



Australian Government



**IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY
(PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

LOW SES SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

**New South Wales
Progress Report 2013
(1 January – 30 June 2013)**

Due 31 October 2013

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In April 2013, NSW provided an Annual Report to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) on Smarter School National Partnerships (SSNP) activity in the 2012 calendar year.

This Progress Report covers SSNP funded activity from 1 January to 30 June 2013 for the Low Socio-economic School Communities National Partnership and to 31 October 2013 for the Principal Professional Development National Partnership.

The Progress Report focuses on key highlights, case studies as well as milestone activities, as set out in the Bilateral Agreements/Final Implementation Plans.

The report also provides important information on SSNP funded activities to support the improvement in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Section 1 – Improving Teacher Quality

(Please note that apart from obligations to report on the Principal Professional Development National Partnership, NSW provided the final report on the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership as part of the 2012 SSNP Annual Report (dated April 2013))

Principal Professional Development

(As this is the final report for the PPD NP, this narrative section and the following table report on activities to date since the last report (April 2013) as well as those scheduled to occur up to the end of October 2013.)

Overview of activities and key achievements – including engagement of the non-government sectors

The *National Partnership on Principal Professional Development* is comprised of four projects:

1. Principal action learning communities
2. Building instructional leadership capacity
3. Leading improvement, innovation and change
4. Principal preparation pathways

Extensive activity has occurred in each of these projects, with significant progress being made both in the government and non-government sectors. The considerable numbers of principals and emerging principals who have participated in each of the projects (as reported in the table) reflect the close alignment of these professional development activities with preparation for increased responsibilities under the NSW Government's Local Schools Local Decisions policy. As a result of this National Partnership, there has been a rapid expansion in the numbers of learning units developed, with most principals in government schools having been exposed to new and clearly targeted professional learning opportunities.

Project One - Principal action learning communities

The establishment of action learning communities in the government sector will build current and emerging Principal capacity for school improvement. Two tiers of funding have been provided to these learning communities. Those communities of schools with first tier funding are known as Learning Alliances, with communities receiving second tier funding referred to as Targeted Priority Projects. Both tiers of action learning communities are supported by leadership coaches.

(i) Learning alliances

Thirty learning alliances have been established amongst networks of government schools to support and develop professional learning projects that have focused on:

- collaborative and sustainable alliances of schools
- building instructional leadership capacity at school and system level
- leading innovation and change
- developing skills and pathways for emerging and aspiring school leaders

The alliances were formed by principals who identified practice partners and aspiring leaders. The alliances are currently implementing project-based learning with an emphasis on joint professional development, innovative leadership learning and improvement projects which most often seek to establish a culture of professional practice. Project teams are producing professional learning modules for use by other principals and aspiring leaders. Modules will be completed by June 2014.

Each alliance is using practices outlined in the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*, the *AITSL 360 Reflection Tool*, the *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders*, the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the principles of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework*.

(ii) Targeted Priority Projects

Twenty targeted priority projects have been established amongst networks of government schools. These projects have the same focus as the learning alliances but without the expectation for module production. Rather, the impact of funding in these action learning communities will be on the development of sustained systems of collaboration to build leadership capacity.

(iii) Learning Alliance Coaches

Each learning alliance and targeted priority project is being supported by an experienced principal who has been trained as a coach, following a selection process. These principals coach groups of principals and aspiring leaders to successfully complete national partnership projects in principal professional development. Coaches are responsible for maintaining frequent contact with their principals during all stages of planning, development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the identified innovative projects and support the creation of a professional development module as the product of the Learning Alliance projects.

In the Catholic sector, examples have occurred across the dioceses of activities relevant to the development of professional learning communities. In the Lismore Diocese, for example, activities have emphasised principal capacity to respond to change through improved pedagogy, innovation and new strategies and instructional leadership. These initiatives require an understanding of data, the development of goals and strategies to improve classroom practice and evidenced based decision making.

In the Parramatta Diocese, an annual Principals' Master Class provides principals with an opportunity to share aspects of their work with other practising principals from both within and outside the diocese. In 2012, 98 staff attended including 80 principals. Principal Network Meetings are held each term and have focused on issues such as training in and building understanding of the Quality Catholic Schools (QCS) Project, providing survey data from students, staff and parents for principals to focus improvement efforts in their schools. Other Network Meetings have focused on suspension, transfer, expulsion and exclusions in schools, with a further session led by Professor Michael Fullan, on achieving the moral purpose of all children's learning

In the Broken Bay Diocese, material presented in a Leadership Forum was further developed within smaller groups of schools, focusing on the use of data and strategic planning, as well as developing open professional communication centred on improving learning outcomes for students.

The Canberra/Goulburn Diocese provided a residential program – the “*Siloam Networks*” with a focus on reflection, structured dialogue and processes to challenge and enrich leadership within the community of schools.

In Newcastle/Maitland, in conjunction with the Empowering Local Schools NP, six schools and their executive staff have been developing a model for teacher performance framework (AITSL) within their professional learning community.

In relation to Project One, 21 schools in the independent sector participated in the *Evaluating Excellence in Independent Schools* program. Seven of these schools have commenced participation since the last report in April 2013.

This program has involved schools collecting and analysing data from a range of sources to identify areas in leadership and teaching and learning that could improve student learning and performance. As a result of analysis of the data, targeted professional learning has been identified for the leaders and teachers in the schools. This has also required the development of an action plan to implement and review the areas of focus.

Project Two - Building instructional leadership capacity

The development of leadership capacity in the government sector is being facilitated by the appointment and capacity building of leadership officers - 25 experienced principals who have been appointed for a period of 6 months to:

- establish an evidenced-based approach to guide school direction and provide leadership support for different local contexts
- develop professional relationships with principals to assist in the development of successful administrative, adaptive and enabling leadership modes
- promote the development of innovative learning alliances to build educational and leadership capacity for aspiring executive, newly appointed and experienced principals and their mentors in networks of schools
- enhance school cultures that promote innovative and transformative approaches to leadership, teaching practices and collective efficacy
- coach a learning alliance project.

The work of the leadership officers is informed by the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*, the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the *National School Improvement Tool*. Their role is also to support the implementation of the Dynamic Learning System, a transformational learning and leadership framework designed to create highly effective planning and learning systems for teachers, school leaders and the public education system. The leadership officers attended two state conferences which built their knowledge of current research, AITSL materials and developed their coaching skills.

Building instructional leadership capacity was also a focus in the Catholic sector, with principals in Newcastle/Maitland, for example, attending system assembly days to focus on the theme, 'the principal as a leader of learning'.

Within the Sydney Diocese, workshops were held for KLA Coordinators and Leaders of Pedagogy, with international presenters Ewan McIntosh and Tom Barrett, to build the capacity of these participants to use the *Design Thinking* process in the development of innovative pedagogy.

Leadership teams in the Diocese also sought to enhance leadership capacity through attendance at an Early Years conference, centring around pedagogy and teacher enquiry. The Diocese also focused on building the capacity of school leadership teams to engage with the Australian Curriculum and the AITSL framework to enhance their ability to build the capacity of teachers in both of these areas.

A coaching course and professional learning supported school leaders in Wollongong Diocese to be more effective in their roles through guiding self-reflection, self-improvement and development and guiding the management of self and others.

In the Bathurst Diocese, the focus was on professional development for principals and assistant principals around issues related to the *Quality Catholic Education Framework*, information sharing and updates on the developments related to the NSW Institute of Teachers and ACARA.

The Broken Bay Diocese hosted a *Master Class for Secondary Principals*, designed to strengthen the professional leadership capacity of secondary leaders and to support school improvement priorities within schools. The Diocese also held a workshop *Leading Learning Through the Middle Leaders (Secondary Schools)*, designed to strengthen the professional leadership capacity of secondary middle leaders and to support school improvement priorities within their school. The workshop focused on the role of middle leaders in leading teacher learning and development with their staff to improve student learning outcomes.

The Canberra Goulburn Diocese supported principals through its Development Centre and *360° Feedback*, providing an intensive leadership program for principals. Other initiatives in the Diocese to develop instructional leadership capacity included:

- Principals Support and Development Program - an intensive focus for those in their first two years of leadership to assist in understanding the role as the leader of a Catholic school
- Principals Professional Development Project - individualised program of professional development involving study, research and experience
- Coaching and Conducting Coaching Conversations program - to develop a systematic culture and common language of coaching through providing principals with opportunities to be coached and to learn the skills of coaching.

Schools in the independent sector engaged in building instructional leadership through the *Foundation Leadership Program for Senior Executives*. This has provided senior executives with the knowledge and skills required to successfully contribute to the leadership of an independent school. It includes a wide range of leadership and management issues, many of which are seldom addressed through professional learning.

Sixteen independent primary school principals and emerging leaders have also participated in the *Principals as Literacy Leaders* project. Research and practice indicate that literacy results improve when the principal and executive are involved in curriculum leadership. This project has focused on improving reading outcomes in primary schools by training principals and emerging leaders in aspects of leadership and literacy instruction. The first cohort of this group has completed training modules that have built capacity to know about and lead learning to read. This has included learning to lead literacy data gathering, analysis and design and then to implement and monitor literacy intervention. All modules are aligned to the National Standards for Principals.

Project Three - Leading improvement, innovation and change

Principal association projects were established in the government sector to focus on system-wide innovation, learning and improvement in 2013 and 2014, with \$629,000 allocated to the NSW Primary Principals' Association and the NSW Secondary Principals' Council. The principal associations both initiated professional development projects for principals and aspiring leaders:

- NSW Primary Principals' Association: *The Art of Leadership*. Evaluation comments from this project, *Art of Leadership*, were extremely positive, acknowledging the learning and skill development that occurred.

