

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

North Sydney Girls High School 8133



School vision and context

School vision statement

At North Sydney Girls High School we aspire to live our motto, Ad Altiora, "towards higher things" by striving to achieve our personal best in a learning environment which nurtures the growth of identity and promotes respectful, productive collaboration. In a landscape of high achievement and academic excellence, we encourage a culture of reflection and resilience that enables students to set and attain individual learning goals.

By valuing lifelong learning, we foster the development of a wide range of skills to empower a student's voice, embrace leadership potential and develop confidence and resilience in learning and in life. A student of North Sydney Girls will be a person who moves with confidence into the wider community, contributing proactively and making a positive difference to our society both while at school and in the future. In our school community, we embrace public education values of kindness, compassion and respect in all that we do.

We aim to create a community of inclusivity and belonging that builds productive relationships. In partnership with students, parents, staff, and the wider school community we strive to ensure that North Sydney Girls High School is recognised as a school of innovation that exhibits evidence-based practice in the teaching and learning of gifted students.

Ad Altiora

School context

North Sydney Girls is an academically selective high school catering to the needs of over 900 highly gifted students. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds with 93% for whom English is an additional language or dialect. The school community has high expectations for students and staff and the school consistently achieves outstanding academic results.

Our differentiated and conceptually based curriculum emphasises higher order critical, creative and collaborative thinking skills to enrich and extend the gifted learner. Learning experiences inside the classroom are complemented by extensive co-curricular sporting, cultural and leadership programs. Achieving one's personal best and self reflection are key elements of the school's ethos leading to a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Embracing personal growth, students practise developing skills in resilience and adaptability. Positive mental health will assist students in becoming more confident in their beliefs and voice, being productive and active citizens. By empowering social skills and the ability to build relationships, students will develop the confidence needed for future success.

Parents, staff and students have agreed to develop common values in our students - resilience, responsibility, confidence, kindness, compassion, independence, courage and diligence.

Parental support is strong with a commitment to the holistic education of all students. The support of extensive extra and co-curricular activities such as student voice, music, sport, leadership, enrichment and STEM programs is thoroughly integrated.

Strong partnerships with our alumni, school networks and external stakeholders are fostered to ensure a collaborative and dynamic community emerges.

Technology is seamlessly integrated into classroom practice with all students having their own mobile learning device. The technology infrastructure and on-hand support are exceptional, allowing collaborative learning to extend beyond the classroom.

An extensive consultation process with all key stakeholders is captured in our Situational Analysis. Through extensive research, literature reviews, analysis of internal and external data, surveying of students, staff and parents and focus groups, we were able to identify three strategic directions for our Strategic Improvement Plan (2021-2024).

Through our situational analysis we have identified the need to embed strategies that enhance literacy and build a culture of reflective learning to ensure we achieve "Sustained Growth". The integration of highly effective formative feedback practices and self-regulated learning are key initiatives to ensure we achieve "Feedback for Growth". In building "Collaborative Communities", we aim to develop a professional learning culture and productive relationships to achieve personal best.

As a school community we commit ourselves to move "towards higher things" in all endeavours.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

Our purpose is to ensure students grow in their learning through explicit, consistent and research-informed teaching and learning strategies to enhance literacy and the development of critical, creative and collaborative thinking skills in all students. Improvement in literacy, specifically academic writing and thinking skills, will enable our students to increase performance levels in NAPLAN and the HSC.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

Increase the percentage of HSC course results in top two bands to 95.8% (lower bound system-negotiated target) or above.

Maintenance of percentage of students in the top 2 bands of Numeracy and Reading (Year 9).

Target year: 2024

Improvement in the percentage of students achieving in the top 2 bands of the NAPLAN writing assessment to 70%.

Target year: 2024

Improvement in students' ability to use inquiry skills of critical, creative and collaborative thinking in a variety of learning contexts.

Target year: 2023

Increase in the achievement of expected growth rates per student of reading and numeracy in Year 9 NAPLAN.

Target year: 2024

Improved ability to assess (formative and summative) inquiry skills.

