

# 2009 Annual School Report Sylvania High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way



## Our school at a glance

### Students

Sylvania High School is a wonderful school. Our students are generous and courteous, contributing to the school's fine reputation through their participation in community events and selection at state wide and national sporting, cultural and citizenship activities. They are acknowledged for their outstanding ability to work with other students, especially in our partner primary schools, to promote the values of public education.

### Staff

Our staff are a highly motivated group of professionals known for their breadth of experience and the knowledge which they bring to teaching and learning. Students consistently acknowledge their relationships with teachers as the best thing about being at Sylvania High School. Parents also comment on the importance of teachers in their child's learning success.

Recent professional development has included working with experts in the fields of middle schooling, adolescent learning and implementing gifted and talented programs, all aimed to promote quality teaching and learning. All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

### Significant programs and initiatives

Our successful application for a \$5000 grant as one of only four NSW schools to be part of a National Research initiative on Cyber Bullying and safe use of technology, Mrs Turansky will work with year advisors to skill students and parents.

Under the outstanding leadership of Mrs Henderson, SHS became a pilot school for the **Premier's Volunteering Challenge**, something we really believe in because it provides students with a real sense of what it means to make a difference, and put others ahead of yourself.

Initially 28 students began a program with Frank Vickery Village to volunteer their time by serving food and assisting with physiotherapy sessions for elderly residents. The manager of the village has been extremely impressed with our young people who not only have shown their compassion, but also their good will and positive nature.

The second initiative is our effort to develop a philosophy of a sustainable school, a target in our three year management plan.

Students in Geography have been using their knowledge and expertise to take on real issues of what it means to be an Earth Citizen and their

success has been nothing short of spectacular. **Our anti litter campaign** combined activities from Sutherland Council with a whole school assembly and the creation of a 2 minute video which led to us winning a \$1000 award. It was later screened at the Sutherland Shire Council event: *"Down at the Park"* to the local community.

As a result we were selected as the **Showcase school for Education Week 2009** following an amazing initiative to promote environmental issues across the school. We went on to win the **NSW Environmental Trust Grant** of \$2500 and our local member presented us with this award.

**Our community gardening project** was used to launch "Schools First" a program to promote community partnerships. Following a media at Sylvania, we went on to win \$50,000, one of only two schools in Sydney Region to receive this prize.



This huge injection of funds into the school will be used to appoint a coordinator for our service learning projects, add to our technology resources and support the development of a mentoring program for year 8 and 9 students.

**In the Beyond Earth Hour Challenge** Year 8 students set out to reduce our carbon emission by reducing electricity use. The massive 31% reduction made us the winning school and led to another award of \$1000! Mrs Vince won a "Clever Climate Change" grant of \$1000 to continue her professional development next year in this important area.



## Student achievement in 2009

**Jana D Yr 9** German received a Distinction in Open High School. **Brandon D and Brett M Yr 11** were each awarded a \$1000 Defence Force Technical Scholarship. **Alice L** received the \$4000 UNSW Academic Achievement Award.

**Natasha B** had her major work nominated for **TEXSTYLES**, a prestigious exhibition for outstanding HSC work in Textiles and Design.

**Vanessa K** was selected as "Director, Media Unit" for a day and worked at our Head Office of the DET in Bridge Street. Vanessa was also appointed to the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's Reference Group, one of only 12 young people from across NSW, who meet every two months to advise the commissioner on relevant youth issues.

**Nathan L** was selected to attend the National Cyberbullying Forum held in Sydney with students from all states participating in workshops to provide a youth voice to leaders in this field.

**Harrison C and Lachlan O** were part of the event team at the DG's Awards for excellence in Public Education, and **Harrison** was asked to be the MC providing a polished performance and a wonderful example of public speaking and ambassadorial skills.

## NAPLAN, School Certificate and HSC results

The best results for **NAPLAN** Year 7 Literacy were for students in spelling, grammar and punctuation where the average mark was 20 points above state average.

Students were generally above state average in all three of the highest levels, bands 7, 8 and 9. For reading and writing at the high levels, bands 7 and 8, students are performing 9% above state average.

Year 10 achieved **outstanding results** in the School Certificate.

- 41.7% received either Band 5 or 6 in English
- 32.3% received either Band 5 or 6 in Science,
- 41.2% received either Band 5 or 6 in Mathematics
- 73.4% of students were in the **highest** band for Computing Skills, 18% higher than the state average.

## Messages

### Principal's message

I am inspired by the amazing success that we've experienced in 2009 and I know it is the result of a real commitment to achieve excellence.

Teaching and administration staff, School Council, P & C members, our student Leadership Teams, parents and of course the students themselves, all worked together to make this a special place. It's this team effort that led to our outstanding academic results for 2009, exciting community partnerships, and a wonderful school culture.

This has been a significant year implementing the Digital Education revolution, the employment of our new Technology Support Officer, and the rollout of laptops for all year 9 students and staff.

And even more exciting has been the determination of the school community to get the school hall which will be opened in 2010. It is a \$3.2 million project.

I believe we are a great school because of our common thinking, our partnerships with parents, the respect we give students so they have the best chance for future success.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

*Mrs. V Elliott, Principal*

### P&C and/or School Council message

In another busy year, the P&C continued hosting guests at many of our regular meetings. These were well attended, and gave the parents of students at SHS an opportunity to hear in detail about IT initiatives from the Dept of Education and Training, welfare programs, and subject selection for Years 9 & 11.

P&C through our Uniform sub-committee began set up a school-based uniform shop, negotiating with major uniform suppliers before opening for Open Day at the end of 2009. This shop allows parents to visit the school with their children before or after school on set days, as well as ordering on-line. A percentage of the sales from this shop come back to the P&C and are then available for major items we fund through the school.