- NSW Secondary Principals' Council: *Leading Principal Mental Health and Well Being*

Each association also developed proposals for principal credentialing:

- NSW Primary Principals' Association: *NSW Primary Principal Association Principal Credential*
- NSW Secondary Principals' Council: *SPC Leaders Contributing to Leadership Pathways*.

The following outcomes are being embedded in the development of principal credentials and modules

- better succession planning for school leaders
- school leaders better supported so they can drive quality teaching in their schools
- new school leadership credentials provide pathways to employment as a school leader.

In the Catholic sector, each diocese supported initiatives relevant to the aims of Project Three. Leadership teams in the Sydney Diocese, for example, from both secondary and primary schools attended a full day professional learning workshop on instructional rounds and innovative pedagogies.

In Lismore, the *Principal Professional Growth Package* provides three components: group professional activity, small group professional development (conference) and individual professional development.

A leadership framework, culminating in the '*Leading the Way*' document, was developed in the Bathurst Diocese, with the Catholic Education Office collaborating with diocesan principals. The framework seeks to 'inspire, challenge, educate and support leadership development and practice, in the areas of faith, learning and stewardship'.

The Broken Bay Diocese supported several initiatives related to leading innovation and change, including leadership forums to help build system-wide capability using context-informed strategic plans and annual school improvement plans and developing skills in effecting positive change and building relational trust. The Diocese also held cluster workshops in which material presented in *Leadership Forum 3* was further developed in smaller groups of schools. Key focus areas were the use of data and strategic planning, as well as developing open professional communication centred on improving learning outcomes for students.

Leading improvement, innovation and change was also a key theme in the Wilcannia/Forbes Diocese. Seven school communities are participating in the '*Team Leadership for School Improvement K-12*' Program. This initiative guides and supports school teams through an improvement cycle leading to enhanced student performance, increased leadership capacity for both teachers and principals and whole school improvement. School teams have used the NSW DET *Analytical Framework* to identify priorities and plan customised actions for improvement in literacy and numeracy.

In the independent schools sector, Project Three has involved schools implementing an online performance review and development system for leaders and teachers. Schools have selected school goals that target improvement in teacher quality and have implemented a system involving teachers and leaders reflecting on their practice, identifying areas for improvement, participating in professional learning and collecting evidence of improved performance that includes observations of practice.

Project Four - Principal Preparation Pathways

A key focus for the government sector has been the development of coaching as a strategy to develop leadership capacity, with coaches and leadership officers attending training sessions in coaching. The capacity of leadership officers has also been developed through a newly developed *NSW Leadership Officers Program*. This program provides individual coaching for each leadership officer, integrating the results of the AITSL 360 tool undertaken by all leadership officers.

Four leadership coaching programs have been developed in the government sector to support leadership pathways which will reflect developmental stages of leadership from administrative through to enabling leadership:

- *New Leaders – the first 150 days*
- *Leading Transformation*
- *Coaching for Systems Leadership*
- *Mentoring and Coaching Certification program*

Within the Catholic sector, the *Emerging Leaders Program* in the Parramatta Diocese assists teachers, who are already in leadership/management roles in their schools, to become more competent and confident in their positions and also provides support for teachers aspiring to such roles. In 2012, 61 staff joined the program.

Principal Mentoring and Coaching is a joint initiative which began in 2011 between Parramatta and Broken Bay Dioceses, together with Auckland University. The focus of the program is for experienced principals to mentor beginning principals. In 2012, four experienced principals mentored four beginning principals. In a second cohort, eight early career principals were identified and matched with eight experienced principals.

In the Armidale Diocese, a structured induction program has been developed for new principals and acting principals, to provide targeted support for principals throughout their first two years of service with the Diocese. The Diocese also developed an *Assistant Principal Formation Program* to support assistant principals to become instructional leaders in schools.

In the independent sector initiatives relevant to Project Four have been designed to increase the number of potential principals as well as developing the leadership capacity of principals. *The Foundation Leadership Program for Middle Leaders* is designed to challenge middle leaders to see themselves and their role as strategic leaders of their team and as a part of their school's leadership structure. Since the April report, 30 middle leaders have attended this course and another two courses are scheduled for later in the year.

The *AIS Leadership Centre Flagship Program* for senior leaders and emerging principals was offered for the first time in 2012-2013, with a second cohort planned for 2013-2014. The design of this holistic multi-phased leadership development program includes peer-learning, shadowing, 'professional companionship', ongoing reflection, e-learning and change project leadership. In addition, successful completion of the course contributes two units towards a Masters in Educational Leadership from the University of NSW. The Program is currently being evaluated. Two tranches of interviews have already been conducted, with interim reports checked with all participants. The findings of the evaluation thus far indicate that the *Flagship Program* is meeting or exceeding expectations.

Principal Professional Development

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Project 4: Principal preparation pathways	<p>Number of participants engaged:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="4">Emerging Principals</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Males</th> <th>Females</th> <th>Total</th> <th>ATSI</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Count</td> <td>N/A**</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>1215</td> <td>N/A*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proportion of total</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>100%</td> <td>N/A*</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status is not available from all sectors as a reliable figure and is therefore unable to be reported on a state-wide basis.</p> <p>** Due to variations in administrative/counting processes across the sectors it is not possible to report the state-wide gender breakdown for Project Four.</p> <p>Number of professional learning units aligned to National Standard for Principals: 55</p>		Emerging Principals					Males	Females	Total	ATSI	Count	N/A**	N/A	1215	N/A*	Proportion of total	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A*	<p>Number of participants to be engaged:</p> <p>Emerging principals - 300</p> <p>Number of professional learning units aligned to National Standard for Principals</p>
	Emerging Principals																					
	Males	Females	Total	ATSI																		
Count	N/A**	N/A	1215	N/A*																		
Proportion of total	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A*																		
	<p>Total number of professional learning units aligned with National Professional Standard for Principals: 255***</p> <p>Project 1 = 99</p> <p>Project 2 = 47</p> <p>Project 3 = 54</p> <p>Project 4 = 55</p> <p>TOTAL = 255***</p> <p>*** Note that due to variations in administrative/counting processes and extensive range of professional development activity across the sectors, it is not possible to express this number as a proportion of total (aligned plus non-aligned) learning units developed by all sectors across NSW for principals and emerging principals.</p>																					

Section 2 – Low SES School Communities

Significant Achievements/Highlights - 1 January to 30 June 2013

Schools across all three sectors have continued to achieve positive outcomes from their participation in the National Partnership.

Incentives to attract high performing teachers and principals

Funding received through the National Partnership supports a range of strategies to attract and retain high performing teachers and executive:

- professional learning programs have been implemented in schools to target leadership skills, teaching strategies, use of curriculum, and evaluation methods
- strategies have also been put in place to identify leaders in priority learning areas and provide staff with opportunities for networking and mentoring
- a number of schools have recruited additional staff or executive to improve teacher capacity, lead teaching/learning programs, and support curriculum development.

Highly Accomplished Teachers (and sector equivalents)

Since 2012 in the government sector, three additional Highly Accomplished Teachers (HATs) have been accredited at the Highly Accomplished or Lead level, with another 71 having submitted their accreditation documents. Two HATs have been promoted to deputy principal positions, and two have been promoted to principal positions.

HATs continue to make valuable contributions in the government sector:

- at Bega Valley Public School the HAT has developed more effective strategies to identify student needs, and worked to embed teaching of writing skills across the curriculum using the NSW DEC *Quality Teaching Framework*. The HAT has advised the school community on the new curriculum, as well as facilitating the In2Uni project with the University of Wollongong
- at Merewether Public School the HAT has provided regular mentoring sessions to teachers and twice yearly mentoring on effective assessment practices using Planche's 4C teacher buddy system
- Hampden Park Public School's HAT facilitates specific programs such as *Language, Learning and Literacy (L3)* and *Teaching English Language Learners (TELL)*. School-level data indicates that all Year 3 ESL Phase 1 students are achieving at or above proficiency in both reading and numeracy
- Wyong Public School employs a HAT in a mentoring role to improve teacher quality. Together, the deputy principal and the HAT support teachers to use the continuums in literacy and numeracy; for example, facilitating effective implementation of integrated units aligned to the *Accelerated Literacy* texts.

The Catholic sector utilises 'Teacher Educators' to facilitate professional learning. For example, St Patrick's Cessnock employed a Teacher Educator to work on differentiating curriculum content through improved questioning techniques. All staff have benefited from a range of coaching strategies, including peer observation, team teaching, focused practice, and peer-to-peer feedback.

Similarly, the independent sector has benefited greatly from the input of experienced teachers:

- the Special Education teacher at Al Amanah College (Bankstown and Liverpool) has led whole-school professional development on identifying and responding to at-risk students, including assessment and support strategies. The College reports that the earlier emphasis on quality documentation has resulted in a unified approach to learning

support across both school campuses.

- Al Faisal College Auburn has been able to employ three highly experienced teachers – two with literacy and curriculum expertise, and one within Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expertise. This has improved the capacity of existing staff to teach phonics and guided reading, as well as embed ICT within their lessons.

