Black Mountain School Board Report2015

Berry Sport and Rec Camp

Students training in Six Degrees café

This report supports the work being done in the ACT Education Directorate, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 "Leading the Nation". It complies with reporting requirements detailed within the ACT Education ACT 2004 and the Australian Education Act 2013 and associated Regulations.

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School Board Chair Report

Overall 2015 was another very busy, successful year at Black Mountain School. The success of every school year is attributed to many people - staff, parents/carers, volunteers and of course our wonderful students - all of whom were involved directly and indirectly in the enormous amount of activity that comprised 2015.

This yearbook is filled with pages of updates, stories and photos that articulate the happenings of the year, below is a snapshot of some key activities for the year:

- The Term 1 welcome BBQ kicked off the year with a great opportunity for students, staff and families to get to know each other and experience the vibrant and inclusive culture of the school.

- Students within the COMPASS program attended a 3-day camp at Berry. The camp encouraged students to challenge themselves as well as learn the important aspects of teamwork.

- Our resident Chaplain of four years, Andrea de Vaal-Horciu was sad to leave us but excited to take up a new position at Malkara School. We have been very fortunate to have four years with the wonderful Andrea and wish her all the best. Pastor Ken Perrin will fill those big shoes with many years of experience and a list of credentials that is very impressive!

- A BMS year wouldn't be complete without our support of the ACT Miniature Fair and Dollhouse show. We once again provided the catering for the event and I would like to thank all the volunteers who contributed. This was another success with a substantial amount of money raised for the school.

- Room 22 completed its makeover and should be considered a rival to those on TV's 'The Block'. This room now boasts state of the art facilities including a ceiling hoist, and provides the necessary space to maximise opportunities for movement for our students.

- Ausdance ACT Youth Dance Festival is another perpetual event on the school calendar that our students really enjoy, not to mention the teachers! A huge effort is involved to bring this together and once again the BMS community put on a great performance that concluded with a standing ovation.

- Some of you may be familiar with the Six Degrees Café Garden Gallery project, which is starting to really gain some momentum as it progresses through the building stage. Six Degrees café will provide solutions for ongoing training and employment for young people with a disability and also showcases the talents and skills of students. We are all very excited, as the doors will open soon.

- These points wouldn't be complete without talking about the 60th year celebrations for the school. BMS was the first specialist school opened in the ACT and over those

years has undergone many improvements and transformations as needs have evolved and technology improved.

I would like to remind everyone how lucky we are to have such high caliber teachers and support staff employed at BMS. Every year I have been involved with the school leaves me with the same impression: amazement at the staff's professionalism and unwavering commitment to our children.

I'd also like to thank all those that have volunteered their time and energy to be involved with activities for the school and children. Thanks must also be given to the many sponsors that have provided their loyal support for many BMS projects and initiatives.

Finally, I would like to provide my personal thanks to the principal, Frank Fogliati, who inspires me each year with outstanding leadership and complete commitment to the staff and students. Also, thanks to the rest of the board and P&C members for their support and input to the school. I speak for my fellow board members when I say we are privileged to contribute in some small way to BMS.

Gavin Richardson

Introduction to School

Intro to school

Black Mountain School (BMS) fulfils an important role within the ACT public education system, providing students and their families with a unique and specialised placement. BMS is a secondary specialist school located in O'Connor. The school specifically caters for year 7 to year 12 students with learning needs, requiring a special education program and facilities. Throughout a student's placement at BMS the focus remains steadfastly on successful transition to post-school life. Over the past few years the school has been operating at capacity with 16 full-time classes in operation. Parent choice has a great deal to do with this. The school believes that the quality of its staff, programs, and facilities are key features that attract potential and future enrolments.

As a secondary school which graduates students directly into their post-school life, BMS is focussed on 'capacity-building for independence, maximum participation and quality of life'. The general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum provide the standards for this personalised academic and social learning which is both challenging and enriching. Educational priorities are established which assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. It is essential for young people with a disability to have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, to feel connected with and contribute to their world, and be confident and involved learners and effective communicators.

Consolidating social enterprise was a significant undertaking in 2015, spear-headed by Six Degrees, Café Gallery Garden. Establishing Canberra's newest social enterprise on-site at Black Mountain School has been a multifaceted process. On Thursday December 3, International Day of People with Disability, the café was opened by then Minister for Education Joy Burch MLA.

In 2015 there was continued growth of Compass as it entered its third year. Compass is a relatively new placement program that increases options for families with children with mild intellectual impairment and/or ASD (Autism Spectrum Diagnosis) living in northern Canberra. Our Compass program has stretched and expanded to successfully accommodate an ever-increasing minority cohort of highly disengaged students from other secondary settings. Based on feedback from parents, the wider community, and of course the students themselves, Compass has categorically demonstrated that it can rebuild futures for 'failing' students.

We undertook further steps in diversifying and evolving our workforce. To achieve this we looked into creating additional paraprofessional roles, recognising that sustaining dynamic change requires both an acknowledgement of 'local' factors and thinking outside the box. With the increasing uptake of responsibility for post-school transition by the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency), we phased out the inaugural transition coordinator position, established in 2014. In 2016, synchronising with this evolution in disability services, we will continue our role diversification through the establishment of full-time positions for two Community Recreation Coordinators. One will be a specialist in sport and recreation programs, the other an allied health professional (occupational therapist). Our school adheres to the philosophy of the 'right person for the right job at the right time', leading a shift in school staffing from a one-dimensional model to a responsive flexible model that focuses on student improvement. We humbly believe we have the most dynamic high-achieving workforce of any specialist education setting in the ACT, one that is committed to the school community, working collaboratively to improve student outcomes.

Being founded in 1955 as the first specialist setting in the nation's capital, this year saw Black Mountain School celebrate 60 years. By Canberra's relatively youthful standards that practically makes us an historic landmark. We hosted a range of community events, including an open week, successfully reuniting the many generations of students, staff, and families.

Student enrolment

In 2015 there were a total of 99 students enrolled at this school.