2009 was a year of change for our parent-managed canteen. Through the Canteen

Committee, more emphasis was placed on a healthy eating program. The canteen was also subject to the first Health Inspection under new food safety legislation, and while the storage, preparation and serving of food all passed, the Council inspector wanted us to replace the porous ceiling. After months of discussing options and obtaining quotes for this very expensive work, Council agreed it wasn't essential to pass the inspection. Another initiative this year at Canteen was the employment of a canteen assistant to help prepare more food on site, rather than purchasing pre-prepared goods. This gave us the opportunity to increase the range of food offered, as well as prepare healthier options. This program is in its early stages, and we are confident that the financial returns will be sufficient to continue to cover the cost of this additional staff member. Canteen still relies on the parent volunteers who help out every day of the school year. P&C acknowledge this enormous effort and thank these volunteers for their contribution to the school.

P&C operates the School Watch team of registered volunteers who, if they observe potential misbehaviour on the school grounds after hours, ring a security number to have prompt attention. The volunteers for this program include some neighbours, local residents as well as staff and parents.

Transport issues, principally bus routes, parking at the front of the school, and other safety issues are regularly addressed through Council, the bus companies and Police by P&C Transport sub-committee.

The Building Fund continues to grow. Parents are able to make a tax-deductible donation to this fund, which is then used to improve building facilities in the school. This fund assisted with the fit out of the new music block.

Lobbying has always been one of the activities of the P&C. This year, we lobbied for school security through a new perimeter fence. This should be installed after the work is completed on the new Auditorium in 2010. We also continue to lobby for improvements to the science labs and toilet blocks, all badly in need of major works.

We continue to provide members to the School Council, and through this body, helped the school

	SC03- HSC05	SC04- HSC06	SC05- HSC07	SC06- HSC08	SC07 - HSC09
School	68.4	68.5	74.8	63.9	64.9
SEG	72.1	75.5	71.4	73.2	73.5
State	61.0	61.1	60.8	60.3	61.0

prioritise the funds available for major school improvements from the Australian Government. This year, the large COLA covering most of the quadrangle was built through this program, and the canteen was also successful in receiving funds for refurbishment of the canteen through a NSW government initiative.

### **Kaye McCulloch, P&C President**

#### **Student representative's message**

2009 was the year Sylvania High grew not only as a school, but as a community. Its uniqueness shone through the talents of every student, creating a welcoming atmosphere.

In my time here as a student, I have developed a feeling of belonging and believe I am a valued member of the school community. Since becoming a school leader in 2009, it has been easy to uphold the values and pride that are now so much a part of school culture at Sylvania High School.

Sylvania High School continues to provide a safe and happy learning environment for students. The development of several capital works projects including the new auditorium will further improve school facilities in 2010.

The tone of the student body has been positive in 2009 with students endeavouring to do their best at all times. The role of the SRC has been evaluated and guidelines have been provided for the future to make this student decision making body more effective.

### **Kate M, School Captain**

#### **School context**

##### **Student information**

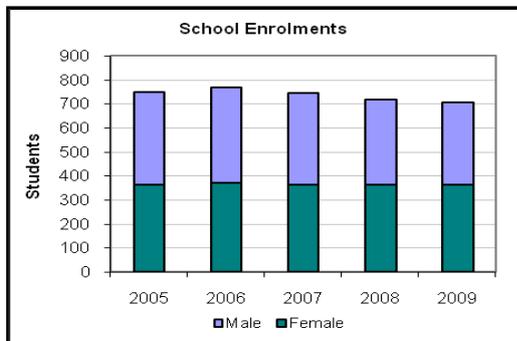
It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

##### **Student enrolment profile**

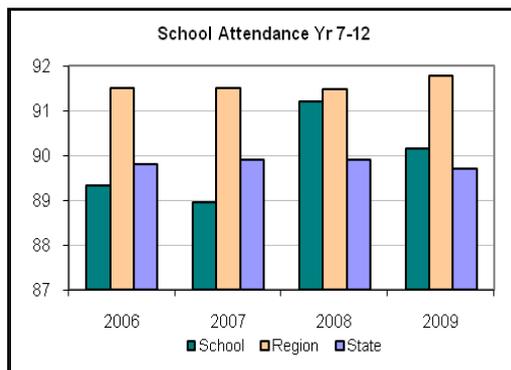
Enrolments have been stable for the past five years as a result of increased confidence about the quality of teaching, and an increased demand for enrolment from parents outside the local area.

In the past twelve months female enrolments have increased, overtaking boys for the first time in five years.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Male</b>	388	398	381	355	354
<b>Female</b>	362	370	363	361	361



### Student attendance profile



### Management of non-attendance

Our attendance rate is higher than state average in years 7, 8 and 9. For Years 10, 11 and 12 attendance is still a little below the state average.

This is being addressed through improved procedures to monitor attendance and the introduction of regular checking of chronic absenteeism by year advisors. Student Advisors now work with the Deputy Principals to counsel students on the long term impact of absenteeism.

### Structure of classes

In year 7 & 8 there are usually five classes. In 2009 a selective class was introduced, gifted and talented students identified through testing, individual nomination, portfolio and teacher recommendation.

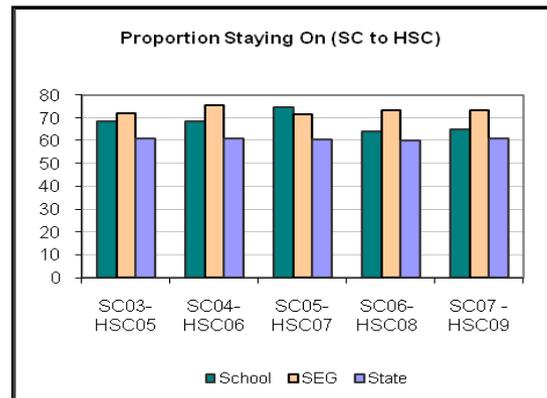
Of the remaining year 7 and 8 classes the top academic achievers were identified from primary school data and streamed to provide more

challenging work for above average students. The remaining three classes are mixed ability.