Employment of additional executive staff and teaching staff

A total of 276 government schools have taken the opportunity to employ additional executive staff. Additional executive support has allowed for a greater emphasis on staff development in areas such as data analysis, differentiating curricula, providing individualised learning, and embedding the *Quality Teaching Framework* into the curriculum:

- Punchbowl Public School employs an assistant principal K-2 to implement explicit and systematic teaching of literacy and numeracy within the *Quality Teaching Framework* through programs such as SMART data, *Best Start*, and *Count Me In Too*. The school has decreased the percentage of students at or below minimum standard in NAPLAN reading, as well as increasing the percentage of students achieving at or above proficiency
- Alexandria Park Community School established a School Learning Success Teacher position to promote prior to school learning and identify students at risk. They also appointed a transition advisor to work collaboratively with the Head Teacher Careers and a transition team to provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and case management strategies to assist students. This includes a sustainable career planning process to support retention. Discounting students who completed the HSC at another high school, the retention rate from Years 10 to 12 has increased significantly to 77%
- the additional Deputy Principal, Literacy and Numeracy at Muswellbrook South Public School is leading professional learning and enhancing leadership capacity. Teacher comments indicate that the creation of the Deputy Principal position with its particular focus has been a successful strategy in embedding improved literacy and numeracy strategies across all Key Learning Areas (KLAs). The school has exceeded its target for Year 5 reading scores for Aboriginal students, and the percentage of all Year 5 students above minimum standards in reading, writing and numeracy was greater than similar schools
- Fairfield High School has created a Head Teacher Teaching and Learning position to drive whole staff professional learning on data analysis. This has resulted in increased staff confidence in accessing data through *SmartData2*. Students identify the Head Teacher Teaching and Learning as key to understanding NAPLAN results. The school reports that literacy and numeracy key messages have been reinforced in many forums resulting from a cultural shift of shared responsibility. All faculties developed NAPLAN reading components in Stage 4 assessment tasks
- Shoalhaven High School employs faculty literacy and numeracy coordinators to utilise NAPLAN data to establish baselines so that school and student data can be analysed to inform whole-school focus areas and strategies. The coordinators assist in the development of resources for literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) across all faculties and coordinate whole school professional learning. The coordinators support faculties in incorporating the practical application of the *School Measurement and Reporting Toolkit* (SMART) data package materials into classroom planning with a specific focus on KLA specific item analysis
- Niland School for Specific Purposes (SSP) provides educational and behavioural programs for students with emotional and intellectual disabilities. Literacy and numeracy assessment data is used to identify growth in student learning and develop individual student education programs. A teacher has been employed to relieve the literacy and numeracy coordinators, to allow the coordinators to implement their respective

programs. This includes monitoring of school-wide assessment, data collection and analysis, providing professional learning to staff, providing additional targeted support to individual students and developing resources.

Within the Catholic sector:

- schools in the Lismore Diocese have employed a Leader of Pedagogy to establish and develop professional learning teams. Curriculum development is a major focus of these teams, which have based their approach on the research of Richard and Rebecca DuFour
- the employment of a Diocesan National Partnership Coordinator in the Wollongong Diocese has supported principals and leadership teams to implement the National Partnership reforms
- Parkes Christian School, in the independent sector, established two new leadership positions in Student Welfare and Early Career Development. These new roles provide more support to early career teachers and are contributing to the development of more consistent school-wide approaches to curriculum delivery and student management. The new positions also allow the principal to focus on leading whole-school improvement initiatives.

Leadership development

Participation in the National Partnership is continuing to provide professional learning opportunities that build leadership capacity and drive improvement in government schools.

328 school principals indicated their intention to engage in further professional learning, with 120 indicating they have a mentoring relationship to enhance their leadership skills:

- the Tuntable Creek Public School Principal attends the teaching principals (Big Scrub) meetings once per term for professional learning in leading change and implementing flexible management approaches. Following from this, teachers at the school have a professional learning plan linked to whole-school priorities, and mentoring/sharing days with colleagues have increased staff confidence in their teaching skills. Observation of classroom practice indicates more effective use of technology in teaching and learning. The school believes that students are confidently using resources appropriate to their learning
- Hampden Park Public School promoted improved group leadership practice, leadership capability enhanced by evidenced-based research and practice, as well as the participation of 12 executive in the *Australian Growth Coaching* program. Growth coaching has increased the capacity of every leader to mentor others using processes such as goal setting and effective feedback. The establishment of a Future Leaders group has provided a framework for succession planning in the School. This has built the capacity of aspiring leaders, several of whom have since successfully applied through a rigorous Expression of Interest (EOI) process to lead stage and curriculum based programs and teams. The School employed an Assistant Principal Teacher Mentor to develop emerging leadership capacity in the management of resources, including staffing, IT and budgets. This officer also leads teacher professional learning in the use of the Department of Education and Communities *Quality Teaching Framework* for Early Career Teachers and supported their accreditation process
- the Cabramatta Community of Schools (Cabramatta High School, Cabramatta Public School and Cabramatta West Public School) has strategies K-12 to improve student learning in literacy and numeracy. It involves reviewing pedagogy and school leadership and management procedures. School leadership teams are examining the effective practices of schools identified by Professor John Hattie (in *Schools that achieve extraordinary success: How some Victorian schools 'punch above their weight'* (2010)). This activity is providing ideas and issues for discussion, leading to significant change in systems and structures.

Within the Catholic sector:

- in the Canberra Goulburn Archdiocese, school leaders are provided with system-based professional learning which includes *Principals as Literacy Leaders* and *Transforming Teaching and Learning*. These courses are conducted by Catholic Education Officers through a series of workshops, and investigate areas of the curriculum, effective approaches to whole-school change in literacy and ways to maximise teacher expertise and support teacher learning. This approach assists principals to place effective staff in key literacy positions, support professional learning, develop literacy plans and promote effective literacy approaches in programming, assessment and teaching approach, implementation of literacy blocks, parent workshops and good models in use of support teacher staffing
- professional learning opportunities in the Wollongong Diocese have been provided for principals through system network meetings and cluster meetings, as well as through conferences and forums. Mentoring programs involving newly appointed principals in two National Partnership schools with more experienced principals have been well supported.

Two recently appointed Principals at Parkes Christian School and Sydney Adventist School Auburn have just completed the Newly Appointed Principals 10 day course delivered by the AIS Leadership Centre. This course includes a coaching relationship with an experienced principal. The Principal from Sydney Adventist School Auburn is also participating in the Principals as Leaders of Literacy course provided by the AIS.

Staff coaching/mentoring and professional learning

NSW government schools are implementing a range of coaching and mentoring strategies. These strategies enhance the capacity of school-based personnel to deliver ongoing and consistent support for teachers and enable individualised improvements in teaching and learning. School plans for 2013 indicate that 379 schools have explicit mentoring programs for teachers, with 177 of these having mentoring programs in place specifically for early career teachers.

Strategies indicated in school plans include modelling, team teaching, opportunities for reflective dialogue between colleagues and collegial programming. The purpose is to build the capacity of all teachers to embed best practice in curriculum, pedagogy and classroom management into their own teaching and learning programs and practice. For example:

- Birrong Girls High School has created Quality Teaching Mentor positions to support the provision of personalised professional learning for individual teachers. These Mentors, through formalised links with the University of Newcastle, are appointed to faculties and engage in collaborative and innovative professional learning with individual teachers. In supporting the achievement of school targets, mentors work productively with teachers of varying levels of experience, from early career teachers to teachers seeking promotion. The evaluation of the Quality Teaching Mentor program reveals strong support, with 86% of staff indicating the mentor program had significantly assisted in the development of quality learning programs and in addressing faculty teaching and learning needs
- Kandos High School has established an in-school Teacher Mentor program where 10 early career teachers are supported by four teacher mentors through modelling, demonstration, professional discussion and sharing of quality teaching practice. The school has created a Head Teacher Mentor position to coordinate the program including the coordination of early career teachers, the *Teacher Assessment Review Schedule* (TARS) processes and all aspects of the NSW Institute of Teachers (NSWIT) accreditation
- Lightning Ridge Central School, together with other National Partnership schools in the Bourke School Education Group, has employed a Quality Teaching Mentor. The mentor works with teachers and students in a wide range of activities designed to enhance quality teaching in the school. Particular attention has been paid to the interpretation of

key data sources, including *Best Start*, NAPLAN, and the Higher School Certificate (HSC)

- Windang Public School employs an external provider to provide individual coaching and mentoring to all teaching staff. Each teacher receives 80 minutes of individual literacy mentoring each fortnight that is differentiated and based on their level of professional experience, understanding and practice. The literacy mentor/coach is also responsible for leading all teaching staff through the process of curriculum review for a whole-school approach to curriculum content and delivery. Staff reported that the provision of strategic professional learning through employment of a literacy mentor/coach has improved confidence in their ability to support reading in their classrooms. All students K-2 achieved appropriate *Reading Recovery* levels and student results in NAPLAN Reading for Years 3, 5 and 7 were above that of similar schools
- all teachers at Carrington Public School are given a quarter-day release per term for quality teaching lesson observation. Staff surveys indicate that time used to observe and code a colleague's lessons for NSW DEC *Quality Teaching Framework* elements significantly changed their thinking around teaching and changed their own teaching practices
- the employment of a *Language, Learning and Literacy* (L3) facilitator at Cessnock East Public School provides ongoing teacher professional learning at stage and individual levels. Teachers involved in the L3 training indicate an improvement in their knowledge, understanding and implementation of guided reading and writing. L3 strategies and teaching methods are embedded into early stage one teaching and learning cycle. The school target to increase the percentage of Year 3 students at or above the minimum standard in 2012 NAPLAN reading was achieved with 100% of Year 3 students reaching that standard
- all teachers at Auburn West Public School engaged in professional learning programs on quality literacy teaching such as *Focus on Reading* and Language, and Learning and Literacy (L3). Teachers involved in the *Focus on Reading* program have developed their knowledge of the reading process, particularly in terms of comprehension. More significantly, through dialogue with the Quality Teaching Mentor, teachers have improved their skills in teaching students to comprehend what they have read. Kindergarten teachers utilised the L3 program to improve their knowledge and ability to teach fundamental reading skills, including the key areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, hearing and recording sounds and vocabulary. This program is being extended to Year 1 teachers through the provision of a Quality Teaching Leader, who mentors teachers in their implementation of the L3 program principles within the classroom. All teachers are very positive about the impact of the programs on teaching practices, professional knowledge and student learning outcomes.