Table: 2015 Student Enrolment Breakdown

Group	Number of Students
Male	64
Female	35
Indigenous	2
LBOTE	15

Source: Planning and Performance, December 2015

Students are enrolled from across the ACT and surrounding NSW.

Student attendance

The following table identifies the attendance rate of students by year level during 2015. Student attendance rate is the percentage of school days attended by students in each year

level at the school. Student attendance is measured over two school terms; that is from the first day of the school year for students in term one to the last day of term two.

Table: 2015 Attendance rates in Percentages

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
7	90.0
8	87.0
9	89.0
10	89.0
11	86.0
12	92.0

Source: Planning and Performance, December 2015

The school experiences very high levels of student engagement in their learning. Non-attendance issues are with few exceptions, a result of illness, both chronic and acute. The school manages student non-attendance through regular contact with parents and a unified approach to pastoral care and health. This occurs formally at the Personal Future Planning Process (PFPP) and In-school Review (ISR) meetings and informally, via phone calls and communication books. A designated school-based pastoral care team, as well as staff from ACT Health, is always available to discuss non-attendance issues.

Staff Information

Teacher qualifications

All teachers meet the professional requirements for teaching in an ACT public school. The ACT Teacher Quality Institute has provided the following data based on teachers registered as at 18 December 2015.

The proportion of teaching staff with certificates/degrees/diplomas and a postgraduate qualification is shown below.

Table: 2015 Qualification of Teaching Staff in Percentages

Qualifications	% Teaching Staff
Certificate/Diploma/Degree	100
Postgraduate	47

Source: Teacher Quality Institute, Date 18 December 2015

Note: Qualifications for teachers who were registered under TQI Transitional arrangements in 2011 are self-reported.

2015 saw a significant increase in the number of teaching staff reporting postgraduate qualifications. This was due to two reasons: several staff completing further study, and new staff commencing their placement at BMS arriving with a postgraduate qualification.

Workforce Composition

In 2015 the workforce composition of the school is highlighted in the following table. The data is taken from the school's verified August staffing report. For reporting purposes It includes all school staff including preschools, staff absent for a period of less than four consecutive weeks and staff replacing staff absent for more than four consecutive weeks. It does not include casuals and staff absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or longer.

Table: 2015 Workforce Composition Numbers

Staff Employment Category	Total
Teaching Staff :Head Count	32
Teaching Staff :Full time Equivalent Permanent	23.3
Teaching Staff :Full time Equivalent Temporary	6
Non Teaching Staff (Head Count)	36
Non Teaching Staff :Full time Equivalent	28.5

Source: Workforce Management, August census 2015

Note: This table includes pre-school staffing

There is one indigenous staff at this school.
Note: * Indigenous staff are reported where the staff member has self identified.

The workforce composition of Black Mountain School is split approximately 50/50 between teaching and non-teaching staff. This reflects the level and frequency of complex needs of the student cohort. Many students require daily therapeutic, health, and medical intervention, as well as significant assistance for personal hygiene, nutrition, and challenging behaviour.

Additionally, as the school is a year 7-12 setting, graduating students directly into their post-school lives, there is a workforce component dedicated to transition, community recreation, allied health, and vocational training. In 2015 there were staff at BMS not listed in the table above as they were not employees of the Education Directorate. This included 4 ASBAs (Australian School Based Apprenticeships)and 4 trainees.

Volunteers

The estimated number of hours in which volunteers have worked in the school during 2015 was 770. Volunteers contributed in a variety of ways including constructing and/or modifying therapeutic and mobility equipment, providing design and infrastructure support for our social enterprise, development of a business plan, and several promotional key events.

School Review and Development

In 2015, the ACT Education Directorate's *Strategic Plan 2015-2017* provided the framework and strategic direction for the school's plan. This is supported by the *School Improvement in ACT Public Schools Directions 2010-2015* and the *School Improvement Framework* which are the overarching documents providing support to achieve high standards in student learning, innovation and best practice in ACT public schools.

All ACT public schools participate in a four year cycle of school review and development. Schools take part in a continuous cycle of review comprising annual self assessments against their school plans. In the fourth year schools undergo an external validation process. This process provides an independent and unbiased assessment of the school's progress towards achieving system and school priorities.

Black Mountain School was validated in 2015. A copy of the validation report can be found on the school website.

School Satisfaction

Schools continually use a range of data collection tools to gain an understanding of the satisfaction levels of their parents and carers, staff and students. In August/September 2015 the school undertook a survey to gain an understanding of school satisfaction at that time. Staff, parents and students from year 5, and above, with the exception of students in special schools, took part in an online survey.

Overall Satisfaction

In 2015, 100% of parents and carers, 96% of staff, and 0% of students at this school indicated they were satisfied with the education provided by the school.

As well in 2015, 14 national parent survey items and 12 national student survey items were included in the surveys. These items were approved by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for use from 2015. The following tables show the percentage of parents and carers and students who agreed with each of the national items at this school.

The results for the 49 number of staff who took part in the survey are tabled below.

Table: Proportion of staff in agreement with each national opinion item

Item	(%)
Teachers at this school expect students to do their best.	100
Teachers at this school provide students with useful feedback about their school work.	92
Teachers at this school treat students fairly.	100
This school is well maintained.	84

Item (cont)	(%)
Students feel safe at this school.	94
Students at this school can talk to their teachers about their concerns.	96
Parents at this school can talk to teachers about their concerns.	98
Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	84
Students like being at this school.	94
This school looks for ways to improve.	92
This school takes staff opinions seriously.	69
Teachers at this school motivate students to learn.	98
Students' learning needs are being met at this school.	92
This school works with parents to support students' learning.	86
I receive useful feedback about my work at this school.	71
Staff are well supported at this school.	78

Source: 2015 School Satisfaction Surveys, August/September 2015

The results for the 32 number of parents who took part in the survey are tabled below.