In years 9 & 10 class sizes are kept as small as possible, especially in practical classes and where specialist facilities are needed.

In years 11 & 12 classes are small due to our commitment to a broad curriculum. Classes in languages, performing arts and some VET subjects often have less than twelve students.

### Retention to Year 12



### Post-school destinations

Of the 88 students who sat for the HSC in 2009:

- 32 have been offered places at university and 1 of these students deferred the offer
- 23 have been accepted into TAFE courses
- 5 are studying at Private Colleges and 9 have gained apprenticeships and 6 traineeships
- 5 students are in full time employment while another 5 are in casual employment
- 3 students have been unable to be contacted

Of the 10 students who left school during Year 11:

- 7 have entered apprenticeships, 2 are studying at TAFE and one is working casually

### Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Sylvania High School has a qualified and committed staff. Our teachers are extremely experienced and have high levels of expertise in their subject area. Teaching staff are supported by eight clerical staff, a senior administration manager and specialist support in library, laboratories and kitchen areas.

## Staff establishment

Position	Number
Principal	1.0
Deputy Principal(s)	2.0
Head Teachers	8.0
Classroom Teachers	45.0
Support Teacher Learning Assistance	0.4
Teacher Librarian	1.0
Teacher of ESL	0.6
Counsellor	1.0
School Administrative & Support Staff (SASS)	11.0
Total	70.0

At this time there is insufficient data to report on the indigenous composition of our school workforce.

## Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	75%
Postgraduate	25%

## Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Date of financial summary: 30/11/2009

**Income** \$

Balance brought forward	227 902.50
Global funds	378 034.23
Tied funds	241 405.07
School & community sources	396 191.36
Interest	15 466.17
Trust receipts	58 339.75
Canteen	0.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1 317 339.08</b>

## Expenditure

Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	125 818.73
Excursions	116 065.23
Extracurricular dissections	138 969.15
Library	15 482.50
Training & development	19 855.76
Tied funds	248 910.45
Casual relief teachers	90 586.26
Administration & office	137 726.62
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	69 824.69

Maintenance	38 343.51
Trust accounts	65 949.99
Capital programs	0.00
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1 067 532.89</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>249 806.19</b>

A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

## School performance 2009

### Achievements

#### Visual Arts

Major art works for James R, Charley S and Jarred H were accepted into ARTEXPRESS and were part of an exhibition at Hazelhurst Gallery.

#### Performing Arts

Our school is acknowledged on a state wide basis for our outstanding performance in music, dance and drama. Many of our Year 7 students come to us for that reason alone.

Students from years 7 – 12 participate in music, choral, dance, drama and band events at State, Regional and local festivals, Schools Spectacular, Tours, Competitions and Showcase Evenings.

**The Tech Crew**, working under the leadership of Mrs McDougall, ran a huge number of events this year, assisting with performance nights and events from our local primary schools, Sylvania Heights and Sylvania public schools, both of whom have been incredibly impressed with their positive and enthusiastic support.

Students in the Wind Orchestra and elective drama courses joined forces to tour the Lithgow and area, performing at Coerwull PS and Orana Heights PS, and our Dance Ensemble travelled to Queensland and performed at Terranora PS, Centaur PS, and Dreamworld.

#### Music

Students in the music program participated in many performances both within the school and the community.

**Kyra B** had her work nominated for **ENCORE** for the best HSC Musical performers

**Sarah B Yr 8** performed at the opening of the Sydney Region School Year as part of the Sydney Region Band

The Showband received Gold at the Engadine Band Fest, and the Concert Band received Silver at the Engadine Band Fest and NSW Band Festival.

The schools band and a vocalists toured Dubbo and its surrounds, performing at local schools in the area.

The Jazz Ensemble and Showband performed at Sylvania Swings, and various showcase evenings and school events.

## Dance

**Natasha B and Courtney M** had their work nominated for **CALLBACK**, for the best HSC dance performances

**Year 9 - 12 Dance Ensemble** gained selection for their work **Celadon** at the State Dance Festival, choreographed by Ms Kirby Darlington in this extremely competitive arena where only the best ensembles in NSW are selected.

**Natasha B Yr 12 and Angelica SYr 10** were accepted into the prestigious State Dance Ensemble in the Senior Company, and **Natasha** went on to give a stunning performance dancing a solo at Schools Spectacular, the second year in a row that one of our students has received this honour.

## Drama

**James L Yr 11** was selected to the State Senior Drama Company, **Rebecca S Yr 7** to the State Junior Drama Ensemble, and **Joel S yr 8** was selected to attend the Taikoz workshop.

**Yr 11 and 12 Drama students** attended a workshop at the *Australian Theatre for Young People* and later performed their works at Frank Vickery Village to a packed audience. Our Intermediate Theatre Sports Team were finalists in the schools Theatre Sports Competition.

**Sarah C Yr 9** and **Megan SYr 10** were successful in auditioning for the *Fresh Ink Writers Ensemble*, a program for gifted and talented writers in year 9 to 11. They worked with specialist writers in the performing arts industry and created fresh and original works for the theatre.

## Sport

We also have some spectacular athletes:

**Hayden M Yr 10** was selected to join the soccer squad at the NSW Institute of Sport. **Kristina R, Yr 10** won State Finals in Sydney East Water Polo team. Our 100m relay team made it to the NSW Athletics finals at Homebush, and Shintaro O'Brien received a bronze medal in the sprint finals. **Tyson W yr 8** represented Sydney East Region in AFL. **Emma D, Jake C and Sarah C** represented Sydney East in Lawn Bowls at the NSW Combined High Schools championships

## Academic

In 2009 students from Sylvania High School participated in the **Australian Mathematics Competition** and gained very impressive results.