Within the Catholic schools:

- St Peter's Catholic College in Tuggerah Lakes has provided Key Learning Area (KLA) coordinators with an additional four periods of release time within a 10 day cycle. Coordinators use this time to mentor, coach, and support classroom teachers in order to refine and improve instructional practice within an evidence-based framework
- in the Diocese of Bathurst, the Principal Mentor program involves an experienced principal and a new principal. These Principals mentor each other and regularly contact one another. In one example, two principals selected a Professional Development Project based upon their personal goals for 2013. After investigating the professional development available which fitted with their goals, the principals selected a one day program which focused upon addressing individual needs in the classroom through ICT usage
- at St Mary's Primary School, Moruya, the Numeracy Intervention Program (NIP) teacher attends five days of professional learning, to deepen the teacher's pedagogical knowledge and understanding in a collegial environment with other NIP teachers in the Diocese.

Schools in the independent sector are using both internal and external mentors to provide specific and targeted support to teachers, including providing ongoing professional learning and mentoring for the mentors themselves:

- at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School 12 teachers are being mentored by an external AIS consultant. This is the second step in a whole-school professional learning approach to quality teaching which began in 2012. Nine New Scheme Teachers are being mentored for their accreditation by a team of more experienced teachers and led by the curriculum facilitator, while a highly experienced teacher from another school visits to mentor and coach nominated staff as required. A team of teachers have been working with an external consultant on ESL Pedagogy while others are continuing to focus on improving literacy
- Moree Christian School has employed a mentor for the purposes of curriculum writing, to address one of the challenges that remoteness and isolation provides for professional learning. All teachers are provided with time out of class to work on programs with the mentor, to focus on better understanding the syllabus, developing richer scope and sequences, unit plans and curricular resources that are meeting syllabus requirements and the needs of the students. Within the scope of the mentoring time the school has developed a new curriculum policy as well as whole-school scope and sequences for literacy.

Adoption of best practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals

All NSW government schools in the National Partnership follow agreed processes for performance management through the *Teachers Assessment Review Schedule* (TARS), the *Executive Assessment and Review Schedule* (EARS) and the *Principal Assessment and Review Schedule* (PARS). The TARS and EARS processes are school-based performance management processes.

A total of 522 government schools indicated they were implementing programs that supported performance management, 344 schools were implementing Professional Learning Plans for teachers and 117 schools referred to using the professional teaching standards in relation to teacher performance. Examples include:

- a more formalised TARS and EARS process is being implemented at Murrumburrah Public School, including the development of professional learning plans for teachers and school executives based on key accountabilities linked to performance reviews using the NSW Institute of Teachers' Professional Teaching Standards. Through cyclical performance reviews, the school focuses on areas for teacher professional learning to continually improve teaching practice leading to improved student learning
- teachers at Urunga Public School are bringing about change through TARS, EARS and PARS. They have developed several formats which directly reflect their teaching practices and align with school targets, the National Partnership Reforms, the *Quality Teaching Framework* and NSW Institute of Teachers (NSWIT) Professional Teaching Standards. The teachers have seen this as enhancing their professional practice and producing benefits for the school and students
- all teachers at Warrawong High School successfully participated in TARS and EARS, which focus on the identification of professional learning needs for teachers and the executive for inclusion in their Professional Learning Plans. The TARS and EARS processes make explicit reference to areas identified through NAPLAN data analysis and student achievement tracking sheets, and foster greater teacher self-reflection and collegiality among staff
- Doonside Public School employed an additional Deputy Principal for mentoring teachers in quality literacy teaching. Teaching and learning programs are reflecting links with the NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards.

The continued deployment of the curriculum coordinator at Blacktown Youth College (independent sector) has enabled the oversight of staffing arrangements, timetabling and curriculum programming by someone other than the Principal. The curriculum coordinator monitors the performance of teachers and facilitates professional development. This strategy has allowed the Principal to concentrate on the overall vision of the school, strategic planning as well as revision of school policies and procedures.

At another independent school, Macleay Vocational College staff are given the opportunity to submit feedback to the Principal via personal interviews each semester and through surveys to assess how the College and each individual within the organisation is seen as a valued member of the organisation. The Principal spends time each week visiting every classroom and actively participates in the College's writing program by making comments on an individual student's work and rewarding students' efforts. The College also has a school-wide teacher appraisal system using *Appretio*.

School operational arrangements that encourage innovation and flexibility

Schools in all sectors use a range of organisational practices to implement innovations and to enhance existing practices. By strategically using National Partnership resources in 2013, schools have used new technologies, reviewed timetable options and work experience opportunities, collaborated across networks of schools and formed partnerships with universities.

Schools working together

Within the government sector, a community of school (COS) approach has been developed between Bonnyrigg High School, Elizabeth Macarthur High School, Prairiewood High School, Moorebank High School Sir Joseph Banks High School, Chipping Norton Public School, Nuwarra Public School and Newbridge Heights Public School. An additional Deputy Principal and Head Teacher Literacy were employed to support improvements in leadership and management across the COS. A literacy team was formed and meets regularly. Based on data analysis the team established the *Super Six Reading Comprehension Strategy* as a focus for professional learning and implementation across the schools. A parent workshop was conducted for 45 parents from the COS on the strategy.

In collaboration with the University of Wollongong, the following government schools have developed a program for gifted and talented students: Windang Public School, Farmborough Road Public School, Berkeley West Public School, Berkeley Public School, Lake Heights Public School, Warrawong Public School, Cringila Public School, Port Kembla Public School, Primbee Public School, Lake Illawarra South Public School, Mount Warrigal Public School, Koonawarra Public School and Warilla North Public School. The students meet once a week at and explore a range of curriculum content. Students have used Claymation techniques, participated in writing workshops with a visiting author and visited the University to undertake a graphic design workshop and a robotics course. The initiative has provided high achieving students with the opportunity to participate in a problem-based learning group.

A network of shared professional learning is being conducted involving Canley Vale Public School, Harrington Street Public School, Lansvale Public School, Carramar Public School, Lansvale East Public School and St Johns Park Public School. The professional learning involves interschool visits, workshops demonstrations and forums and is based on identified common needs and school strengths.

An ongoing network of nine principals has formed the Western Gateway Educational Community (WGEC). The network includes Capertee Public School, Coerwall Public School, Cullen Bullen Public School, Hampton Public School, Lithgow High School, Lithgow Public School, Portland Central School, Wallerawang Public School and Zig Zag Public School. One of the significant elements of this network is the joint professional learning program attended by a combination of primary and secondary teachers, which focuses on teacher quality and development. The activities of the group have been strengthened by the employment of two

shared positions through the National Partnership: a National Partnership Mentor and a Connected Learning Coach. The activities of the network include:

- the sharing of professional expertise and resources
- formal and informal meetings of principals to discuss matters relating to school leadership
- professional development focusing on literacy, numeracy, transition programs and the implementation of the Australian Curriculum
- shared curriculum planning and the development of joint teaching programs
- identification of effective approaches to student assessment and the development of student tracking systems
- the development of professional learning plans for all staff and participation in a range of online professional learning opportunities such as *Count Me In Too* and Inclusion Online
- sporting activities and excursions within groups of small schools.

Staff within the WGECC highly valued the professional development opportunities and identified them as key strategies leading to an increase in student learning and teacher quality. Principals have indicated that they find the professional support they offer each other to be highly beneficial. Other principals and executive from schools beyond the network are beginning to attend pertinent WGECC meetings, further strengthening the professional community. The participants believe that the effectiveness of the network will continue to grow beyond the end of the National Partnership.

The use of videoconferencing within the Wollongong Diocese has assisted principals and leadership teams from three Low SES schools to share their expertise. Professional learning opportunities have been provided for principals through system network meetings and cluster meetings as well through conferences and forums. Mentoring programs with newly appointed principals in two of the schools have been well supported and the ongoing employment of a highly experienced principal in one low SES school has supported the implementation of National Partnership activity.

Through National Partnership funding, Kempsey Adventist School (KAS) has continued to grow and develop a three-school partnership with Knox Grammar School and Ravenswood School for Girls. In July 2013 the inaugural Knox/Ravenswood/KAS three-day Staff Conference, *Learn-Connect-Envisage*, was held in Sydney. This conference brought together the entire teaching staff from the three schools for a time of rich professional learning, peer support and the establishment of ongoing networking frameworks. The benefit of this program to the teachers at KAS has been significant, not only with regards to the professional support offered by their peers from the other two schools, but also understanding that their own work and programming is respected and sought after by schools in other contexts who see both the KAS teachers and their work as a valuable resource.