Table: Proportion of parents and carers in agreement with each national opinion item

Item	(%)
Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best.	97
Teachers at this school provide my child with useful feedback about his or her school work.	100
Teachers at this school treat students fairly.	97
This school is well maintained.	84
My child feels safe at this school.	93
I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns.	100
Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	91
My child likes being at this school.	100
This school looks for ways to improve.	94
This school takes parents' opinions seriously.	94
Teachers at this school motivate my child to learn.	100
My child is making good progress at this school.	94
My child's learning needs are being met at this school.	100
This school works with me to support my child's learning.	100

Source: 2015 School Satisfaction Surveys, August/September 2015

This information can be considered alongside information available on the *My School* website (http://www.myschool.edu.au).

In preparation for school review in 2016, the executive team undertook a preliminary audit using the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) to prioritise action. The table below

NSIT number	Title	Code
1	An explicit improvement agenda	Improvements gained
2	Analysis and discussion of data	**Prioritised area for improvement**
3	A culture that promotes learning	Strength
4	Targeted use of school resources	Strength
5	An expert teaching team	Improvements gained
6	Systematic curriculum delivery	**Prioritised area for improvement**
7	Differentiated teaching and learning	Strength
8	Effective pedagogical practices	Strength
9	School-community partnerships	Strength

These results as well as the continual review of school performance contributed to the evaluation of our school plan and the development of annual operating plans. The school plan is available on the school website.

Learning and Assessment
NAPLAN Assessment

Students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in all ACT schools participated in the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This program assesses skills in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation and numeracy.

In 2015, 100% of year 7 students and 100 % of year 9 students were exempt from testing based on nationally agreed criteria.

Performance in other areas of the curriculum

Within the guidelines of the school's curriculum, and specifically addressing the areas of academic learning, social skills, independent living skills, and leisure and recreation options, the school seeks to maximise the successful transition to post-school life for every student. Additionally many of our students are engaged in authentic work education programs both on-site and out in the community, targeting genuine long-term employment opportunities.

As a secondary school which graduates students directly into their post-school life, BMS is focussed on 'capacity-building for independence, maximum participation and quality of life'.

As part of its drive for continual school improvement, BMS is focussed on building effective community, corporate, and academic partnerships. One example of this is the development of 'social capital' focussing on social relations that have productive benefits and the value of social networks, bonding similar people and bridging between diverse people. For example

the school contributes to the productivity of the territory through our long-standing weekly horticulture crew at the Yarralumla Nursery, and annually renewed employment pathways into organisations such as Greening Australia. BMS believes this provides tangible and public evidence of the importance of schools and community in partnership. Most significant in 2015 was the establishment of Six Degrees, the first social enterprise in Canberra wholly on school grounds. Six Degrees is a wonderful showcase of the seven general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. These general capabilities play a significant role in equipping young Australians to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. They encompasses knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions. Students of Black Mountain School can develop capability within Six Degrees, a training and certification facility where they apply knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in complex and changing circumstances, in their learning at school and in their lives outside school.

The Black Mountain School curriculum aims to build student capacity for participation in society with independence and quality of life. Students need an ongoing, highly prioritised and coordinated program to deliver the goals to be achieved by graduation as set by parents/carers and staff during the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process. These goals are envisioned in the student's Personal Futures Action Plan (PFAP) which is developed with parents/carers on enrolment and modified as required at successive annual ILP meetings.

Within the overarching framework of the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum, BMS integrates all the school's processes from the creation of the PFAP to the development of each student's personalised curriculum. The PFAP provides the rationale for selecting 'capacities' from the BMS curriculum as the basis of long-term and short-term ILP goals.

The framework for the PFAP includes the domains: Vocational Training; Community, Leisure and Recreation Options; Residential; Transport and Mobility; Finance; and Advocacy, Legal and Citizenship.

Our curriculum also incorporates programs such as week-long interstate camps, appropriate vocational placements, two-way peer support with local high schools and colleges, and engagement in sporting clinics.

Progress against School Priorities in 2015

Context:

In 2012, the External Validation panel commended Black Mountain School (BMS) on our Professional Learning Community (PLC) journey driving improvements in pedagogy, and therefore student outcomes.

2015's Annual Action Plan focused on two priorities, as outlined below. A major focus for the school was to continue to build collaboration between staff, improving communication and building capacity of staff. Our Executive Teacher Professional Practice (ETPP) led the

school on a journey towards further understanding and embedding best pedagogical practices. A whole school system (COMP – Coaching, Observations, Mentoring, and Programming and Performance) captured all of the processes throughout the school into one document, supporting the practices of all.

Throughout this journey, the ongoing implementation of Healthcare Access At School (HAAS) continued to raise uncertainty for staff as they were faced with new challenges; and the Executive team liaised between school staff, the parent community, the Education Directorate, ACT Health, and the ACT Union, to ensure students' health and wellbeing and education outcomes remained the priority. The Pastoral Care team and teachers at the school met the challenge of supporting families as they transitioned their young people into the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Priority 1

Black Mountain School (BMS) strives to create an optimal educational pathway for each student from arrival to graduation. From the first point in their transition, students pursue capacity-building goals designed to maximise their communication, independence, engagement, and quality of life. Each transition point (entry, year-to-year, graduation) will be a rich opportunity to collaborate with parents, carers, feeder schools, and community organisations; and to record and share key information to enhance student learning outcomes and wellbeing. The new addition of a Transition Coordinator to our Pastoral Care team will strengthen these partnerships and support successful transitions. School wide approaches to Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) will equip students with the skills to express themselves, make choices, and have independence in their everyday lives.

Priority 2

A professional learning community (PLC) is built on collaboratively developed and widely shared missions, visions, values, and goals; collaborative teams working to achieve common goals, and a focus on results as evidenced by a commitment to continuous improvement. The key improvement strategies in 2015 focused on building opportunities for collaborative practices; building opportunities for continuous improvement through effective feedback, and embedding shared visions and goals through enhancing student wellbeing and positive school culture, and building the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

Methodology:

A number of data and information sources were utilised, and a variety of Black Mountain School (BMS) community consulted, to gather information for the following report. This includes:

- ACT Satisfaction Surveys – Parent and Carer, and Staff

- BMS Modules within the Satisfaction Surveys – Parent and Carer, and Staff
- School-based surveys
- BMS Individual Learning Plan (ILP) goal achievement
- Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool (ASCSIMT)
- National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)
- Feedback during staff and teacher meetings; targeted school improvement meetings; professional learning; and School Board meetings.