15% of students achieved a Distinction and 43% of students achieved a Credit. The result for Credits is significantly above the national distribution.

When results are broken into three sections, Senior, Intermediate and Junior the results are equally as impressive. In Seniors, 31% gained a Distinction and 38% achieved a Credit. Intermediate candidates had 15% gain a Distinction and 52% gained a Credit. 10% of Juniors were awarded a Distinction and 52% achieved a Credit.

Congratulations to all students who participated in the competition and a special congratulation to David Z (Year 7) who received the Prudence Award. This award is given to the student who correctly answered the most number of consecutive questions.

## NAPLAN 2009

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

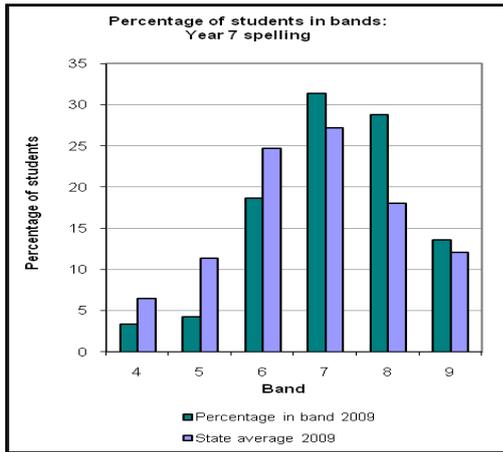
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)

Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

## Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7

The best results were for students in spelling, grammar and punctuation where the average mark was 20 points above state average.

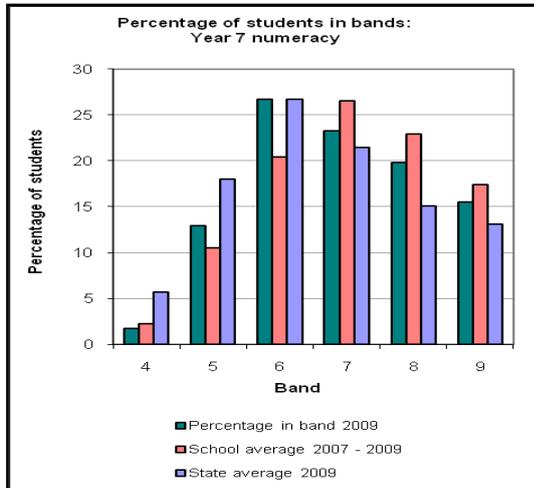
Students were generally above state average in all three of the highest levels, bands 7, 8 and 9.



For reading and writing at the high levels, bands 7 and 8, students are performing 9% above state average. However in Band 9, the highest level, the performance is below state average and needs to be addressed. Results in the lowest bands 4 & 5 are significantly lower across all areas of literacy than the state average.

### Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

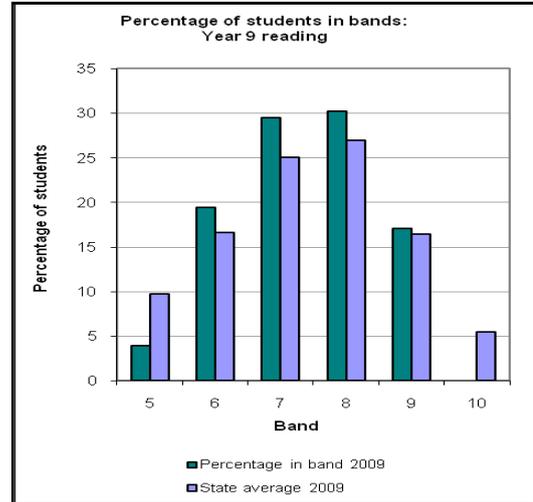
The school received an average mark of 552.6, more than 10 points above the state average of 541.2. Students were generally above state average in all three of the highest levels, bands 7, 8 and 9.



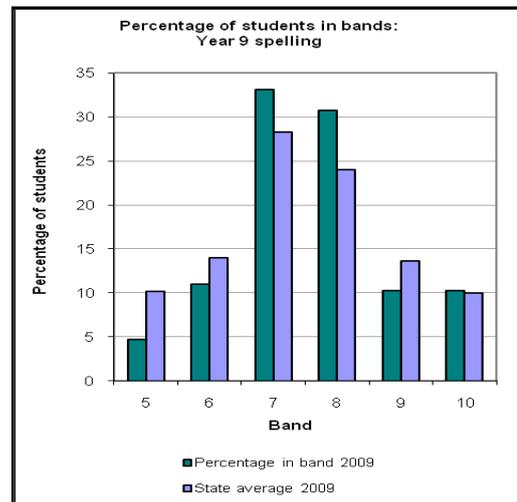
### Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9

Year 9 students scored an average mark of 575.0 for reading which is at state average, and for writing 574.9 which is 20 points above the state average of 553.7.

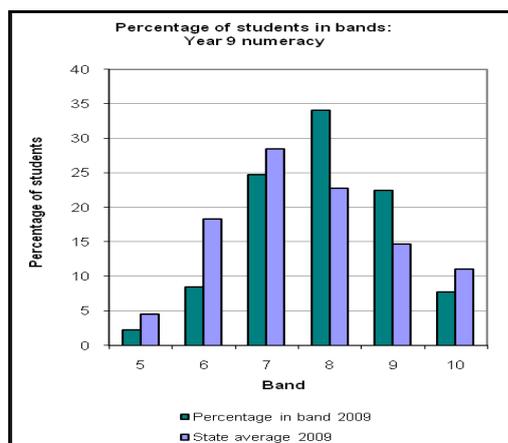
The best results are in bands 7, 8 and 9 which are all above state average.