In another example of collaboration in the independent sector, three teachers from Namoi Valley Christian School (NVCS) have visited both Minimbah Primary School in Armidale and Moree Christian School. At Minimbah they discussed the different programs they had in place to help the overall learning of Aboriginal students. The teachers were also able to see how different teachers managed the learning needs of Aboriginal learners. This resulted in some changes to practices at NVCS. At Moree Christian School, NVCS teachers were able to spend time with a teacher who has a class with a similar structure (similar grades in the class) to observe different practices, as well as developing a better understanding of how to focus on improving literacy.

University partnerships (to support teacher practicum and teacher learning)

(Note also the additional later heading related to university partnerships supporting student transitions)

Hillvue Public School engages an academic partner from the University of New England to work with Stage 2 teachers to strengthen action research in classrooms, with a focus on the NSW DEC *Quality Teaching Framework* and integrating technology. The Department of Rural Health

within the University of Newcastle supports the Eat Well 2 Learn Well Breakfast Club and the after school homework centre.

Teachers from James Busby High School work with an academic from the University of Western Sydney to facilitate an action learning project aligning the NSW DEC *Quality Teaching Framework*. The project allows opportunities for teachers to work in teams across faculties to collaboratively design lessons around engaging student learning and classroom observation. Action learning projects have involved 60% of staff.

Ashcroft High School, the Ingham's Applied Medical Research Institute and the University of New South Wales are conducting a five-year study into student health and its effects on learning outcomes. A clinical coordinator is employed for two days a week to join the Student Support Services team. A targeted group of Year 7 students are assessed and students are screened for hearing, dental, vision, height/weight proportions, mental health and any other manifesting issues. Teachers and parents form part of the data collection.

Birrong Girls High School has a partnership with the University of Newcastle with a focus on NSW DEC *Quality Teaching Framework* to build and consolidate teacher capacity. Academics from the University work with all faculties to support teacher professional learning and strengthen classroom practice.

An example of a university partnership in the Catholic sector focusing on literacy is the work done by Adjunct Associate Professor Kaye Lowe at the University of Canberra, who has worked with secondary school principals, school executive, teaching and support staff at Carroll College Broulee and Sacred Heart Central Cootamundra to provide professional learning, facilitate professional conversations, and implement and support the intensive secondary reading program, *iRead*.

Many of the independent schools participating in the Low SES National Partnership have ongoing relationships with a range of universities through the provision of practicum places for teaching students. Schools in the partnership provide teacher practicum positions for students from the University of Western Sydney, University of New England, Macquarie University, and others.

Specialised staffing resources

Within the government sector, specialised staff support the learning environments in a number of ways:

- Blairmount Public School employs two paraprofessionals, a Technology Learning Facilitator and an Aboriginal/Pasifika community engagement officer (CEO). The Technology Learning Facilitator has implemented an SMS absence notification system targeting students whose attendance rate has fallen below the school target. The school website has been redesigned to improve access to school events and documents by the community. The provision of computer support and technology upgrades has resulted in better management and effective use of the school's technology. The Aboriginal/Pasifika CEO provides a contact for the community to access information. There is positive feedback from parents regarding the impact of the Aboriginal playgroup, coordinated by the CEO, in supporting their children's education from an early age. There has also been a significant increase in the number of parents attending personalised learning plan meetings.
- A technology learning facilitator is employed at Wyong Grove Public School to support teachers to facilitate the use of technology for student centred classroom activities and to ensure that curriculum leaders develop whole school capacity in technology, literacy and numeracy in line with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The employment of this paraprofessional has enabled teachers to concentrate on integrating technology into their teaching rather than solving IT problems.
- James Busby High School has established a Re-engagement Centre to identify students in Year 8 who fall below national minimum benchmarks in literacy and numeracy and who have become disengaged from their learning due to absences, truancy, lateness

and behaviour. The program, coordinated by the National Partnership funded Head Teacher Re-engagement, delivers intensive literacy and numeracy teaching with a focus on behavioural targets. The centre combines an alternative in-house learning setting with an additional Learning Assistance Support Teacher and Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) assistance. Students are supported through individual learning plans (ILPs) and an external mentoring program with Youth Connections.

- South Grafton High School employs a technology learning facilitator to conduct teacher professional learning in the use of technology and to coordinate the expansion of technology across the school. A wireless network has been completed throughout the school and the base server line has been upgraded. Data has been collected and digitised across the school. Support for staff and students is provided in both hardware and software. Teachers were asked to rate the support they have received from the Technology Learning Facilitator, with 97% stating it was highly valuable.

Many specialist staff continue to be employed with participating independent schools as a result of National Partnership funding. These specialist staff have skills in Literacy, ESL, Special Education and ICT. The provision of ICT resources have been provided with professional learning and mentoring available to the teaching staff to support the effective use of technology to improve student learning particularly in literacy and numeracy.

At Macleay Vocational College, the National Partnership funded Resource Teacher and the RTO General Manager collaborate to provide support and opportunities for the senior students to complete assessments, class work and research for courses and careers. To facilitate this, a timetable has been constructed to allow for a dedicated student support lesson every week and to provide both staff members time on two other occasions in the week to work collaboratively.

Innovative operational practices and flexible timetabling

All three sectors have continued to implement flexible practices to best suit the needs of students and teachers:

- Moorebank High School has reduced the head teachers' face-to-face teaching load to support faculty leadership and the management of the school's improvement priorities, including literacy and numeracy, in the context of each KLA. The school employs a Head Teacher (HT) Literacy and a HT Numeracy to provide mentoring programs across all KLAs involving collaborative planning, team teaching, lesson observation and constructive feedback. The HT Literacy provided professional learning to the school's literacy team as a sustainability measure to ensure the ongoing leadership of literacy programs at the conclusion of the National Partnership. The school reports that the strategy to employ a HT Literacy and a HT Numeracy over two years greatly supported the improvement of staff confidence in using NAPLAN SMART data to inform planning
- Bradbury Public School provides additional release for the executive through the employment of Assistant Principal Mentors, to mentor classroom teachers in the implementation of quality teaching practices in reading. Staff are supported by an ongoing targeted professional learning program, which includes staff and stage meetings to explicitly define each model of best practice, demonstrations, opportunities for guided practice and small group discussions
- within the Broken Bay Catholic Diocese, KLA Coordinators have been provided with an additional four periods per 10-day cycle to enable them to be instructional leaders across their KLA. The goal is for KLA Coordinators to mentor, coach, and support classroom teachers to refine and improve instructional practice. A range of evidence-based strategies is being used by the KLA Coordinators to bring about such refinement and improvement. One such strategy is Instructional Walks and Talks, which enables leaders to better understand what is happening in the classroom so that they can positively influence practice
- since 2010, Regents Park Christian Community School (independent sector) has been providing 2 days release per term to teachers, during which time teachers work collaboratively to analyse assessment data and develop targeted learning activities for

the ensuing 5 weeks. This has led to greater student engagement, innovative teaching practices, and fewer behavioural problems

- to address the challenges revealed in the school's situational analysis, Manning Valley Anglican College created an additional English class in Year 7 and 8 to reduce class sizes for more targeted literacy focus. In order to address the challenges of providing a broad curriculum in a small school, Year 11 PDHPE is delivered out of normal school hours. By combining electives in Stage 5, a wider choice of subjects is provided for the small cohorts. Mentor teachers have been assigned to support students studying via distance education.

Using new technologies

In their 2013 school plans, 217 government schools indicated they were implementing new technologies in the classroom as a National Partnership strategy. Staff are supported in the implementation with differentiated professional learning covering the use of hardware such as laptops, iPads, interactive whiteboards and the use of *Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment* (Moodle). Examples from this sector include:

- Koorawatha Public School, Holmwood Public School and Cargo Public School are small schools working with The Henry Lawson High School to undertake a joint project called Pump up the Peas based around the development of scientific experiment. The Connected Learning Coach worked with both staff and students to develop their skills in using Video Conferencing Facilities and Adobe Captivate to create the final project presentation. The project has been very successful in developing skills and building relationships across these small rural schools
- Barellan Central School utilises a Moodle to coordinate learning programs that can be accessed by the learning community at all times. Students and teachers regularly participate in Moodle surveys and forums. Professional learning plans are uploaded on the school's Moodle. Ongoing teacher mentoring, professional dialogue and reflection are accessed from the school's Moodle site. Moodle statistics demonstrate increased integration of technology in all KLAs. The School is also a member of the highly successful Riverina Access Partnership (RAP) which utilises video conferencing technology to deliver the HSC curriculum across six schools
- The teachers at Glebe Public School use electronic mobile devices to support learning in grammar and punctuation. Teachers use writing-based learning objects on interactive whiteboards and use eBooks to improve comprehension and contribute to class blogs. An additional Assistant Principal is employed to explicitly support a range of strategies including the use of technology
- Kandos High School joins with other schools to employ a Head Teacher Technology to facilitate professional learning on the integration of interactive technology into classroom practice. The technology coach has proven very successful in the areas of student and staff laptop use and the ongoing involvement of staff in the *eiTeach* program. Teachers' use of the Moodle has increased by 10% over the past year with 62% of teachers regularly using interactive whiteboards
- Urana Central School has developed a different approach to curriculum delivery for Year 10. To make the transition to this, students have a mixed delivery for some subjects ranging from face to face lessons to video conferencing with another school. Stage 5 students can access combined elective classes. Students can now access a wider range of subjects, teachers and facilities
- Bass High School utilises the school's Moodle for student and staff surveys. Data collection through Moodle is a key instrument in building authentic feedback statistics to inform school strategies and targets. All teachers are trained in the use of Moodle as a teaching and learning tool for use in the classroom and as a dynamic and engaging resource and information source for the school community. Staff access teacher professional learning in Moodle and students can use Moodle to access career

information. Moodle is also used as a tool for on-line assessment and testing, evaluating and providing feedback across all KLAs

- Tolland Public School utilises iPads to enable students in the Special Education Unit to have easier access to the curriculum in all KLAs. The iPads facilitate a means of communication between non-verbal students and their teachers, family and peers. The provision of the iPads has enabled students to engage in meaningful learning, to become active learners and to learn basic cause/effect and decision making.

