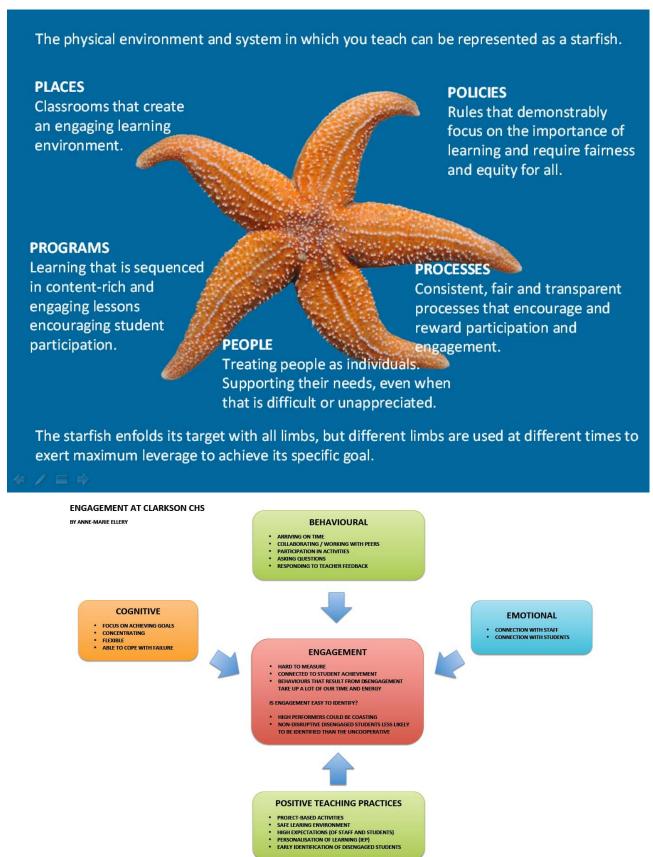


Invitational education is an essential part of enabling student success at Clarkson. Inviting students to learn through implementation of a philosophy of 'people, places, programs, policies and processes' is proving to be a very effective strategy to engage students, teachers and the community in learning in the school.

The Principal mentors and guides this process to encourage effective instructional practice and ensures that the school's strategic vision is focused on providing the opportunity for successful life pathways for every student.

Developing Invitational Learning to Improve Teaching Practice

The work of Purkey underpins the development of invitational education practices at Clarkson. In the Invitational Education model, every aspect of the school is investigated and adapted to ensure that students are encouraged to engage and be active participants in their learning. Clarkson is several years into this process and gaining the benefits from improved student engagement.



Leadership Roles at Clarkson

(Adapted from Source: Ontario Leadership Framework)

A simple representation of shared vision of leadership roles in administration and learning areas assists all staff and teachers to understand the importance of collaborative leadership and each person's part in developing good leadership outcomes for students.

Core Leadership Capacity			
1. Setting Goals	Setting Directions	Leading the Instructional Program	Securing Accountability
	Ensures the vision is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon by all	Fosters a commitment to equity of outcome and to closing the achievement gap	Aligns school targets with department targets
2. Aligning Resources with Priorities	Setting Directions	Leading the Instructional Program	Securing Accountability
	Ensures creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate technologies to achieve excellence	Ensures that learning is at the centre of planning and resource management	Makes connections to department goals to strengthen commitment to school improvement efforts
3. Promoting Collaborativ e Learning Cultures	Building Relationships and Developing People	Developing the Organization	Leading the Instructional Program
	Acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of individuals and teams	Builds collaborative learning cultures within the school and actively engages with other schools and the community to build effective learning communities	Develops professional learning communities to support school improvement
4. Using Data	Setting Directions	Leading the Instructional Program	Securing Accountability
	Works within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans which promote and sustain school improvement	Ensures a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on student achievement, using system and school data to monitor progress	Develops and presents a coherent, understandable, accurate and transparent account of the school's performance to a range of audiences (e.g. department, parents, community)
5. Engaging in Courageous Conversation s	Building Relationships and Developing People	Developing the Organization	Securing Accountability
	Encourages colleagues to take intellectual risks	Uses performance appraisal to foster professional growth, and challenges the thinking and learning of staff to further develop professional practice	Ensures individual staff accountabilities are clearly understood, agreed to and subject to rigorous review and evaluation

De-privatising Teaching Practice and Developing Expert Teaching Teams

The implementation of monitoring and support for AITSL standards and a clear vision of professional accountability assists leaders in de-privatising teaching practice. Clarkson has been making steady progress towards open classrooms over a period of years, encouraging teachers via implementation of Instructional Rounds and collaborative teams to advise and support peers in classroom activities and pedagogy.