Year 9 students scored an average mark of 586.3 for spelling which is 9 points above state average, and 572.9 for Grammar and punctuation, which is 7 points above the state average of 565.9.



## Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9



Year 9 students scored an average mark of 604.4 for numeracy which is 5 points above state average.

For bands 8 and 9 students were performing above state average 12% and 8% above state average. However in Band 10, the highest level, the performance is below state average and needs to be improved. Results in the lowest bands 5 & 6 are significantly lower than the state average.

## School Certificate

In the School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest).

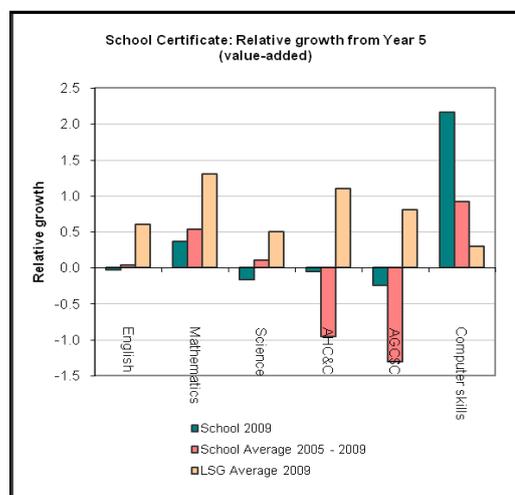
- 41.7% received either Band 5 or 6 in English
- 32.3% received either Band 5 or 6 in Science,
- 41.2% received either Band 5 or 6 in Mathematics
- 73.4% of students were in the **highest** band for Computing Skills, 18% higher than the state average.

Year 10 achieved **outstanding results** in the School Certificate.

- 41.7% received either Band 5 or 6 in English
- 32.3% received either Band 5 or 6 in Science, with thirteen students awarded band 6, well above state average, and a huge increase on 2008 results for our school.
- 41.2% received either Band 5 or 6 in Mathematics
- 19% of History students and 21% of Geography students received either Band 5 or 6, both results showing a significant improvement over previous years

- 73.4% of students were in the **highest** band for Computing Skills, 18% higher than the state average.

## School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)



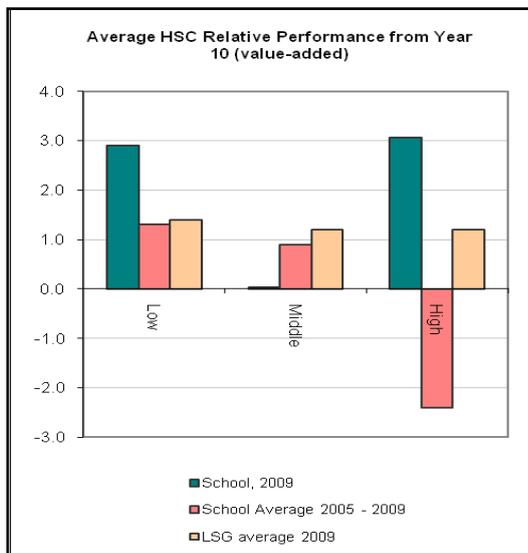
## Higher School Certificate

The HSC results were outstanding and changed the trend of the last four years to one well above state average in both the highest and lowest bands.

The subjects where the school average was above state average include:

- **ENGLISH:** English Standard, ESL and Extension 2
- **MATHS:** Mathematics Extension 1 and 2
- **HSIE:** Ancient and Modern History
- **SCIENCE** Chemistry and Physics
- **TAS:** Industrial Technology, Community and Family Studies, Information Processes and Technology, Hospitality
- **THE ARTS:** Visual Arts, Dance, Drama and Music
- **PDHPE:** PDHPE

### Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)



### Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

### Percentage of Year 7 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

#### Minimum Standard Information

Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at and above minimum standard	
Reading	96.6
Writing	95.8
Spelling	96.6
Punctuation and grammar	96.6
Numeracy	98.3

### Percentage of Year 9 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at and above minimum standard	
Reading	96.1
Writing	95.3
Spelling	95.3

Punctuation and grammar	91.3
Numeracy	97.7

### Significant programs and initiatives

#### Multicultural education

32% of the students at Sylvania High School come from cultural backgrounds where English is not the first language. The ethos of the school is that all students are respected and valued and the school community promotes tolerance and understanding for each other.

In 2009, the school's celebration of diversity was through **Harmony Day** enjoyed with much enthusiasm by staff and students. A sense of unity was promoted as the school dressed in orange and enjoyed speeches, harmony messages, costume parade, special guest performers, food stalls, and cultural acts portraying the message of harmony.



This event is now part of the Sylvania High School tradition and fosters a spirit of acceptance, goodwill, co-operation and anti-racism. Other welfare programs and the school's Anti-Racism Policy support these goals of tolerance and harmony within the school community

#### Respect and responsibility

The work of students in charity initiatives has been exceptional. The School has an outstanding commitment to the welfare of others - over \$2000 was raised for the VIC Bushfire Appeal, \$600 for Jeans for Genes, \$1200 for World Vision and many gifts for the Anglicare "Toys and Tucker" Christmas giving project.

In 2009 the school adopted the Premiers' volunteering program. Mrs Henderson was appointed as coordinator of this program and worked with DET consultants to develop promotional materials, establish links with local community service groups and raise awareness amongst staff and students about the program.

Volunteering is any activity undertaken for the benefit of others, for which you receive no payment or direct advantage. Generally, volunteering is done in your own time, so there is a sense that you are giving up something, to give to another.