Initiatives

Literacy Initiative - Embedding literacy across the curriculum.

- Literacy Coordinators and cross-faculty literacy team lead professional learning to develop teachers' confidence and skills in explicitly teaching literacy in their subject context.
- Cross-faculty literacy team showcase expertise and examples of literacy embedded lessons.
- EALD support staff identify high needs students for additional support in individual and small group academic writing support classes.
- Resources such as Wordflyers utilised to assist and develop staff expertise and student understanding of foundations.
- Improvement in academic writing skills of students will enable greater access to Band 6 HSC results.

Building a culture of reflective learning

- Professional learning to upskill all staff in explicitly teaching and assessing the inquiry skills of critical, creative and collaborative thinking to facilitate student reflective practice.
- Development of conceptual framework from the curriculum which will reveal the self-reflection and evaluation skills required by students so they can explore the personal significance of learning.
- Continued implementation of strategies for gifted students in higher order thinking skills to enhance metacognitive processes.
- Improvement in metacognitive skills of students will enable deeper conceptual understanding leading to greater access to Band 6 HSC results.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

School data shows that student progress and achievement is greater than students at statistically similar schools on external measures, and this is consistent with strong student progress and achievement on internal measures.

The school's curriculum provision supports high expectations for student learning.

Teaching and learning programs across the school show evidence that they are adjusted to address individual student needs, ensuring that all students are challenged and all adjustments lead to improved learning. Teachers involve students and parents in planning to support learning, and share expected outcomes.

The leadership team maintains a focus on distributed instructional leadership to sustain a culture of effective, evidence-based teaching and ongoing improvement so that every student makes measurable learning progress and gaps in student achievement decrease.

The school is recognised as excellent and responsive by its community because it uses best practice to embed a culture of high expectations and effectively caters for the range of equity issues in the school.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

- NAPLAN, Check-In assessment and HSC data
- Teacher evaluation of professional learning
- What Works Best surveys measure teacher confidence and expertise
- Formative and summative assessment of inquiry skills are embedded in assessment tasks.
- Student evaluation in Tell Them From Me surveys.
- Explicit literacy lessons and inquiry skills are embedded in teaching and learning programs.

Strategic Direction 2: Feedback for growth

Purpose

Our purpose is to embed a culture of reflective and resilient learning that sets high expectations for every learner and assists High Potential and Gifted students to self-regulate. Within this culture, evidence-based formative feedback practices will enable a growth mindset approach that equips every student with the skills to focus on sustained progress in their learning. Our teachers will reflect on and evaluate their current effectiveness and adapt their classroom feedback practices to facilitate a growth mindset approach supported by high impact professional learning and use of student data to inform teaching.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

Increased engagement with feedback by students, staff and parents promotes a shared understanding that the purpose of formative feedback is to provide a bridge between assessment and learning which assists each student to develop a clear understanding of how to improve through building growth mindsets and self-efficacy that looks beyond the grades/marks they receive.

Target year: 2024

Collaborative professional learning increases teachers' individual and collective capacities to incorporate evidence-based formative feedback strategies in the classroom. These strategies enable clear communication about the learning task through written learning intentions and explicit success criteria, and embed opportunities for detailed and specific feedback about what students need to do to achieve growth as a learner.

Target year: 2023

An increase in students' engagement with feedback through metacognitive strategies, ensuring each student acts on the feedback they receive through monitoring and self-assessment, and reflection on work towards the achievement of clearly defined learning goals.

