



ACT
Government
Education

Mount Stromlo High School

Review Report Summary, 2018

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Overview of the school review process

Approximately a quarter of all ACT public schools are reviewed each year. The reviews are an important part of how the Directorate supports and monitors school improvement. Reviews provide schools with quality and independent feedback, tailored to the school's context. Each school is reviewed at least every five years, providing valuable opportunities for self-reflection, planning and improvement.

Reviews are undertaken by experienced educators trained in the use of the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT), a nationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices. Each review team generally consists of two to three reviewers, however, the number of reviewers and length of review depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of the school.

Reviewers closely consider each school's performance data and speak with a wide range of staff, students, parents and community members to get an accurate picture of the school. Following the review, the school receives a comprehensive report. The report outlines the key findings and recommended improvement strategies to maximise student outcomes. The report concludes with a set of commendations, affirmations and recommendations to assist in future planning and to support school-wide improvement planning.

The following summary contains the commendations, affirmations and recommendations from the review report.

Commendations

The commendations highlight positive actions the school has taken over its last improvement cycle. Typically these actions are either complete, or embedded in school practice.

Affirmations

The affirmations verify specific actions being undertaken by the school that are impacting positively on school improvement. These actions are typically either not yet complete and/or not yet embedded.

Recommendations

The recommendations provide the school with evidence-based advice regarding high-value areas for future school improvement efforts. Drawn from the NSIT, recommendations are key to the school developing a sharp and narrow improvement plan.

Commendations

Mount Stromlo High School is commended for the following.

- A strong culture of belonging. Students unanimously said that “all staff cared for them”.
- Constructing an evidenced approach to school improvement called the Mount Stromlo Roadmap, and the leadership team’s high expectations of staff alignment to the Roadmap.
- The strong commitment by all staff to the success of every child. This is the underpinning value of the Roadmap.
- Providing a warm and welcoming culture for visitors and parents to the school. This was apparent to the school review team, in survey data and by comments by parents.
- A strong culture of collaboration and teamwork throughout the school.
- Developing a Responses to Intervention Framework, to ensure all students leave the school as successful students.
- Creating a collaborative culture where staff learning and improving is part of the fabric of the school.
- The systematic use of data at PLT meetings. Teachers work at understanding where students are at in their learning, including their knowledge level, and identifying any learning difficulties and misunderstandings in order to clarify starting points for teaching.
- All teachers taking responsibility for literacy learning.
- Teachers trying to make the learning visible through the use of learning intentions, rubrics and formative assessment strategies.

Affirmations

The Review Team offers the following affirmations for Mount Stromlo High School.

- Revitalising the cultural awareness program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with the aim of providing higher engagement and a way students can discover their cultural identity. A student said that “this program helps me understand my culture”.
- Developing a ‘Makerspace’ that has become very popular with students.
- The considerable work undertaken in developing essential learnings and program planning to narrow and focus the curriculum.
- Developing an extensive range of curriculum delivery models to structured differentiation. These include: team teaching, Learning Extension at Stromlo (LEX@S) classes, learning support classes, EAL/D classes, MacqLit intervention groups, the cultural awareness program, ‘Makerspace’, and other out-of-class support.
- Continuing to develop strategic partnerships to support teaching and learning.
- Teachers working towards embedding restorative practices in their classroom.
- Using the rewards system to reinforce school values.

Recommendations

The Review Team recommends Mount Stromlo High School pays attention to the following opportunities for school improvement during the next planning cycle.

- Collaboratively develop a Mount Stromlo High School Strategic Plan 2019-2023 that is consistent with school's vision for teaching and learning, and provides a narrow and sharp agenda focussed on student outcomes, by incorporating explicit targets for student achievement that are well communicated to the school community. The plan should clearly articulate the measures and strategies for improvement in a timeline that acknowledges capacity for change. Progress towards targets should be monitored, and initiatives and programs systematically evaluated for their effectiveness in producing the desired improvements in student learning and performance.
- Build upon the school's data plan to incorporate the full range of school academic and wellbeing data. Develop processes to broaden analysis of school data to identify starting points for improvement and to monitor progress over time. Develop consistent processes across the school for staff to engage with data to inform teaching and to measure growth in student and cohort achievement over time. Build leadership and staff data literacy skills.
- The school should continue to explore ways of making the general capabilities and cross curricular priorities explicit in the curriculum. In particular, seek ways to use the capabilities of critical and creative thinking, and ICT to further challenge students.
- Continue to explore ways that physical spaces and technology can be used to effectively maximise student learning.
- Continue to engage in professional dialogue on evidence-based pedagogical practices to support differentiation. Ensure that all students, including high achieving students are appropriately challenged, engaged and extended, by designing classroom activities to meet students' learning needs, interests, aspirations and motivations.
- Continue to promote a range of evidence-based teaching strategies. This includes providing regular and timely feedback that promotes clear actions to improve, creating classroom environments that provide flexibility for learners, questioning that promotes further inquiry or higher order thinking, providing opportunities for students to build their learning capacity, and routinely evaluating the effectiveness of teaching.