Research has shown that generally, participation in volunteering activities leads to

- increased happiness
- sense of satisfaction and purpose
- improved self-esteem
- better health
- a stronger network of relationships: friends and support networks
- skill development (both practical and personal)

In 2009 our students visited Frank Vickery Village to undertake two projects one with an occupational therapist to support residents in daily exercise, and the second working in the kitchens preparing food.

### Other programs

Following the success of our anti bullying programs the school applied for and received a grant of \$5000 to become a pilot school for the Cybersafety and Wellbeing Initiative which focuses on the smart, safe and responsible use of communication technologies. Cyberbullying, sexual predation, accessing inappropriate content, being coerced into sending sexually suggestive images, and identity fraud are some of the cyberspace risks facing young people today. Supported by the Allanah and Madeline Foundation, participating schools work with experts in this field of student welfare.

The first major focus of the initiative is to help schools to create a cultural norm of smart, safe and responsible use of communications technologies. The initiative:

- helps schools develop policies and practices
- points schools to teaching resources on cybersafety,
- encourages schools to embrace the positives of technology for teaching practice
- establishes a system for schools to provide evidence they are actively implementing these policies and practices



### Progress on 2009 targets

The targets for 2009 were the start of a new phase in our school improvement thinking and planning. It began a new three year plan 2009 – 2011 and included the development of a new software program to assist with school management.

#### Target 1:

**All staff use the Quality Teaching framework to create an engaging learning environment.**

Our achievements included:

- Professional development was provided through effective faculty monitoring and teacher interviews focussed on Intellectual Quality and differentiating the curriculum to meet individual needs
- a comprehensive handbook was developed for the induction of early career teachers and expertise developed through strong mentoring programs
- school development days promoted leadership opportunities for staff in roles of responsibility. Providing inspiring and exemplar workshops in technology, student welfare, school management and quality teaching practices,
- Increased number of teachers used the QT framework to develop teaching programs
- Increased number of teachers applying for specific roles, and relieving opportunities.
- A Beginning Teachers Mentor Team was established with 6 experienced staff supporting new scheme teachers.

#### Target 2:

**A comprehensive gifted and talented program is developed and implemented to promote high achieving students.**

Our achievements included:

- a strong gifted and talented team were able to model best practice in teaching for the gifted

- differentiated teaching and learning programs were developed for the top stream in year 7
- a teacher in residence program was coordinated working with our academic partner Dr Jill Forster to provide professional development and support in the identification of gifted students.

### Target 3:

***Strong welfare policies are developed and implemented to promote retention and transition.***

Our achievements included:

- A newly formed Careers and Transition team developed strong programs to promote retention
- Links with outside agencies were established a strengthened to ensure that students have access to industry networks, traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Transition programs were developed at critical points, from year 6 to 7, from year 10 into year 11, and from school to work or further study.
- A study skills program was developed to support and promote retention
- student and parent awareness of transition programs was increased and opportunities for links with industry and university study developed.
- The Year 7 portfolio program was enhanced to include students' presentation skills and mindmapping.
- Police Liaison Officer workshops were coordinated to raise awareness about cyberbullying in schools.

### Target 4:

***New technologies are introduced into specialist areas so that all students have access to technology.***

Our achievements included:

- students were introduced to new skills, wireless technologies and had better access to the intranet
- a more interactive learning environment was developed through improved booking systems for existing computer rooms, and increased number of data projectors in specialist areas

- curriculum and reporting software was centralised and accessible by all staff in staffrooms and through portal links at home
- Existing software was used to include subject selection on line.
- The needs of students were met and technology successfully integrated into classroom practice
- The number of computer rooms increased and a connected classroom became fully operational.
- 50% of staff are now confident using the connected classrooms and new computer facilities due to a planned professional development program which included outside presenters and a series of workshops run by staff

### Target 5:

***Projects are well managed to develop the sustainable use of school resources and students are encouraged to participate in the decision making process.***

Our achievements included:

- a new emergency plan was developed and successfully implemented to meet departmental requirements
- SRC members and Ecorangers students were involved in a range of data collection activities and special programs e.g. recycling, composting, graffiti and rubbish reduction
- A garden program was undertaken to beautify new building works.
- New resources added to school infrastructure, the major addition being the construction of our new school auditorium, a \$3.2 million project.
- student forums and leadership opportunities provided for more students to be part of school governance.

### Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2009 our school carried out evaluations of the Whole School Welfare Policy and the PDHPE faculty

### Educational and management practice

In 2009 the welfare team evaluated the current school welfare and discipline policy in line with

DET requirements to provide a happy, safe and supportive learning environment for all students. The new policy was distributed to all staff at a staff meeting and communicated to the wider school community through regular welfare reports in the *Sylvan Lights* newsletter.

## Background

The welfare team meets fortnightly to plan and coordinate programs to support the well being of all students. As part of ongoing evaluation, the Head Teacher Welfare worked with the team to review present practices and then bring them into line with the new DET policy in this area.

The main tasks were to update documentation available to staff and students, review roles and responsibilities and strengthen the existing program of activities which support school target 3: "to develop and implement strong welfare policies".

Meetings involved the welfare team and the Principal working collaboratively to develop new documentation and ensure DET policy was clearly in place. A major initiative was to update the anti-bullying policy, and students were involved in the development of the brochure given to all students.

Integration programs were also reviewed by our Integration Coordinator and team of SLSO and assessed as to whether they met the specific individual needs of students.

Our welfare focus also centred on the prevention of cyber bullying with the aim to educate students on the risks as well as empowering students to cope with any incidents. This involved the review of our current anti-bullying brochure to include cyber bullying as well as workshops lead by our Police Liaison Officer investigating the effects of cyber bullying for each year group.