Initiatives

Embedding highly effective formative feedback practices

- High impact professional learning, informed by *What Works Best* and *High Impact Professional Learning*, builds teachers' individual and collective expertise to develop a 'feedback for growth culture' which embeds evidence-based formative feedback practices as an integral part of daily instruction.
- Continue to strengthen support for collective pedagogical practice through the collaborative planning, sharing, marking and evaluation of learning tasks to provide regular, detailed and specific feedback to gifted students about what they need to do to achieve growth as a learner i.e. 'stretch challenges'.
- Continue to develop systems and professional capacity for analysis of assessment data to underpin high quality, authentic assessment which is used to identify and monitor improvement measures and target areas as needed.
- Embed highly visible learning intentions, success criteria, and 'designed-in' and 'contingent' feedback points into teaching and learning programs which enable students to actively engage with feedback through metacognitive strategies.
- Use programmed formative feedback points to assist students to set individual learning goals to assess their learning growth against explicit success criteria.
- Continue to develop formative assessment practices which are used to generate high quality feedback on individualised learning goals to the student, teacher, faculty, senior school executive and the community.

Developing a culture of self-regulated learning

- The continued, collective development and implementation of formative assessment and feedback practices supports High Potential and Gifted students to reflect on the quality of their learning and adopt a growth mindset through active

Success criteria for this strategic direction

There is school-wide, collective responsibility for student learning and success, which is shared by parents and students. Planning for learning is informed by sound holistic information about each student's wellbeing and learning needs in consultation with parents/carers.

All teachers have a sound understanding of student assessment and data concepts (e.g. causality, bias). They analyse, interpret and extrapolate data and they collaboratively use this to monitor and assess student progress and achievement, inform planning, identify interventions, set learning goals for students, and reflect on teaching effectiveness and modify teaching practice.

Teachers routinely use formative assessment flexibly and responsively as an integral part of daily classroom instruction to provide formative feedback to students on their learning, both in class and on work submitted, ensuring all students have a clear understanding of how to improve.

Students and parents understand the assessment approaches used in the school and their benefits for their learning. Feedback from students on their learning derived from assessments informs further teaching.

Teaching and learning programs are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable student assessment and continuous tracking of student progress and achievement.

Teachers engage in and evaluate professional learning activities to identify, systematically promote and implement the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning. Teachers work collaboratively both within the school and with teachers from other schools to share and implement best practice.

Students actively engage with feedback, from the teacher, peer, or through self-reflection. The whole school cultivates a feedback for growth culture that supports student self-efficacy, were students take accountability for understanding and implementing feedback that support improved student learning and growth focussed on understanding what to; strengthen, adopt/start,

Strategic Direction 2: Feedback for growth

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

The collective efforts of teachers to trial, share and implement learning about highly effective formative feedback both within faculties and across the whole school develops and sustains a 'feedback culture' where each student understands the learning intentions and criteria for success, and has advice and support in making necessary changes to set individual learning goals and improve their learning.

Initiatives

engagement with feedback.

- Each student is guided to develop authentic learning goals which enable them to self-assess, peer-assess, reflect on, and monitor their own work and learning growth against explicit success criteria.
 - Each student is assisted to develop skills in self-regulation and metacognition which enable them to perceive 'success' in their learning as the progress they have made i.e. the 'distance travelled'.
 - Student work samples are used to generate visible feedback to students, supporting them to set individual goals which are increasingly challenging, develop more control of their learning, and to become increasingly confident in their intellectual capacity.
-

Success criteria for this strategic direction

adapt/change and discontinue/stop.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

- Teacher and student surveys to establish benchmarks
- TTFM and What Works Best (WWB) surveys evaluate the increased ability and confidence of staff to use data-informed formative feedback strategies.
- TTFM, WWB surveys and student focus groups evaluate increased student engagement in formative feedback
- TTFM surveys evaluate students' and parents' understanding of the school's 'feedback for growth culture'
- TTFM and WWB surveys, and PL surveys evaluate increased proportion of teachers who make formative feedback practices part of everyday practice

- Andrew Martin surveys assess student's initial approaches to learning to establish baseline data and assess again at two year intervals
- Annual evaluation of Program registration shows the incorporation of explicit success criteria, learning intentions and 'designed-in' and 'contingent' feedback points.
- Lesson Observations are used to evaluate effectiveness of feedback strategies and share strategies with colleagues.
- Classroom exit surveys etc. collect data from students regarding the value and clarity of feedback practices
- PDPs reflect individual goals related to feedback

Strategic Direction 3: Collaborative Cultures

Purpose

Our purpose as a school is to create a collaborative culture to ensure the whole school community works towards achieving personal best. We aim to have a collective responsibility for student learning that is shared by parents, staff and teachers. We will develop partnerships both within the school and in the wider community to deliver a holistic education for our highly gifted learners.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

All teachers work collaboratively within the faculty and school through discussion, peer observation and the development of programs and assessments.

All staff work collaboratively to analyse data and implement evidence based teaching and learning strategies.

Target year: 2022

An increase in the proportion of students reporting improvement in wellbeing data (advocacy, belonging, expectations) to be at 80% or above.

Target year: 2022

An improvement of 0.5% of students attending more than 90% of the time to 95.9%.

Target year: 2024

An increase in the proportion of students, staff and parents working collaboratively to achieve the resilience and personal best of students.

Target year: 2023

An increase in the visibility of partnerships operating in the school.

Initiatives

Developing a professional learning culture to collaboratively plan, share, assess and evaluate all learning tasks.

- Staff collaborating at a faculty level to plan, share, assess and evaluate all learning tasks.
- High impact professional learning to ensure successful collaboration and to share and gain expertise in evidence based teaching practices.
- Sharing knowledge and understanding across the school, within networks and with external bodies.
- Collegial (cross faculty) lesson observations and the PDP process will lead to an improvement of teaching and learning strategies.
- School support staff work collaboratively to ensure the smooth operation of all school processes to support student learning.
- School support staff collaborate to develop a professional learning culture of continuous improvement.
- Students create a learning culture through collaboration and enhanced skills such as inquiry thinking skills, guided discussion, effective group work and the ability to engage with feedback (SD1 and SD2).

Creating productive relationships to achieve personal best.

- Students, staff and parents developing productive partnerships to ensure all students are committed to achieving their personal best.
- Develop a positive learning culture where students engage in collaboration to achieve common goals.
- All teachers working collaboratively to build resilience of students to ensure the achievement of personal best.
- Experienced teachers encouraged to mentor early career teachers within school and across subject

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Teaching staff demonstrate and share their expertise within their school and with other schools. All teachers have expert contemporary content knowledge and deploy effective teaching strategies.

The leadership team establishes a professional learning community which is focused on continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Teachers collaborate with staff in other schools to share and embed good practice.

The staff evaluate professional learning activities to identify and systematically promote and implement the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning programs are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable student assessment and continuous tracking of student progress and achievement.

Teachers involve students and parents in planning to support learning, and share expected outcomes.

Teachers, parents and the community work together to support consistent and systematic processes that ensure student absences do not impact on learning outcomes.

The school engages in strong collaborations between parents, students and the community that inform and support continuity of learning for all students at transition points.

The school community engages in productive partnerships to enhance the learning of all students.

Management practices and processes are responsive to school community feedback. There is a whole school approach to improving service delivery and parent and student experience.

The leadership team uses data to evaluate the effectiveness of management processes, and creates a culture of shared accountability to achieve organisational

Strategic Direction 3: Collaborative Cultures

Initiatives

networks.

- Mentoring of aspiring leaders encouraged and the development of opportunities supported.
 - Links and network with other schools, universities, agencies and stakeholders are evaluated, developed and publicised.
 - Celebration and showcasing of elite success in all pursuits - creative arts, sporting, cultural, linguistic, public speaking, debating, Olympiad, drama and cross curricular programs.
-

Success criteria for this strategic direction

best practice.

Technology that supports learning is available and expertly integrated into lessons by teachers. Administrative staff are expert users of available systems and work to support teaching at learning at NSGHS.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

- Tell Them From Me surveys (all stakeholders)
- Focus Groups (all)
- What Works Best surveys (teachers)
- Engagement levels monitored - parent forums, events, participation in focus groups, alumni, guest speakers etc
- Teaching and Learning program registration
- Register of external partnerships
- Professional Learning opportunities and evaluation
- PDP process, goal setting, achievement of goals and lesson observations
- Year 12 Exit Survey
- Attendance data.