The use of videoconferencing in the Wollongong Catholic Diocese is one example of new technologies fostering the sharing of expertise between school leadership teams.

Manning Valley Anglican College and Al Zahra College, both in the independent sector, have developed school apps which provide another means of communication and collaboration at student and staff levels. The apps also provide an avenue for communication with parents.

For the students at Macleay Vocational College, access to the internet during lunch and recess on certain school days is filling a significant gap as most of these students do not have internet access at home. Students have also had a huge exposure to new technologies over the past 12 months but in particular with assessments being presented on PowerPoint and Webpage as well as using photography and morphing the digital images for visual art and design.

Providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities (including professional development)

Professional learning in data analysis

Schools recognise that it is essential to identify and target specific student needs in order to make measureable improvements. In 2013 school plans, 514 government schools indicated explicit professional learning for teachers in the analysis and use of data to inform their programming and planning. The school plans of 322 government schools indicated the use of *Best Start* data to inform teaching and learning. Both *Best Start* data and the SMART package provide teachers with detailed diagnostic information to inform teaching and learning to cater to individual learning needs. Examples of this professional learning in government schools include:

- all teachers at Windale Public School participate in professional learning on the use of data including the Kindergarten *Best Start* assessment. All Kindergarten to Year 2 teachers attend *Best Start* Network meetings and use a range of teaching strategies and resources promoted at the meeting. Teachers understand the use of the *Best Start* data to drive teaching and learning for Early Stage 1 students. Stage meeting minutes reflect teachers are engaging in the analysis of their literacy and numeracy teaching and sharing best practice. Teachers are using teaching ideas from the Interactive Literacy Continuum, evidenced in their teaching and learning programs and lesson observations. School targets for the achievement of appropriate *Reading Recovery* levels for Kindergarten and Stage 1 students were achieved
- Ashcroft Public School has changed the way it works by releasing an assistant principal to professionally develop all staff in assessment strategies for literacy and numeracy and the use of SMART data. Staff demonstrate an increased level of confidence in the use of student assessment data. Cooperative planning sessions now begin with an analysis of school collected data which informs teaching learning programs at all levels: whole-school, stage and individual class. A half-day meeting between the assistant principal and stage teams in the middle of each term has ensured everyone remains focused on student progress and teachers are adapting learning programs to meet the needs of all students
- St Marys Senior High School has conducted significant professional learning for program leaders in SMART data for Higher School Certificate (HSC) analysis in order to use this data more effectively and to reflect on teaching and learning practice. Evaluations of professional learning opportunities that focused on student data to inform planning were rated as highly valuable on teacher surveys. Every faculty now prepares detailed reports

on faculty performance using HSC SMART data, which also informs teaching and learning programs.

In the Lismore Catholic Diocese, schools have established professional learning teams to develop data analysis skills, providing for more innovative delivery strategies and tailored learning opportunities.

Within the Wollongong Catholic Archdiocese, three National Partnership schools have implemented:

- whole-school (K-6) professional learning in analysing data, in particular NAPLAN data and Diocesan designed reading assessments
- data driven decisions to create positive learning environments to maximise student learning
- data sources such as socio-cultural data, parent and community surveys used to inform School Review and Improvement plans.

In the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese, teacher capacity to use data effectively has significantly improved through provision of targeted professional learning through the National Partnership. Teachers report that their skills in understanding, analysing and interpreting academic, attendance and behavioural data have significantly improved. They use the practice of data review as a fundamental tool during collaboration and team work.

Professional learning in analysing NAPLAN data using the SMART packages has been undertaken in seven independent schools commencing the National Partnership. These schools report that this training has allowed teachers to analyse the students in their class and tailor learning opportunities for individual students. The teachers have also found teaching strategies embedded in the package a very useful resource linked directly to their students learning needs. Independent schools in the continuing cohorts are also engaging in professional learning in data analysis to inform school planning, to monitor student progress and to shape classroom practice.

Literacy and numeracy intervention programs

Government schools are implementing a range of whole school and individual literacy and numeracy intervention programs. These programs are developed to best meet the needs of the students in the local context.

In 2013, 458 government schools implemented 1,013 targeted literacy and numeracy programs from the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership, with most schools implementing more than one program.

Government National Partnership schools use data to determine the most appropriate whole-school and individual literacy and numeracy programs for their context. Examples of literacy and numeracy programs implemented in government schools in 2013 are provided below:

Literacy and Numeracy Interventions	Number of DEC schools
<i>Reading to Learn</i>	69
<i>Accelerated Literacy</i>	114
<i>QuickSmart Numeracy</i>	123
<i>Taking Off With Numeracy</i>	49
<i>MULITLIT</i>	174
<i>Focus on Reading 3-6</i>	151
<i>Language Learning & Literacy (L3)</i>	126
<i>Count Me In Too (CMIT)</i>	103
<i>Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN)</i>	104
TOTAL	1,013

- Barraba Central School provides focused intervention strategies in numeracy to support identified students not reaching the national minimum standards (NMS). The school employs two additional School Learning Support Officers to assist in the implementation of the *Taking Off With Numeracy* (TOWN) and *Targeted Early Numeracy* (TEN) programs. Resources are being developed for students across the whole school to assist teachers to differentiate the curriculum and support students performing below the NMS in numeracy
- Hebersham Public School has developed a full set of DVDs demonstrating *Accelerated Literacy* approaches to literacy for Kindergarten and Stages 1-3. The professional development package features teachers from each of these four stages. The DVDs and accompanying manuals are used extensively by staff and are available to other schools
- professional learning at Ashcroft Public School in *Focus on Reading* has changed teacher practice in the explicit teaching of comprehension, vocabulary and reading. School tracking data demonstrates that students have achieved increased engagement in reading activities. Preliminary results show that a majority of students have shown increased achievement levels when measured against the Literacy Continuum K- 10. Teachers are utilising this data to develop and implement appropriate reading programs that are specific to the needs of individual students or groups of students within their classrooms
- Kindergarten teachers and the Highly Accomplished Teacher at Windsor South Public School have received ongoing, intensive training in the *Language, Learning and Literacy* (L3) program, resulting in a more focused method of teaching reading and writing. Teachers report that the L3 program has supported them in providing explicit instruction in reading and writing strategies and refined their implementation of the literacy session. The school reports that the reading targets for Kindergarten students have been achieved
- thirty Stage 2 students at Muswellbrook South Public School were included in the *QuickSmart* program. All the students have improved their speed recall for addition, subtraction and multiplication. A student survey found that 75% of the participating students felt more confident in their classroom to work faster with their numeracy calculations. Staff surveys indicated that those students who had completed the *QuickSmart* program demonstrated more confidence and an improved application to numeracy tasks
- Merriwa Central School employs a deputy principal to facilitate improvement in literacy and numeracy K-12. All staff K-6 and secondary English teachers are trained in the *Accelerated Literacy* pedagogy to ensure that the teaching of literacy is explicit, scaffolded and age appropriate. Assessment schedules are created to ensure regular assessment in English and tracking of student achievement is conducted. NAPLAN results are analysed as the basis of future directions in teaching programs. Teacher professional learning in mathematics is provided with teachers attending workshops on particular strands of mathematics such as patterns and algebra and Newman's Error Analysis
- Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School has implemented a professional learning program to support the implementation of focused literacy strategies. The program is based on the application of six explicit comprehension teaching strategies using the literacy continuum to differentiate student learning and target individual and class improvement across all KLAs. A Student Engagement Officer, with expertise in the delivery of *Focus on Reading*, has been employed to coordinate the program and oversee related professional learning. Year 7 students undertake a sustained reading program involving the explicit teaching of reading using the *Strategies to Achieve Reading Success* (STARS) and *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies* (CARS). Students are developing the skills to gain further meaning from age appropriate texts. All Head Teachers undertook training in NAPLAN data analysis to enable them to better mentor, instruct and coach faculty staff in critical literacy areas. Increased staff participation in action learning, mentoring and peer coaching is a feature

of the program

- one-to-one tuition in literacy and numeracy is required at Blacktown Youth College, as many students have gaps in their skills resulting from a history of truancy and disengagement at previous schools. To assist in determining where to start the process a student undertakes *Compass Testing*, an assessment designed for disengaged adolescent learners. The results inform the development of ILPs and the learning program for each learner.

In the Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Diocese, staff engaged in Taking Off With Numeracy (TOWN) were able to implement an across-school approach and a deeper, more purposeful use of student data to better focus on where and how to improve teaching and learning. Other examples include:

- the Parramatta Catholic Diocese, where professional learning for teachers of mathematics continues and as each Year 7 cohort commences, the learning design process used by teachers includes:
 - knowing the individual student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by using a diagnostic tool to assess the student's mathematical understandings and to program an appropriate course of teaching
 - knowing, through a structured numeracy lesson, that student reflection and response informs teaching adjustments to ensuing learning activities
 - challenging learners in mathematical problem solving within their ZPD.

Teachers report that this process has brought about some profound changes to student attitudes and learning behaviours, while students report a greater enjoyment of mathematics.