## Findings and conclusions

Students were nominated for a number of welfare programs including Stewart House, Sister 2 Sister, Community Health programs and a Youth off the Streets scholarship.

Integration programs were extremely strong, however the challenge was to develop Life Skills Courses for one severely disabled student.

The Learning Support Team has continued to strengthen with regular meetings allowing for the review of student progress, analysis of NAPLAN results and the development of strong transition programs catering for students of all levels through well established links with primary schools.

The welfare team coordinated welfare initiatives targeting specific welfare needs of students within each year group to further support social development and promote pastoral care:

- Year 7 – *Bullybusters* theatre workshop, peer support program and orientation camp
- Year 8 – *Sticks and Stones* theatre workshop focusing on conflict resolution, peer pressure and assertiveness training
- Year 9 – *Hurting game* theatre workshop focusing on harassment, body image, resilience, self-esteem, and the development of positive relationships.
- Year 10 – *Cheap Thrills* theatre workshop focusing on risk taking behaviours and substance abuse. Students involved in our Peer Support Program
- Year 11 – *Youth and Road Trauma Forum* workshop focusing on driver awareness to promote road safety
- Year 12 – *Wired* theatre performance focusing on managing stress, anxiety and depression. Study Skills program aimed to further enhance students organisational and time management skills

In addition a special one day program was implemented for Year 10 students focusing on risk taking behaviours associated with drug and alcohol use and peer pressure, an important part of making the transition to Year 11 and 12.

## Future directions

As the existing policy was already strong the major tasks involved development of programs for the future, especially those which identified other agencies who could support student needs, and updating of the anti-bullying brochure.

The new antibullying brochure was made available to all students at year group assemblies, and in 2010 the E Smart program will involve year group workshops around building strategies for coping with cyber bullying.

Staff will need to be supported to deliver Life Skills as a new area of study. This will involve release time for staff to re-program and write these courses in 2010.

## Curriculum

In 2009 the PDHPE faculty was evaluated as part of the schools' self evaluation cycle. The cycle has been operating for three years and is part of ongoing monitoring and supervision practices.

### Background

Faculty evaluation is a process which weighs up data from a variety of sources and provides feedback on the teaching and learning within a faculty.

PDHPE was identified as a faculty with good results, a committed staff and good student relationships.

Over two terms the faculty met to determine which aspects of the faculty needed reviewing and worked with the senior executive to establish the terms of reference.

The terms of reference focused on three areas: Organisation, Resources and Teaching Programs.

### Findings and conclusions

#### Organisation

- communication within the faculty is strong, both informally and at structured and well documented faculty meetings. Staff share expertise willingly.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- There is no specialist head teacher which means teachers to develop best practice, manage programs, resources, and day to day organisation.
- It was clear from classroom observations that teachers know their content and translate this into excellent classroom practice.
- Staff are seen as committed, enthusiastic and supportive by students.

#### Resources

- Students identified that faculty resources were good, they enjoyed the outdoor spaces and they liked the variety of equipment that was available.
- The staff use technology regularly however there are times when resources are stretched due to room clashes and constraints.
- The change rooms are not secure and are poorly maintained.

#### Teaching Programs

- Expectations are well communicated to students and assessment tasks are well

documented; students feel that assessment tasks are relevant to the world they live in.

- Teachers care for their students and take the time to build relationships and this has a positive impact on successful learning.
- Assessment practices are strong in stage 5 but need to be more explicit in stage 4.
- Teachers operate independently in developing teaching and learning programs and resources. Year 9 has excellent models which are being replicated in Year 10, but this is not yet evident in years 7/8.
- The range of extra curricula activities are seen as a positive contribution to the community and primary school links.
- Changing the nature of teaching in the junior years is critical to engaging them in the middle years and building respect for the academic rigour of the subject.
- Having only one teacher willing to teach Stage 6 is problematic, both from a timetable and staffing consideration, and in terms of being able to recognise junior content that may be explored in more depth in preparation for learning at stage 6.

#### Future directions

- More opportunities need to be developed for specific subject professional development and strengthening pedagogy.
- The subject coordinator needs to work with the executive to gain a better understanding of budgeting and developing faculty targets.
- The need for better security and easy access to teaching resources is an issue.
- The addition of a dedicated weights room is a real bonus and other innovative resources could be explored.
- Attention needs to be given to the development of a range of teaching and learning activities which promote higher order thinking across all courses.
- All activities must have students working towards achieving the 'learn to', this will result in clear achievement of learning outcomes.
- The need to have a dedicated space for dance and gymnastics for 2 blocks of 5 weeks minimum needs to be solved
- The specific use of the new hall, and its relationships with the existing hall space must be discussed and prioritised, with clear school guidelines for their use.

### Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Parents of year 7 students were asked to respond to a survey about what factors influenced their decision to make Sylvania High School their first high school.

73 families responded and stated that parents chose Sylvania High School because of its:

- Caring and safe environment
- High standard of teaching
- Approachable teachers and executive
- Ability to get the best learning outcomes from all students

Other comments included

*"We selected SHS after the open night, where we were convinced that parents were in a partnership about their child's progress. This is the most important aspect of a high school when children communicate less at home about what's happening at school"*

*"Great school. All the staff have always been very approachable and go out of their way to help our kids"*

*"I like the way vocational subjects are linked with TAFE gives students a complete education"*

*"Good anti-bullying policy supported by the whole school"*

*"Keep Sylvania HS a small school this was the major contributing factor to sending my child here, a 7-12 co-ed school with good subject selections, strong values, strong leadership... our daughter is very happy here."*

*"In our association with the school the teachers are excellent overall. "*

All year 7 students were surveyed to establish the extent of bullying generally in their first 9 months of high school. 70% indicated that they liked coming to school, and 92% said they had a good circle of friends at school. 21% said they had never seen bullying at school, while 59% said they had never been bullied.