Due to the challenges presented by a specialist school obtaining measurable data, many targets were written against questions within the yearly Satisfaction Survey. Whilst rarely used in isolation, they did provide the required numerical target. Unfortunately, a number of challenges have presented themselves when analysing this year's data. Firstly, some of the questions were removed or reworded from the survey. Broad comparisons can be made from similarly worded questions, but not direct comparisons. Secondly, the question type in many of the BMS Module questions, or the format of the question was changed. For example, in previous years, a five-point Likert scale was used. Unfortunately in 2015, many questions were changed to 'opt in' where parents/carers or staff could choose all applicable responses, changed to either a closed yes/no question with options for 'other', or changed to an 'opt in' type where you could select all options that apply. When analysing results, in the Likert scale, answers of 'Agree' (4) or 'Strongly Agree' (5) were used to calculate the statistic. This year, only the responses indicating they have selected 'yes' or marked the required statement were included. This presented the most challenges in the transition statements in the Parent/Carer survey that relate to Priority 1.

Where possible, these digressions will be rectified in the 2016 Satisfaction Survey.

In some instances, survey questions within the Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool (ASCSIMT) have provided evidence to support the anecdotal evidence of culture change within the school. It is also supported by initial analysis of NSIT, conducted by the Executive team.

Evaluation of Performance:
Strategic Priority 1: Supporting successful transitions for all students.

Transitions for students at Black Mountain School (BMS) are critical points in time throughout the learning journeys of our students with a disability. Key transition points include students' arrival at BMS from the feeder school; year to year throughout their schooling at BMS; and transitioning from BMS into post-school. It is vital to the ongoing learning of the students that there are clear systems in place to share student information effectively and efficiently; that all key stakeholders are involved in decision making processes; and each transition best meets the needs of the students. Three key improvement strategies focussed on: 1) the transition processes from feeder schools to BMS; 2) improving practices within BMS to enhance transitions year to year; and 3)

strengthening transition supports to improve engagement post school. The last key improvement strategy looked at: 4) establishing systematic practices throughout BMS that empower students to communicate using Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC), thus improving self-determination in their own lives and transitions.

In 2014, the BMS entry criteria for students broadened to include students with a mild intellectual impairment; this saw the beginning of our 'Compass' classes, and an extension of our curriculum. The number of ACT feeder schools transitioning students to BMS increased (from four schools in 2012 and 2013, to seven schools in 2014, and eleven ACT schools in 2015). It is important to have clear, yet flexible, transition processes to gather and record information about new students prior to their transition into BMS, and effective processes to share this information with BMS staff.

The first key improvement strategy focused on gathering and sharing new student information for new students entering BMS. In 2015, Transition Guidelines were formalised, outlining the process of essential steps for engaging with feeder schools for new student transitions. This approach remains flexible enough to collaborate with each feeder school and accommodate a wide range of differing student and school needs; key to a successful transition process. It was noted that a small number of schools completed a Transition Action Plan (TAP) using directorate guidelines for their students prior to engagement with BMS staff, but were then willing to adjust the TAP to meet the needs of both schools. Whilst the target was not met as not all students had a formalised, documented TAP, negotiation took place between stakeholders to ensure an agreed upon transition plan was arranged for all. Some of the difficulties that arose between key stakeholders whilst negotiating the TAP for students include: transport of students for transition visits; provision of support for the student during visits; and processes around longer transitions. It is recommended that agreed processes in these areas are developed in 2016. Initial BMS communication with new families could also be strengthened in 2016.

Revision of the processes for sharing new student information with BMS staff took place in 2015, with a survey taken to gather feedback about satisfaction with the changes. In both 2014 and 2015, the Executive team brought forward the timeline of draft classes to allow greater planning for staff for the coming year. Steps in the Transition Guidelines incorporate the sharing of information with BMS staff, as well as a refined template for new student observation visits. This document allows verbal information to be consolidated from the feeder school into 'BMS speak', with information recorded in a manner that has immediate transferability into BMS documents. All new student information is shared in an accessible folder on G Drive, during staff meetings, and during individual meetings between the Transition Coordinator and class teachers. Whilst 100 percent of teachers indicated they were satisfied with the processes put in place by BMS to share information (compared to 80 percent when reflecting upon practices in 2014), the available information varied between students and only 25 percent of teachers felt they received adequate information. This

continues to be negotiated between schools, and the BMS observation template aims to assist with. This target was met, however due to a small sample size in this survey, statistics are not robust. A more robust survey and sample size will be an area for improvement in 2016. On the BMS module of the Parent Satisfaction survey, 50 percent of the new families 'opted in' to indicate they felt their child had a successful transition to BMS. Due to the change in question type (from Likert scale to multiple 'opt in' answers) it is challenging to make comparisons between 2014 and 2015. In 2014, 50 percent of parents 'strongly agreed' their child had a successful transition, and 100 percent either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'.

The second key improvement strategy, transitions for students continuing year to year at BMS are an area that is entirely within reach to improve. In 2014, a comprehensive system: Coaching and Communication; Observations; Mentoring; and Programming & Performance (COMP), was developed to assist staff to meet their professional responsibilities through clear expectations and guidelines, and collaboration within a Professional Learning Community. In 2015, this system was integrated throughout day-to-day staff routines. The Programming and Performance aspect was implemented, allowing all staff to have clear expectations and timelines for all required student documentation throughout the year (such as Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), programming and data collection documents, and reports). Action plans were in place to offer support to staff not meeting their requirements. Content and style guides offer clear expectations for the standard of completion. Intensive and ongoing professional learning and coaching builds capacity of teachers, supporting their understanding of the documents. Completion of this documentation and most importantly, sharing of the documents onto the shared G drive, allows teachers to continue progressing students' learning outcomes in the following year. Whilst most key student documents (ILPs, PFAPS, student plans, and reports) are routinely shared between teachers, data collection will continue to be a focus for 2016. The use of the TAP document and the accompanying list of required student documentation to assist with year-to-year transitions are superseded by the comprehensiveness of COMP. Inclusion of the following statement "I regularly use data collection to inform my planning, programming, & reporting" within the BMS module of the Satisfaction Survey indicates there has been improvement in the uptake and use of these documents. Whilst not entirely comparable due to changes in survey question types, in 2014 only 55 percent of teachers indicated they did this 'very often' or 'always' (Likert scale 1-5); whilst in 2015, 89.2 percent of teachers indicated 'yes' they did this (closed choice 'yes' or 'no'). The target to increase the proportion of teachers who are well prepared for year to year transitions of continuing students was exceeded, with 100 percent of teachers who felt they were well prepared in 2015, compared with the reflection of 66 percent teachers in 2014. The target of increasing teacher satisfaction with the systems in place to support effective recording and sharing of student information was met, as 100 percent of teachers were satisfied with these processes, maintaining the score from reflection from 2014.

The shift from school-based nurses to Healthcare Access at Schools (HAAS) has driven BMS to refine processes for recording and sharing students' health-related information. Unless a nominated HAAS student, as determined by an ACT Health assessment, BMS is responsible for all other healthcare needs of students. Actions throughout the year include: a School Health Information Package sent to all families to gather student information; modifications to documents such as the Personal Future Action Plan (PFAP) to include health information; a comprehensive system created and embedded to record and share important health information, distinguishing between levels of complexity; training of staff throughout the school in specific processes (including First Aid; giving medication, and asthma training); training of staff in specific HAAS procedures (including PEG feeds; epilepsy training, and diabetes training). Outcomes from these actions include: consistency in recording and sharing medical information; continual student attendance at school; clearer communication surrounding medical needs of students; and a focus on staff wellbeing. The recording and sharing of health-related information is only one aspect of the work required in this area; it will be continued in 2016. There has been continual liaison between BMS staff, the Education Directorate, Health ACT, and the Union, to reach an agreed upon HAAS model. The leadership team has worked tirelessly to advocate and represent all members of the BMS community, and to maintain a cohesive school culture. Ongoing changes to the HAAS model of implementation continued to challenge staff in their ability to stay focussed on the educational program of the students, and to retain transparent and effective communication amongst all levels of staff. This is covered further in Priority 2, in aspects of establishing a Professional Learning Community.

The third key improvement strategy aimed to strengthen transition supports to increase post-school engagement. The actions focused on improving information transfer from BMS into post-school agencies working directly with our graduating students; expanding the role of the Transition Coordinator to help meet the needs of the school and the community; and creating a long-term sustainable social enterprise (Six Degrees Café Garden Gallery) as an on-site training facility and business. The use of the TAP template for post-school transitions was not an effective strategy. Instead an individualised collaborative approach was taken for each student, focusing on sharing of information between key stakeholders through rich discussions; supported transition visits; and student observations. 100 percent of all graduating students received a digital portfolio, outlining their strengths and strategies that help them achieve their best. The Personal Future Action Plan (PFAP) is designed to assist families outline the post-school visions for their young people. Our aim is for this document to become more aligned with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) terminology, making it more purposeful for families. Whilst some minor revisions were made, a full review is postponed until the NDIA standardises processes and documentation. During semester one, the roles of the Transition Coordinator focussed on increasing parent understanding of the NDIA and the post-school world, and strengthening partnerships between parents and post-school organisations in preparation for graduation.

Unfortunately, the position was not sustained into semester two due to unforeseen personal circumstances. Due to changes in NDIS funding, the role of Transition Coordinator became limited and was not reinstated. Teachers of graduating students liaised more closely with families and post-school providers to facilitate transitions. A new class model was created for 2016, with the majority of graduating students placed within one class, allowing for a focus on post-school options; it will be supported by the Pastoral Care Coordinator. The Pastoral Care team continued to evolve the work of the Transition Coordinator in the area of the completion of construction for Six Degrees, Café Garden Gallery, culminating with the Stage One opening on National Day for People with a Disability, with Minister Burch in attendance. The opening was highly successful, and 2016 plans were evolved, including the creation of a new role to facilitate training students in hospitality skills within the café. In 2015, 50 percent of parents and carers of graduating students were satisfied with the level of support they received from the school. The target of increasing this proportion to 60 percent was not met, but was maintained at the same level as in 2014. Again, changes to the question type in the parent module make it challenging to make direct comparison. 100 percent of teachers were satisfied with the processes implemented by the transition team to support the transition of students into post-school, meeting this target. Many of the key actions described here are also relevant in Priority 2, key improvement strategies 3 and 4, in relation to developing student well-being and a positive school culture.

The fourth key improvement strategy examines systematic practices throughout BMS to improve students' use of AACs. The successful application for an 'Engaging Schools Action Inquiry Project' in 2014 allowed BMS to undertake a highly successful action research project examining an integrated therapy team at BMS. This allowed a speech pathologist to review and improve pedagogy. Therapists worked collaboratively with BMS staff to build capacity and consistency in their approach to AAC (amongst other outcomes). Professional learning was also delivered to all staff. All staff strongly supported the presence and impact of the integrated therapy team at BMS. The core vocabulary continues to be used throughout the school as a key tool for modelling AAC use (stage 1). Stage 2 saw fringe vocabulary added to Proloquo2Go on all school iPads, allowing for increased vocabulary for students. Multiple teaching resources and instruction guides have been created based on the core vocabulary (such as interactive games, powerpoints, and activities), resulting in increased use within classrooms. Communication support programs (chat groups) utilising Merici College students to engage BMS students in AAC 'chat' were reviewed and strengthened by restructuring the program and delivering formal and informal ongoing training. Feedback from these students indicated the students had gained confidence and a greater understanding around communication from the ongoing chat groups. Our key AAC teacher, alongside individual class teachers, collaborated with families to deliver information about AACs and specific strategies to a number of parents and carers. 77 percent of BMS families indicated they know how to use strategies used by staff with their children to help develop communication skills (BMS Module, Parent Satisfaction Survey,

2015). 63 percent of all AAC-focused ILP goals were achieved in 2015. This did not meet the expected target of seventy-four percent. When looking at the achievement of all ILP goals, as to be discussed in Priority 2, this target also was not met. This indicates the decreased achievement rates may be more global rather than specific to goals with an AAC focus. Possible causes are discussed further in Priority 2.

Strategic Priority 2: Improve capacity of all staff by establishing a professional learning community.

A professional learning community (PLC) is built on collaboratively developed and widely shared missions, visions, values, and goals; collaborative teams working to achieve common goals, and a focus on results as evidenced by a commitment to continuous improvement. The key improvement strategies in 2015 focused on building opportunities for collaborative practices; building opportunities for continuous improvement through effective feedback; embedding shared visions and goals through enhancing student wellbeing and positive school culture; and building the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

The first key improvement strategy strengthened school systems and processes and built opportunities for collaborative practices. All of the Professional Learning Community indicators developed in 2014 were embedded within the comprehensive COMP package. This includes opportunities for collaboration on all levels of the school from whole school to leadership to class teams. Regular times are allocated to allow for whole staff meetings, teacher meetings and Professional Practice seminars; professional learning team meetings, class meetings, and individual coaching. There are clear roles and responsibilities for all members of each team. COMP creates individual alignment with the school's broader vision and values and accountability for engagement in professional learning and improvement, whilst supporting staff through the journey.

The Coaching aspect of COMP was embedded throughout the school. Each permanent or long-term contract teacher was regularly engaged in coaching with an executive teacher (weekly or fortnightly). Coaching contracts between teacher and coach were collaboratively compiled using an AITSL tool; the COMP timeline for tasks was shared; and action plans enabled as necessary to support teachers to complete their professional requirements. Content of fortnightly Professional Practice Seminars (PPS) led by the Executive Teacher Professional Practice (ETPP) corresponded to the COMP timeline of required documentation and tasks. Informal feedback indicates strong appreciation for this transparency and support. A survey about COMP analysing staff use, usefulness, and ideas for improvement led a taskforce review of content and timelines in readiness for an ongoing commitment to coaching in 2016. Many collaborative systems assisted to support LSAs to meet their whole school PDP goal (to improve capacity in systematic instruction). These included: upskilling teachers at PPS prior to coaching LSAs in class meetings; designated time for class team meetings; and attendance at class team meetings by executive staff. Formal mentoring processes between experienced educators and LSAs and new educators were created and implemented by the ETPP, resulting in 100 percent of new educators and LSAs engaged in

mentoring. These responsibilities are also included in COMP, with formal contracts agreed upon, and meetings established. All of the above strategies assisted to build collaborative practices between all staff.

At the beginning of 2015, three team teach classes were established in different Professional Learning Teams, with teachers and LSAs working collaboratively to teach a larger cohort of students. These models were continually reviewed throughout the year for their effectiveness, with key points identified and collated that led to the success or demise of the classes. In readiness for 2016, and based on this review, a modified model of the team teach class was developed. The model pairs teachers and classes together with shared LSAs. Teachers must collaborate to develop equitable roles, responsibilities, and timetables for the LSAs. The model is flexible to allow teachers who seek more collaboration with their peer to team teach and build flexible classes throughout the week dependent upon students' needs and abilities within the two classes. However, it also allows for classes to remain as distinct classes with the LSAs working across the two rooms. The team teach model builds capacity of LSAs to work in a variety of classes, and provides opportunity for collaboration. Teachers will also be allocated planning time off class together, an element found to be key for a successful team teach class.

The actions listed above all helped to build opportunities for collaborative practices. Throughout this collaboration, effective and constructive feedback was also given to all members of staff through both formal and informal pathways (key improvement strategy 2). Our ETPP formalised lesson observation and feedback processes. With mentoring from the ETPP, peer observations established clarity between the BMS pedagogical toolbox and the AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers 3, 4, and 5. Pre- and post-lesson discussions were held between a teacher, their peers, and the ETPP, with a focus on teaching strategies, ILP goals, and data collection. Feedback found the peer observations with the pre- and post-discussions to be highly valued by teachers as a means to improve quality teaching practices. This model will be reviewed and continued in 2016. The AITSL self-reflection tool was not trialled in 2015, but will be incorporated in 2016.

The journey towards a professional learning community was continued in key improvement strategy 3 by implementing whole school approaches to student wellbeing and positive school culture. The pastoral care team continued to evolve to meet the needs of the school, strengthening community partnerships within the school and external from the school, and processes were developed to re-engage disengaged students.

As mentioned in Priority 1, the pastoral care team continued to develop and implement a clear model based on the needs of the school. The Youth Support Worker ran a number of groups including Student Representative Council, drama group, singing group, and two young men's groups. The number of students engaged in pastoral care groups also increased. Programs within mainstream schools (Campbell High School; Radford College; and Merici College) continued to be strengthened and new connections were forged with

Science Alliance at CSIRO, Belconnen High School, and Work Experience (WEX) in a range of community settings. It was identified that an individualised approach is required when engaging students in WEX or programs within other schools. New positions within the school are being scoped for 2016 to assist with further engaging students in building their skills for post school. Targeted chat groups with students from Merici and Radford Colleges, utilising mainstream peers as communication partners, continued to be strengthened and communication partners were placed in 15 out of 16 classes throughout the school. Whole school events such as Radford theme days and a school walk-a-thon at the AIS ensured students social, physical, and communication needs continued to be met in a variety of ways. The majority of students throughout the school were involved in at least one pastoral care program or event throughout the year. A very small number of students were unable to partake in events or programs due to their unique health needs or complex behaviours.

A study tour was undertaken in Western Australia to look at schools with best practice in positive behaviour support (PBS); this information was shared with teachers throughout BMS, and PBS practices at BMS analysed for strengths and areas for improvements. 100 percent of identified students had PBS plans. BMS staff worked closely with the Education Directorate NSET team for a number of identified students needing additional support. A clear process for re-engaging disengaged students was also successfully trialled, with all three students not attending returning to school; and all identified students attending school but at risk of disengagement, re-engaged in their learning, utilising the afore-mentioned programs.

The final key improvement strategy strengthened and broadened the BMS curriculum to meet the needs of students with a mild intellectual impairment through to those students with a severe intellectual impairment. The curriculum for Compass program for students with a mild intellectual impairment was further developed; integrated units of work incorporating Literacy, Numeracy, and Personal and Social Capability from the Australian Curriculum were scoped and trialled within the classes. The learning profiles of each student are quite unique with splinter skills and areas for development in each area of learning. The units are designed to capture and maximise the individual strengths for each student, whilst continuing to develop the areas in need. The class structure was refined, moving from a combined team teach model to three distinct classes with integration at scheduled times. The Executive Teacher Professional Practice (ETPP) network was utilised, with our ETPP conducting study tours at some of the other specialist schools, gathering literacy and numeracy resources. The learnings from 2015 will be utilised in 2016 to further develop the Compass curriculum and program, including assessment and reporting. Professional practice seminars (PPS) were delivered to all teachers by our ETPP to improve quality teaching for students with intellectual impairment. Content of these seminars focused on the processes involved in writing and teaching clear Individual Learning Plan (ILP) goals that link directly to identified post-school goals. All practices are research based and identified as best practice in the field of intellectual impairment. The PPS have continued to refine ILP

goals, making the outlined Behaviour, Conditions, and Criteria more explicit and focused on the end point of learning. Thus, it is the skill or behaviour the student will be able to demonstrate independently, without relying on prompting from another person. Due to the greater length of time required for individuals with intellectual impairment to acquire skills, the refinement of ILP goals has led to an improvement in calibre of the written goals, but resulted in less goals achieved within a one year time frame.

The actions within this priority aimed to improve the professional capacity of staff, thereby improving student outcomes. By continuing to establish a professional learning community with collaboration and clear, constructive communication at the forefront, it was expected that not only best practice quality teaching would improve, but so would the social capacity throughout the school. Whilst anecdotal evidence and the Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool (ASCSIMT) results support this, survey results from the 2015 Satisfaction Survey do not reflect this. Changes to the 2015 Satisfaction Survey and BMS Module resulted in the target questions either not being included, the wording changed in the question or response options, or the question type changed, making it difficult to compare results.

In the first target, at the time of the Satisfaction Survey, 57 percent of staff agreed or strongly agreed there was effective communication amongst all staff. Thus the target to move from 79 percent in 2014 to 84 percent in 2015 was not met. It can be seen that between 2014 and 2015, there was a downwards shift across all specialist schools in whole school communication. It is possible that within the BMS context, due to ongoing discord, HAAS affected whole school communication. This could be supported by statistics gained from the BMS module where the communication is broken down from 'whole school level' to Professional Learning Team to classroom (options being 'yes', 'no', 'I'm not sure', and 'other'. 65 percent of staff indicated 'yes' there is good communication at a whole school level (2014: 40 percent 'Strongly Agree' (SA) and 80 percent 'Agree' (A) or 'Strongly Agree'), 80 percent 'yes' within my PLT (2014: 40 percent 'SA'; 83 percent 'A' or 'SA'), and 78 percent within my class team (2014: 45 percent 'SA'; 74 percent 'A' or 'SA'). Adoption of COMP, ongoing focus on class teams, and all other strategies implemented throughout the school to build a PLC, appear to have improved the communication, with an increase seen at the class team level.

The second target of staff feeling appreciated for the work they do was not included in the Satisfaction Survey this year; and the third target relating to individuals feeling their opinion is valued by colleagues was changed to "This school takes staff opinions seriously", shifted the results from 98 percent in 2014 to 69 percent. The fourth target that 100 percent of permanent and full-time contract teachers are engaged in coaching was reached. The fifth target about staff receiving constructive feedback about their work was changed in the Satisfaction Survey this year to "I receive useful feedback about my work at this school". This shifted results from 86 percent in 2014 to 72 percent in 2015. The AITSL self-reflection

tool was not trialled however was embedded into the lesson observation discussions undertaken by the ETPP and teachers, reflecting upon their own practices.

The dedicated support from the ETPP throughout the school and Executive teachers coaching teachers, resulted in 78.6 percent of teachers' confidence at implementing best practice pedagogy increasing 'a lot' or 'above expectations' on a 5 point scale, with an average score of 4 out of 5 indicating their confidence in this area had improved throughout the year. When looking at the professional learning implemented throughout the year by the ETPP, teachers felt the professional practice seminars and the lesson observations were informative (100% and 92% respectively scoring greater than six on a ten point scale), and they had a positive impact upon teachers' practices (91.7%, and 92.3% scoring greater than six on a ten point scale).

In spite of the increase in professional learning and collaboration, the target to increase students' ILP goal achievements was not met. In 2014, 70 percent of goals were achieved, whilst in 2015, the achievement rate dropped to 63 percent. As mentioned earlier, this may have to do with a whole school change in how the goals were written, effectively increasing the standards required for students to meet their goals independently.

Both targets surrounding the pastoral care and wellbeing of students were met. 100 percent of identified students had positive behaviour support plans implemented; and the number of students engaged in pastoral care programs exceeded the goal with 89 percent of student engaged in programs, rather than the 50 percent expected.

Despite targets being unable to be met due to changes in Satisfaction Survey responses, results from the ASCSIMT show overall school wide improvements in a number of areas. In a seven point scale, both statements, "Staff get quality feedback on their performance" and "Staff get recognised for good work", 71 percent of staff in scored a 5 or above in agreement with the statement; only 12 percent (or 6 staff) scored a 3 or less in disagreement. An improvement in Staff Relations, with a 9.4 percent upwards shift in staff who rated staff relations as excellent from 2014 (58%) to 2015 (67%), and 95.9 percent of staff view relations as excellent or adequate. This indicates a high level of respect, understanding, support, and acceptance throughout staff. There was also a 9.4 percent shift upwards from 2014 (64%) to 2015 (74%) in staff rating Shared Values and Approach as excellent, and 98 percent of staff who view this area as excellent or adequate. This shows a strong understanding of the school's vision and mission, with a sense of pride and commitment to work together towards the same goals. Compared to 2014 (90%), 2.1 percent more staff rated School Identification as excellent in 2015 (92%), and 100 percent of staff view this area as adequate or excellent. This area exemplifies the sense of belonging and identification with the school. Compared to 2014 (54%), 15.6 percent more staff rated Professional Development (PD) as excellent in 2015 (69%), and 100 percent report adequate or excellent levels of PD opportunities, recognising the changes made towards focusing on staff development. Thus, the strategies implemented throughout the year to build the

culture of the whole school and build staff capacity can be viewed as having a positive impact throughout the school. Despite the downwards shift in whole school communication seen in the Satisfaction Survey, compared to 2014 (62%), 9.9 percent more staff rated Leadership as excellent in 2015 (71%), indicating that staff perceive the leadership group and the whole school strategies implemented are effective and supportive of staff.

The school continues to gain the support of the parent and carer community in all areas of the school, as indicated in the ASCSIMT results. In the areas of Shared Values and Approach, Academic Emphasis, Relations, School and Family Connections, and Parent Involvement: At School, 100 percent of parents and carers reported adequate or excellent levels and all responses were equal to or greater than the ACT average.

Initial analysis of the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) by the Executive team identified areas of strength and areas for improvement. The areas identified as strengths supports the priorities of the school, focusing on people and partnerships (building a professional learning community): school-community partnerships, a culture that promotes learning, and targeted use of school resources; and on practice (improving student outcomes): differentiated teaching and learning, and effective pedagogical practices. Areas for improvement have been identified in the areas of practice: systematic curriculum delivery; and performance: analysis and discussion of data. Once further analysis of NSIT has taken place amongst a broader community, the identified areas for improvement will be a focus for 2016 and into the new school plan.

Financial Summary

The school has provided the Directorate with an end of year financial statement that was approved by the school board. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

The following summary covers use of funds for operating costs and does not include expenditure in areas such as permanent salaries, buildings and major maintenance.

Financial Summary			
INCOME	January to June	July to December	January to December
Self management funds	270054.80	261879.00	531933.80
Contributions & donations	6149.19	10701.76	16850.95
Subject contributions	0.00	0.00	0.00
External income (including community use)	16335.91	15902.49	32238.40
Proceeds from sale of assets	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bank Interest	5229.47	3734.64	8964.11
TOTAL INCOME	297769.37	292217.89	589987.26
EXPENDITURE			
Utilities and general overheads	43197.71	67206.60	110404.31
Cleaning	51212.65	59446.07	110658.72
Security	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maintenance	27268.04	38863.71	66131.75
Administration	73654.77	92401.32	166056.09
Staffing	0.00	0.00	0.00
Communication	3453.11	5063.99	8517.10
Assets	80724.34	58969.87	139694.21
Leases	0.00	0.00	0.00
General office expenditure	24522.96	33929.98	58452.94
Educational	22609.06	17569.08	40178.14
Subject consumables	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	326642.64	373450.62	700093.26
OPERATING RESULT	-28873.27	-81232.73	-110106.00
Actual Accumulated Funds	194395.83	155994.31	201222.67
Outstanding commitments (minus)	-619.71	0.00	-619.71
BALANCE	164902.85	74761.58	90496.96

Professional learning

The average expenditure at the school level per fulltime equivalent teacher on professional learning was $2073.

Voluntary contributions

This school received $nil in voluntary contributions in 2015. These funds were used to support the general operations of the school. The spending of voluntary contributions is in line with the approved budget for 2015.

Reserves

Name and purpose	Amount	Expected Completion
Playgrounds 2015 The school aims to promote healthy lifestyle choices around fitness, exercise, and engagement in appropriate therapeutic and leisure activity	$23,963.00	12/2016
Therapy equipment The school upholds the critical need for essential therapeutic equipment to be available at all times for ensuring dignified quality of life for all students.	$32,835.47	12/2016
Information technology The school continues to implement creative and cutting-edge ICT solutions, especially alternative and augmentative communication (AAC). Proposed upgrades include improved wireless connectivity, student iPad renewal, and staff desktop renewal	$9,740.06	12/2016

Endorsement Page

I declare that the Black Mountain School Board has operated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 2004 including the following sections.

39 (4)   The school board must give effect to the chief executive's directions.

44 (2)   The chief executive must end the appointment of a member of the school board of a public school, other than the principal of the school if-
   a)   The member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the board without reasonable excuse or leave given by the board or
   b)   Contravenes section 49 (disclosure of interests by members of school boards) without reasonable excuse.

46   The members of the school board of a public school must, whenever is necessary, nominate a member of the board as a member of any selection panel established by the chief executive to make recommendations to the chief executive about the appointment of the principal to the school.

47 (2)   However, the school board must meet at least four times a year.

48 (10) The school board must keep minutes of its meeting.

49   Disclosure of interests by members of school boards.

49 (3)   The disclosure must be reported in the school board's minutes and, unless the board otherwise decides, the member (The first member) must not-
   a)   be present when the board considers the issue or
   b)   take part in any decision of the board on the issue.

49 (5)   Within 14 days after the end of each financial year, the chairperson of the school board must give the chief executive a statement of any disclosure of interest under this section in relation to the school board during the financial year.

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Parent Representative:	Gavin Richardson	Dawn Bowra	Greg Mahony
Community Representative	Samantha Salvaneschi		
Teacher Representative	Renate Millett	Danielle Harrison	
Board Chair:	Gavin Richardson		
Principal:	Frank Fogliati		

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the data and information reported in this Annual School Board Report represents an accurate record of the school's operations in 2015.

Principal Signature: _____   Date: _25.5.16_

I approve the report, prepared in accordance with the provision of the *Education Act*, section 52.

Board Chair Signature: _____   Date: _25/05/16_