Leadership Philosophy

THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNING OF LEADERSHIP AT CLARKSON

There is a strong focus on leadership in developing professional capacity in teachers at Clarkson through school-wide pedagogy aligned to school-wide accountability, with an emphasis on teachers' collective responsibility for improvement in students' attainment. This involves leadership to ensure that the teacher, student and curriculum content are the centre of the instructional core, while simultaneously identifying the importance of strategies and tactics as a part of teachers' ever--improving range of practices.

Australian education is characterised by the far reaching strategies outlines in the National Education Agreement (COAG 2008) cited in Fullan (2011:3). Four areas of reform have priority: Developing a national framework of schooling; Increasing school level transparency and accountability, to improve student and school performance; Closing the gap in educational outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous students; and Developing and implementing a national curriculum across all learning areas from K-12.

Fullan (2011:2) critiques the limitations of current strategies and policies that are counter-productive to whole-system reform, namely: Focusing on accountability versus capacity building; Individual quality versus group quality; Technology versus instruction; and Fragmented versus systemic. Fullan's (2011:5) work emphasises the need to use four effective strategies: Learning-instruction-assessment nexus; Social capital to build profession; Pedagogy matches technology; and Systemic synergy. Evans (2010), page 82, spells out that strategic planning in its traditional sense "... is best with serious built-in fallacies". As its most trenchant critic, Henry Mintzberg, has famously observed, the term 'strategic planning' itself is an oxymoron, for planning is analysis, strategy is synthesis and the former cannot produce the latter. Planning gets you a plan, not necessarily a strategy. The Clarkson strategic vision focuses on achieving cultural transformation by investing in smarter people doing things in smarter ways to deal with significant and persistent problems.

Changing pedagogy at the school level is essential for improvement, including the use of the following drivers for educational reform (Fullan 2011:3): Foster intrinsic motivation of teachers and students; Engage educators and students in continuous improvement of instruction and learning; Inspire collective or team work; and Affect all teachers and students – 100%. The re-culturing, re-structuring and re-timing of Clarkson involves significant transformation. The school leadership team believe that building capacity on which to leverage improvement through professional development and capacity building is essential: a school's improvement is linked to the capacity of its leaders and teachers who lie at the heart of a networked regional model of governance and accountability. Sergiovanni's (1984) five dimensions of leadership: technical; human; culture; educational; and symbolic, underpin our investment in people to build human resource capital. School leaders at Clarkson Community High School must be responsible for transformational change management and deliver strategic leadership to drive whole-school improvement strategies, so that leaders share the balcony view (Heifetz & Linsky 2002 page 51) and not merely count the dance steps.

The Clarkson improvement strategy is, of necessity:" Complex (in that it has 'to operate across a number of social, organisational, cultural and technical dimensions simultaneously'); Simple (in that has to 'embody a clear storyline'); and Narrative, that everyone in the system can understand and use to give purpose to their work." (Elmer 2007:1). Significant features for the development of the Clarkson strategy are: Policy makers and educators need to understand what it means to be a learning teacher; All learning that counts involves learning in context; and Teachers need refined and focused knowledge all the time. The work of all schools is complicated and, arguably, is becoming increasingly more so and Clarkson

leaders support the view that a systems approach to improvement can be linked directly to Department of Education's strategic plan 2012-2015.

The challenge is to establish significant, targeted strategies and to ensure students' performance is improved and measured continuously. The critical learning instructional pathway is analogous to the triage pathway; and, similarly, instructional rounds are similar to doctors' rounds. The action strategy we have developed in the region relies heavily on obtaining, analysing and applying evidence to determine the directions we take. Embedding the school's vision and values is a continuous process of "Plan, Act and Assess."

BOUNDARIES: INFLUENCES ON LEADERSHIP

There are five major influences on school planning at Clarkson Community High School:

- The Department of Education WA strategic plan for 2012-2015 "Excellence and Equity" identifies four priorities for schools in Western Australia. These priorities are: Success for all students; Distinctive schools; High-quality teaching and leadership; and a capable and responsive organisation.
- The introduction of a minimum literacy and numeracy assessment in year 10 from 2014 and support for students to meet minimum literacy and numeracy standards by the time they graduate, with students required to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank or a minimum Certificate II in training programs to graduate.
- The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority development of a national curriculum, a national assessment program and a national data collection and reporting program that supports 21st century learning for all Australian students. ACARA requirements and guidelines determine the curriculum offered at Clarkson.
- Australian Institute for School Leadership National Professional Standards define the work of Principals
 and teachers and the elements of high-quality, effective teaching to improve educational outcomes for
 students. The standards provide a framework for the knowledge, practice and professional engagement
 required by the Principal and teachers, and present a common understanding and language for
 discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and
 the public.
- Our commitment as a school community to meeting the needs of students in our local community and striving to provide the best possible education for our students.

Effective leadership ensures that system influences such as the DoE strategic plan "Excellence and Equity", the National curriculum requirements of ACARA, the curriculum requirements of Vocational and Educational Training and other bodies determining State and National curriculum and school processes are translated into effective daily actions by the school planning process.

Teachers at Clarkson have a key role to gather data and form observations regarding the academic progress and pastoral well-being of their students. Each Lead teacher or HOLA has regular meetings with classroom teachers to discuss these matters and to determine progress in achieving the vision and values of the school. These meetings identify areas for change. Lead teachers and HOLAs meet with the Principal and the school leadership group and formulate strategies and policy to achieve effective change. Staff meetings also provide the opportunity for teachers to raise matters that affect planning at the school. At all times there should be a process of consultation and encouragement of engagement, with the expectation that teachers and leaders will be a vital part of the change process and will be supportive of the Principal's vision and values for the school.

STRUCTURED LEADERSHIP: OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The model of planning at Clarkson Community High School is a cycle of

PLAN Assess and diagnose a given situation, develop a plan and strategies, allocate resources and implement the plan consistent with the vision and values of the school.

REVIEW Gather data, analyse the data, then make decisions.

RESPOND Change what we do, change how we do things, change to create improved outcomes for our students.

OUR PLANNERS

The Principal is the leader of the school and sets the vision and values for the school, collaborating with and being supported by Lead teachers, classroom teachers and the community.

Lead teachers collaborate and consult with the Principal to formulate the vision and values for the school. Lead teachers are Heads of Learning Areas, teachers in charge of Learning Areas, and teachers with extensive expertise in their learning area. Lead teachers inform and support the Principal's vision for the school, mentor other teachers, and assist these teachers to achieve the vision and values for the school. A key part of the role of Lead teachers is to gather and analyse data from their learning areas and to recommend planning decisions, based on analysis and the information provided to them by classroom teachers.

Classroom teachers at the school will have varying levels of experience and expertise. These teachers will collaborate with and be guided by Lead teachers to achieve the vision and values for the school. The curriculum and lessons developed by these teachers will be a critical factor in school change and improvement. A key part of the role of these teachers is to gather data relating to the progress of students, to analyse these data and to recommend planning decisions based on analysis and observation.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1: Improve student attainment and progress in literacy and communication skills.
- Objective 2: Improve student attainment and progress in numeracy and science skills.
- Objective 3: Implement 'Invitational Education' programs to improve behaviour and student personal development.
- Objective 4: Improve accountability, teaching standards and course content with the implementation of AITSL standards for teaching and leadership

Learning is the focus of the school. This involves quality teaching and renewal of curriculum to engage and extend students. It involves thinking about our students in their future lives and what they will need to learn at school to prepare for this future. It involves identifying how technology and schools are changing and determining how we need to change our curriculum and teaching to meet these changes, so that our students have the benefit of the best learning available. It also involves evaluating data and observations that tell us where our students are now, what needs they have, then planning how we can improve our school processes to achieve better outcomes for our students in 2013 and beyond.

OUR SCHOOL-BASED PRIORITIES

"Excellence and Equity", the Department of Education strategic plan for 2012-2015, sets four priorities for schools:

- Success for all students (Clarkson Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- Distinctive schools (Clarkson Objective 3)
- High quality teaching and leadership (Clarkson Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- A capable and responsive organisation (Clarkson Objective 4)

The Department of Education has introduced a minimum literacy and numeracy assessment in year 10 from 2014 requiring support for students to meet minimum literacy and numeracy standards by the time they graduate, with students required to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank or a minimum Certificate II in training programs to graduate.

Additionally, Clarkson has school-based priorities to:

- Improve pastoral care and behaviour management of students through the development of a comprehensive and cohesive approach shared by all staff, as detailed in the Student Services operational plan for 2013.
- Develop greater alignment of instructional practices and behaviour management by providing teaching staff with additional training in Classroom Management Strategies and by the development of courses suited to the needs and future goals of our students.
- Strengthen leadership and administrative practices through open and transparent consultation, communication and collaborative processes involving staff, students, parents and the wider community so that teachers and the local community are engaged in making Clarkson a distinctive and engaging school.
- Raise the standard of literacy and numeracy by a clear focus on explicit teaching, coordinating support in Years 8 and 9, and strengthening partnerships with neighbouring primary schools.
- Develop viable and sustainable Year 11 and Year 12 course offerings to suit the future goals of our students.
- Improve support for staff through the development of an ongoing induction and mentoring program.

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS AND STRATEGIES

Changing pedagogy at the school level is essential for improvement, including the use of the following drivers for educational reform (Fullan 2011:3):

- Engage educators and students in continuous improvement of instruction and learning.
- Foster intrinsic motivation of teachers and students.
- Inspire collective or team work.
- Affect all teachers and students, 100%.

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve student attainment and progress in literacy and communication skills.

Improvement targets: Improved performance in NAPLAN in 2013

Improved performance in WAMSE in 2013

Overall improvement in the standard of literacy, demonstrated in classroom work and assessments

Strategy: A whole-school literacy improvement strategy program developed by Feni Bembridge.

Targeted teaching in English to improve specific writing and literacy skills

Teaching in each learning area to support the whole-school approach to literacy improvement

Clarkson is continuing the school-based development of whole-school programs to improve literacy standards and in 2013 the school will implement the literacy improvement strategies developed by Feni Bembridge, with a focus on consistent targeting of problem areas in student literacy

OBJECTIVE 2: Improve student attainment and progress in numeracy and science skills.

Improvement target: Improved performance in NAPLAN

Overall improvement in the standard of numeracy, demonstrated in classroom work and assessments

Strategy: A whole-school numeracy approach will be implemented in 2013, with a focus on consistent targeting of problem areas in student literacy

Targeted teaching in Mathematics and Science courses to improve specific numeracy and science skills Teaching in each learning area to support the whole-school approach to numeracy improvement

Clarkson is implementing a school-based approach to developing whole-school programs to improve numeracy. In 2013 the school will implement numeracy improvement strategies based on the program developed by Jason Remse and Pam Sherrard, with a focus on developing student numeracy in mathematics and science.

OBJECTIVE 3: Implement 'Invitational Education' programs to improve behaviour and student personal development.

Improvement target: Clarkson is viewed by students and the community as offering Invitational Education to engage students in learning

Strategy: In 2013 there will be a focus on the creation of relevant and engaging vocational education pathways in all learning areas at Clarkson to provide students with Certificate II graduation requirements for 2014 onwards.

During the year a survey of the school community will be conducted to establish a baseline for Invitational Education programs, then follow-up to develop invitational education programs in all learning areas at Clarkson.

Engagement of students in relevant programs targeted to their learning needs will diminish behaviour issues and will foster student engagement and personal development.

Clarkson is focusing on making learning more inviting and relevant to students, with an emphasis on the development of Certificate courses, to prepare students for graduation requirement in future years, and development of teaching activities targeted to improve literacy and numeracy through engaging lesson activities.

OBJECTIVE 4: Improve accountability, teaching standards and course content with the implementation of AITSL standards for teaching and leadership

Improvement target: Teachers, lead teachers and administrators to demonstrate progress in attaining AITSL standards during 2013

Strategy: Professional development activities in AITSL

Encouragement of teachers to demonstrate progress in progression in the AITSL standards Emphasis on AITSL standards in pedagogy and development of curriculum

TIMEFRAME AND EVALUATION

Objective 1: Improve student attainment and progress in literacy and communication skills.

Evaluation method: NAPLAN WAMSE

School reports

Timeframe: Semester 1 and Semester 2

Objective 2: Improve student attainment and progress in numeracy and science skills.

Evaluation method: NAPLAN School reports

Timeframe: Semester 1 and Semester 2

Objective 3: Develop targeted and invitational learning that will result in improved behaviour and student

personal development

Evaluation method: Survey of students and community to gauge school progress

Timeframe: Semester 1

Objective 4: Improve accountability, teaching standards and course content with the implementation of

AITSL standards for teaching and leadership

Evaluation method: Teacher performance evaluations

Timeframe: Monthly, with annual report