Of those students who had been bullied, 41%, the majority had been called names, or had rumours spread about them on mobiles or through the internet.

Students themselves commented that there should be "more consequences to the people who bully e.g. detention, yard duty, in school suspension" and because most bullying seemed to occur in the playground at recess and lunch, students asked for "more teachers on duty". Students also agree that they "need to report bullying to teachers more frequently and more

quickly so that these issues could be addressed before they became serious.

## Professional learning

In 2009 the Department of Education provided \$12 000 to support professional learning to support the introduction of new technology linked to the Digital Education revolution.

The school made available a further \$5 000 to support other initiatives, most notably use of the connected classroom, interactive whiteboard, and videoconferencing.

Funds were used to employ a specialist trainer for two days running half day workshops for the new laptops in classrooms. Staff were introduced to **One Note Software** and **interactive whiteboard** technology.

This has been particularly successful with meeting the needs of disabled students, and support staff have also been trained in how to use these facilities. Teachers have been able to access the classroom for specialist courses, and Year 7 and 8 students participated in the **Brain Awareness Program** under the leadership of the principal Mrs. Elliott, and the STLA Ms Swane.

Other professional learning was coordinated at the end of term 4 where a team of staff provided workshops in the use of **WEB 2.0** tools. These have been matched to the need for Higher Order Thinking Strategies (HOTS), and the use of the Intellectual Quality domain of the Quality Teaching Framework.

## School development 2009 – 2011

### Targets for 2010

#### Target 1:

**Increase the number of staff who undertake professional learning to create an engaging learning environment.**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Our academic partners continue to provide up-to-date information about best practice in adolescent learning.
- Faculty and executive meetings used to create a consistent understanding of the QT model
- Professional development through monitoring of faculties, TARS and EARS
- Supervision and monitoring develops the educational leadership role of executive staff

- Faculty plans show strategic thinking about professional learning needs of staff
- school development days provide leadership opportunities for staff in roles of responsibility,
- role statements developed for subject coordinators, and non curriculum HT responsibilities reviewed

Our success will be measured by:

- Increased number of teachers use the framework to evaluate programs and plan future curriculum
- QT metalanguage used by teachers in professional conversation
- Career pathways promoted and teachers feel confident in their professional growth.
- Increase in number applying for specific roles, and relieving opportunities

### Target 2:

***Identify areas where value added data for the School Certificate needs to be increased.***

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Executive meetings involve workshops on the use of data for evidence based decision making
- Faculty meetings are used to share NAPLAN, SMART and EMSAD data to raise awareness of accountability issue
- Staff use this knowledge to adapt Teaching and learning programs

Our success will be measured by:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of data available
- SC value added data shows significant improvement

### Target 3:

***Implement the Cyber Bullying pilot program to promote safe use of technology by all staff and students.***

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Raise awareness of issue amongst staff, students and parents through workshops and new resources

- Student video workshops, followed by discussion and student led action plans
  - Map curriculum to assess where this knowledge and understanding will take place a survey is conducted in years 8 and 9 to follow up on data collected in 2009.
  - A program for Student Mentors is developed to lead the initiative

Our success will be measured by:

- a decrease in reports of bullying and referrals to year advisors
- Increased connections between families and school
- Students are able to use protective behaviours to minimize the effects of cyberbullying
- Final report sent to Allanah and Madeline Foundation

### Target 4:

***Expand new technologies into specialist areas to support the Digital Education revolution DER***

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- introduce new technologies in faculty areas, Soc Science, English, and Science
- students are introduced to new skills e.g. moodle, and wireless technologies provides better access to the intranet
- Create a technology plan through staff and community consultation and conduct a thorough site audit to determine ways to improve teaching and learning systems
- teacher professional development funds are used to promote the use of ICT in classrooms
- develop a more interactive learning environment through improved booking systems for existing computer rooms, and increased number of data projectors in specialist areas

Our success will be measured by:

- 50% of staff are confident using technology in lesson plans
- increased access to school site and resources
- Audit used to inform school council of priorities

- technology successfully integrated into classroom practice

### Target 5:

#### **Complete projects to implement sustainable use of school resources**

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- *Projects are developed to use sustainable principles*
- The funding for National Schools Solar Project is expended
- Gardens to be established in new areas of the school.
- Strengthen the existing school volunteer service programs years 7-12
- Implement National Solar Schools Program for improved solar heating and water management
- Opportunities for student service learning and leadership linked to sustainability expanded as part of school service culture
- Students are actively engaged in developing plans to increase sustainability e.g. recycling, the development of on-site gardens, composting, anti graffiti campaigns and rubbish reduction, Youth Environmental Forums and other high profile “Green Events”
- committee is developed by interested staff and students to prepare the SEMP - school environmental management plan

Our success will be measured by:

- Successful installation and use of solar panels and water tanks.
- improved grounds and learning spaces allow for implementation of SEMP.
- Improved efficiency in water and heating management
- Increased numbers of students participate in volunteer and service learning projects
- SRC and other student led initiatives are evaluated as highly successful
- a SEMP - school environmental management plan is successfully implemented

### About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's

practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

*Kate M – School Captain  
Andrew Taylor – HT Maths  
Brad Flegg - Deputy Principal  
Craig Brown - Deputy Principal  
Lynn James - Careers Advisor  
Vanessa Turansky - HT Welfare  
Kaye McCulloch - P&C President  
Virginia Elliott - Principal*

### School contact information

Sylvania High School  
17 Bellingara Road Sylvania  
Ph: 9522 9951  
Fax: 9544 7246

Email: [Sylvania-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Sylvania-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

Web: [www.sylvania-h.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.sylvania-h.schools.nsw.edu.au)

School Code: 8463

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr>