Sydney Road Community School

Sydney Road Community School is a small secondary school (less than 100 students) located in Brunswick. The school has 18.9 equivalent fulltime staff. One principal class, 11.4 teachers and 6.5 Education Support staff. We offer a comprehensive curriculum including VCE, VET and VCAL. Our students have a wide range of abilities and aspirations and we are committed to providing a broad and challenging education that actively involves all students and that treats each student as an individual with individual strengths and challenges.

The school functions as a neighbourhood school and as part of our local community. Our curriculum and assessment structure provides the opportunity for all students to have a successful school experience if they work hard. We find it much more conducive to student well being, connectedness and attendance if we treat each child individually in terms of progress, so we did not rank students publically on the VELS scale. We use On-Demand Adaptive Testing and measure student progress using a scale that clearly links attendance and effort with success.

We have a strong emphasis on The Arts in general and Music performance and technology in particular. We are an Apple school and computing is embedded in all our curriculum areas.

Student Learning

The student learning data relied solely on the small number of VCE results. Performance was higher in 2009 when compared to the four-year average. However the school is performing similar to other schools when taking into account student background characteristics. Due to the small but diverse and changing backgrounds of Year 11 and 12 students the results from year to year remain volatile.

During the period of data collection the school was developing a range of VCAL programs. These programs complement VCE offerings and allow students to take up individualised programs responsive to the needs of this small but diverse cohort.

NAPLAN results were not available for our students. The school has been actively trialling a number of diagnostic testing methods. This year we have introduced On-Demand Adaptive Testing for all years 7,8,9 and 10 students.

We have also developed a system in which student effort is measured class by class throughout the school. This data contributes to the regular, on-going reporting and discussing of progress between parents, teachers, and students.

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Attendance remains one of our school’s key focuses as it underpins most, if not all, aspects of a student’s successful engagement in learning.

Although attendance is higher than other schools on adjusted school performance, it is still lower than average for all Victorian Government Schools. We continue to extend and strengthen the support offered to students and families and have developed clear, measurable links between attendance, effort and academic success.

Teachers identify potential issues contributing to absence, and intervene through home visits and the development of support groups, often in conjunction with outside agencies.

Students show a strong sense of connectedness to our school. We rate in the top 20% with regard to student attitudes to school. Our school is also seen as doing better than expected on the school comparison measure. We value students’ sense of belonging and participation in the day-to-day organisation of the school.

Student Pathways and Transitions

The school’s performance with regard retention is of a similar level to that expected on the school comparison measure. This data is liable to fluctuate from year to year as the school has a significant level of transience and the student population is often skewed towards the upper year levels.

The number of students experiencing positive exit destinations (continuing on to further studies or finding full-time employment) was higher in 2008 than the average of the last 4 years. It was also higher than other schools on the school comparison measure.

The school continues to refine its approach to developing Managed Individual Pathways for our students. Students are directly assisted in developing pathways plans and individual learning plans by their pastoral care teachers. Our youth worker assists with work placements and visits to workplaces and tertiary campuses. Students also explore workplace issues and career directions through Personal Development classes in years 9 and 10, and Work Related Skills units in the senior years.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at sydneyrdcs.gov.edu.au or view our 2008 Annual Report online at http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/SReg/