Within the independent sector, at Moree Christian School, individualised support using the *MulitLit* program is being provided for primary students. Progress data indicates the positive impact of this for the students so far this year.

Innovative delivery strategies

Many schools have implemented new delivery models to ensure achievement of syllabus standards and successful transition. In the government sector:

- Merrylands High School has significantly invested in a middle years strategy to introduce integrated curriculum units to Year 7 students. A team of six teachers, led by the Head Teacher, Teaching and Learning, has developed English, mathematics, science, history and geography curriculum units to meet the differentiated learning needs of students. There is a gifted and talented class, three mixed ability classes, an ESL class and an additional class to support students achieving at or below national minimal standards. Teachers have developed individual learning plans for their students and communicated these plans to non-integrated curriculum teachers. The integrated curriculum has promoted engagement for Year 7 students. Student survey data from Year 7 indicates: 66% agreed that they learn more; 71% agreed that the integrated curriculum lessons are fun; and 68% agreed that students are better behaved in integrated curriculum lessons
- Prairiewood High School has developed a transition program designed to engage students at risk of not completing secondary schooling. A Head Teacher (HT) Transition has been appointed to mentor students in Stages 5 and 6 who are not engaged in their learning. The role involves building relationships with TAFE and other training and employment organisations and designing individual pathways for identified students for further training and/or employment. Students have been provided with a wide range of experiences that have informed individual transition plans.

Schools in the Lismore Catholic Diocese have been working with the University of Southern Queensland to implement an innovative professional development strategy using a five-phase process: initiating, discovering, envisioning, actioning and sustaining. It involves surveying staff, students and parents; identifying effective school practices and those not working; the

development of a school-wide pedagogy; and reviewing progress through further surveys of staff, students and parents. School management staff have reported improvements in their capacity to lead professional development in their school.

Get Reading Right has been introduced in Al Faisal College Campbelltown (independent sector) for K – 3 students to enhance their phonemic awareness. A number of professional development initiatives were held to train the teachers to target reading comprehension knowledge and skills and curriculum planning. New innovative delivery strategies were employed to deliver the *Get Reading Right* program.

Many independent schools in the National Partnership are reporting the use of technology as providing new innovative strategies for teachers. Others indicate that the new strategies and approaches for teaching literacy are being introduced to the teachers through working with consultants and mentors. These new strategies and approaches are also being shared in the school through new practices such as team teaching, modelled lessons and working with a mentor. Others report the introduction of “thinking routines”, project based learning/student enquiry and integrated programming.

Transition

Schools in all three sectors are implementing successful transition strategies for primary to secondary and post-school options:

- Lithgow High School has an extensive transition program where a Deputy Principal (DP) Transition has been employed to lead the program and support staff professional learning focusing on quality teaching and curriculum differentiation. In the Years 5 - 8 transition program the DP, in collaboration with partner primary schools, facilitates professional learning on quality teaching practices including the integration of technology. The fortnightly transition program for Stage 3 students in partner primary schools has been highly successful. Primary students attended lessons across a range of subjects, participated in team building, social skills programs and orientation activities. Student surveys showed that 85% of students liked the program and 93% found it helpful, with 92% believing it gave them a better understanding of high school
- Sarah Redfern High School has adopted a middle school approach for Year 7 and 8 students with a focus on literacy and numeracy. The school employs a Head Teacher Middle School and a Year 7 - 8 Coordinator to ensure the effective implementation of the strategy. The approach involves reducing the number of teachers who have responsibility for Year 7 and 8 classes. Teachers have their own home rooms and work collaboratively developing teaching learning programs. Individualised learning plans are developed for all middle school students based upon analysis of NAPLAN, internal data and student management system data. Evaluation findings indicate that there is increased student engagement in learning, improved educational outcomes and increased parent satisfaction of student progress
- South Grafton High School employs an additional executive in the role of Head Teacher (HT) Senior Studies. The HT is available to support senior students with their study, assessment tasks and courses. The HT conducts study skills days for Years 11 and 12 students and facilitates visiting speakers to outline vocations and the requirements of these vocations. The school has aligned its timetable with Grafton High School to expand the range of senior subjects including vocational education and training (VET) courses. The additional HT has enabled closer tracking of senior students to assist in student retention and successful completion of the Higher School Certificate
- Fairvale High School has developed initiatives to support students into educational pathways to reach post-school goals. The program is supervised by a coordinator who is responsible for the development of staff in student engagement strategies and maintaining student case files. A senior review panel supports Year 10 - 12 students struggling to achieve their learning goals to satisfy Higher School Certificate requirements and VET accreditation. This program provides an after school tutorial program on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and school holidays. Holiday school provides

students at risk with the opportunity to catch up on work in a supported environment. A transition teacher acts as a link between the school, TAFE NSW, universities and other government and non-government service providers. The teacher works intensively with students. These strategies have had an effect on the whole student body and the broader school community feel that they are positive and effective. School data shows that 83% of 2010 School Certificate graduates completed their Year 12

- Kempsey Adventist School, in the independent sector, has expanded their existing stage 4 transition program to include Year 9. Stage 4 Transition and Stage 5 Aspire teachers work together collaboratively to plan commonly assessed learning tasks for a minimum of 1 hour per fortnight. This initiative supports the students to transition from primary to secondary school, and to then transition to the higher stages of secondary schooling
- Manning Valley Anglican College has established a Special Projects teacher to facilitate post school transition to tertiary study or work. Since the beginning of the year, the teacher has been forging links with local industry, TAFE and universities. In its first event towards this transition, the school hosted its first Careers Market Day.

Tailored learning opportunities

Tailored learning opportunities being implemented include personalised learning plans (PLP) for Aboriginal students or individualised learning plans (ILP) for students at risk based on a range of data including the Literacy and Numeracy Continuums. For example:

- every student at Carrington Public School has either a PLP or ILP. The staff report that 72% of students achieved or exceeded the learning goals in their individual plan. In addition, all teachers report that the setting of goals for all students leads to a more focussed approach to their teaching. Additional school learning support officers (SLSO) have been employed to support literacy programs. Teacher surveys report the additional SLSO support in the classroom is highly effective with targeted students in achieving PLP and ILP goals and improved engagement in learning
- at Cowra Public School the *Tutor Reading Program* provided support for students in Years 3 and 5 in Semester 1 where each student received 15 minutes of explicit instruction using a variety of text types, varying levels of questions and language development. In Semester 2, Year 2 students were provided with individual half-hour sessions with the focus on explicit teaching of comprehension skills and the development of reading fluency. Program data indicates that the targeted, explicit teaching is assisting students to successfully advance their reading skills and increase their engagement in all KLAs. The program is supported by school learning support officers who are involved in an extensive professional learning program aiming to ensure that at the completion of the National Partnership program they will continue to work within classrooms providing sustained high level support for student learning
- a program for students experiencing difficulty in numeracy has been developed at Villawood North Public School. The National Partnership coordinator, the numeracy committee and the Learning and Support Teacher uses school assessment, NAPLAN data and anecdotal evidence to identify students experiencing difficulty in numeracy. ILPs are developed and school learning support officers are employed to work on specific skills with students
- Wyong Public School employs generalist paraprofessionals to drive the ILP program. The SLSOs facilitate the processes for ongoing goal setting in literacy, aligned to the Literacy Continuum K-10, by students and teachers in collaboration with parents and carers. School growth in literacy from Years 3 - 5 as measured by NAPLAN has increased and is greater than that of similar schools
- At Moree Public School, NAPLAN and *Best Start* data informs planning and numeracy teaching. An Assistant Principal is released for 1 day per week to provide professional learning and in-class support on the Numeracy Continuum K-10, the *Targeted Early Numeracy* (TEN) and *QuickSmart* programs. The School has employed an additional

teacher as a trained facilitator of the TEN program. Students have been tracked in the Early Arithmetical Strategies on the Numeracy Continuum K-10. The *QuickSmart* numeracy intervention program is provided to students at risk of not achieving benchmarks. Individualised learning programs support students experiencing difficulties in numeracy learning and the provision of parent workshops on numeracy learning supports home learning. Ongoing assessment of the students is conducted and the analysis of data indicates a decline in the number of students who have not reached the expected level for Early Arithmetical Strategies. Teachers are also benefitting from the professional learning as it has improved their understanding of the Numeracy Continuum K-10.

Strengthen school accountability

All government schools continuing on the National Partnership in 2013 undertook an annual evaluation in 2012. The evaluation was an opportunity to refine, discontinue or introduce new strategies into their school plan to achieve targets. This ongoing cycle of planning and evaluation continues to drive enhanced school improvement.

Schools in the government sector submitted revised 2013 school plans based on their evaluation findings. All school plans were endorsed by school education directors and approved by regional directors as part of the accountability process. Regional teams developed processes to ensure consistent and comparable expectations across their schools. Moderation processes and professional learning for school leaders and teams has had a strong impact on the quality of school planning, target setting and evaluative processes. Increasingly, non-Partnership schools are adapting and adopting these practices as a result of the positive impact experienced in National Partnership schools.

In government schools the evaluation process is strategically supported by the Department of Education and Communities' central and regional offices through workshops, support documents and professional learning. The explicit reflection on progress towards and achievement of school targets and the impact of strategies has continued to develop school leaders' and teachers' skills in analysing and interpreting data to ensure schools are using high leverage strategies that improve teacher quality and inform whole school and classroom practice.

Schools are reporting significant improvements in school planning processes:

- whole-school evaluation and planning has been significantly improved at Borellan Central School since the initial school situational analysis. The annual evaluation has been greatly enhanced by the use of focus groups and qualitative data that is collected primarily on the school Moodle system. The annual evaluation now focuses on the school plan and the specific strategies that are in place to address priority areas. All teachers are deeply engaged in data analysis and have a greater understanding of using data to enhance pedagogy. The School Plan and Annual School Report is revised annually and presented to the Parents and Citizens Association's meeting and can be viewed on the school's website
- John Warby Public School has developed a whole-school evaluation and school planning process based on a shared responsibility among all members of the school community. The evaluation process actively involves all teaching staff in collecting and reporting data against school focus areas. All non-teaching staff, students, parents and community members have the opportunity to provide input and suggest areas for future improvement. The process has strengthened school accountability processes and increased inclusivity and ownership of the school plan, making future targets and strategies purposeful and meaningful for the whole school community.
- Fairvale High School employed a National Partnership manager to support the senior executive team in the efficient and effective management of school financial and administrative operations. Executive conferences and fortnightly workshops were focused on the *Team Leadership for School Improvement* program. Head Teachers were provided with a four period allowance to monitor, team teach, observe and support

their staff as part of the TARS process and staff individual professional learning plans. These strategies have resulted in an improved understanding and application of school data in decision making and planning processes and greater effectiveness in the application of resources to targeted programs and/or school operations.

- Narrandera High School works across faculty teams to develop the school plan. The school conducts professional learning in data analysis with staff reviewing NAPLAN data to provide directions for school improvement. All staff have completed the *Team Leadership for School Improvement* program. Staff use the TARS process to identify career development opportunities with all relieving positions going through an expression of interest process.

In the Catholic sector:

- MacKillop Catholic College undertakes Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning meetings (CASLs) to build teacher understanding, support individual students and to work on teachers' professional learning needs. CASL meetings focus on teaching and student learning. They are based on a professional learning process that assists educators to develop a culture of collaborative inquiry and acquire a deeper understanding of the link between their pedagogy and their students' learning. The process is as follows:
 - teachers identify students who need instructional help (the identification is often linked to the school's Data Wall)
 - CASL meetings are scheduled to include the principal (or their delegate), specialist teachers and the classroom teacher
 - student work samples are examined for collective analysis and problem solving
 - the team recommends instructional strategies to be implemented by the teacher.

All independent schools in the National Partnership develop and publish annual plans as part of a cyclical review process. For the schools in the first cohorts of the National Partnership this has become part of the established practice at the school and no longer limited to an annual whole-school process but is being used to inform and monitor particular initiatives.

In independent schools the following accountability-transparency trends are becoming apparent:

- annual cycles of whole-school planning involving all stakeholders
- the use of student performance data to determine the direction and success of teacher professional learning
- the nature and amount of data used in planning is becoming more sophisticated eg. cohort specific characteristics, staff confidence and competence in the new approaches implemented, or teacher readiness or capacity to engage in further innovation
- planned formative evaluation processes are being established to monitor strategies during implementation e.g. sampling student work, teacher dialogue and formal reviews each term.

Data bases to track individual student achievement

Some schools have created databases to track individual student achievement and maintain a rigorous focus on individualising learning:

- Guildford Public School has established *Data, Analysis, Reflection, Targets, Strategies* (DARTS) groups as a means of setting high expectations, focusing teaching, monitoring student progress and reflecting on effective teaching in literacy and numeracy. The DARTS groups are part of the professional learning rotation and enable stage groups to meet regularly to set targets and monitor student progress. DARTS targets are displayed on data walls in the staffroom and classrooms to promote awareness and discussion. Staff believe the DARTS groups have increased discussion about student achievement,

supported consistent teacher judgement, and encouraged teachers to evaluate teaching strategies in terms of student achievement

- Lawrence Hargrave School caters for students who have emotional or behavioural disorders and a mild intellectual disability. It is continuing the development and implementation of a whole-school tracking system to monitor student progress and inform individual education plans. Of the parents and carers surveyed, 92% felt that the individual case management approach by the School executive benefitted their child as it specifically targeted problem behaviours, learning difficulties, employment opportunities and, most importantly, provided ongoing communication between the School and themselves
- at Mainsbridge School the Behaviour Support Team (BST), with the support of the Assistant Principal National Partnership mentor, developed procedures to ensure that appropriate strategies were developed for students with challenging behaviours and high support needs. Referral processes have been refined ensuring that students are constantly monitored and their needs evaluated. Individual behaviour support plans and comprehensive records are maintained on the central database to ensure that student information is communicated to all relevant staff. Professional learning on autism and intensive interaction and interventions developed at BST meetings have resulted in changes in classroom management and routines leading to positive outcomes for students. Anecdotal evidence indicates that small changes to routines and the physical layout of the classroom have resulted in a reduction in challenging behaviour and an increase in student engagement

In the Canberra Goulburn Catholic Diocese, Teaching Reading Levels (TRLs) are used to continue to track students who have been discontinued from Reading Recovery over their next two academic years. This involves the Reading Recovery Teacher within each school continuing to obtain running records per term on each discontinued student. This has meant increased whole school focus on the teaching of reading, where student achievement is seen as everyone's responsibility, not simply the specialist teacher. This has resulted in increased levels of team planning, assessing and teaching, mentoring and/or coaching and professional learning and conversations.

Throughout the Lismore Catholic Diocese, there is a strong emphasis on the use of pre and post assessment and ongoing formative assessment. A student tracking mechanism has been devised by each professional learning community or by the school and includes such things as data walls, continuum plotting, cluster groupings for early learning plans and cohort records of achievement.

Schools in the independent sector have been developing individual school specific systems for student tracking to inform student learning. These involve data gathering and analysis to scrutinise student intervention data (eg *MultLit* and *MiniLit*), external testing and school based classroom data.

External partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and the provision of access to extended services (including through brokering arrangements)

Government and non-government schools continue to develop a range of external partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and local communities to support students both in school and with transitions to further education and employment. Schools are also increasingly accessing expertise from allied health services to develop staff expertise in the early identification of language, speech and motor skill difficulties.

Parent, carer and community engagement

Schools are continuing to implement explicit strategies for working with their communities, including parent sessions and/or classes for parents on issues related to student learning. These strategies help parents engage more in their child's learning at school and at home to

improve levels of engagement and student outcomes. The analysis of the 2013 government school plans showed:

- 542 explicit references to strategies for working with the school community
- 319 parent education classes/sessions
- 53 Aboriginal Elders and community members providing classroom support
- 445 had strengthened consultation/collaboration with community
- 22 drop in centres/parent cafes.

Specific school examples include:

- Granville South Public School is providing access to parents of video footage of classroom learning via the School's website. Parents can view the classroom and build their capacity to support their children at home. A brief explanation, with translations, is available to promote discussion within the home environment and support the parents' understandings
- Hampden Park Public School has offered a wide range of curriculum-based workshops attended by approximately 60 parents. Parents participated in a two hour workshop with the School's Highly Accomplished Teacher and deputy principal to produce a piece of art which was displayed alongside the students' work at the annual art show. Parents report that they are increasingly confident in asking questions and providing feedback to the School in a range of curriculum areas.
- Mogo Public School utilises the literacy and numeracy expertise of School Education Officers to conduct information sessions for parents on literacy and numeracy strategies that can be used to assist their children at home. Local Dhurga Aboriginal leaders conduct cultural awareness sessions at the School
- Wiley Park Public School conducts parent workshops, supported by community engagement officers, to assist with numeracy activities in the classroom and support student numeracy learning at home. The school reports an increase in parent participation in classroom numeracy programs

Within the Parramatta Catholic Diocese, the *Numeracy Now* project has highlighted the importance of parents supporting the development of numeracy skills. The project has become part of the professional life of the College and as such is highly likely to be sustained beyond the National Partnership. The College has encouraged and supported parents to actively assist their child's further numeracy development wherever possible in their daily experiences through:

- advice and information via the College Newsletter and the student diary
- workshops for parents
- the display of materials at parent information evenings, open days and student-parent-teacher conferences.

A close relationship with the parents of the students at Gawura School, in the independent sector, is essential. The Gawura Parent Advisory Committee, which meets twice a term, is a significant feature of this.

At Green Valley Islamic College, numeracy packs have been provided to parents of Year 2 students, following the parent/teacher evening, to observe numeracy sessions. Similarly, Pre-kindergarten packs will be provided to parents during the Pre-kindergarten Orientation Program.

Student wellbeing initiatives and access to extended services

There were 247 references in 2013 government school plans to professional learning for student wellbeing initiatives and extended services. Examples include:

- the speech pathologist at John Warby Public School has introduced demonstration lessons and team teaching sessions to build teacher capacity in how to develop

language particularly through text types, aspects of grammar, vocabulary and phonemic awareness. This has resulted in more teachers and support staff identifying needs and referring students to the learning support team. The speech pathologist has facilitated individual meetings with parents/carers and general information sessions to raise awareness of speech and language difficulties, build working partnerships and encourage support from the home environment

- Hampden Park Public School has built on community partnerships with various agencies through School representation on the Canterbury Child and Family Interagency and the Lakemba/Wiley Park Schools as Community Centre (SaCC) management committee. The establishment of the Lakemba Community Toy Library in collaboration with a group of interagency personnel now serves the needs of more than 80 families in the local community. The School has continued the successful implementation of a playgroup in which key personnel from NSW Health have provided information and a point of contact for families newly arrived in Australia
- the staff at Barwon Learning Centre recognises the impact of unaddressed trauma on their students and is providing professional learning on intergenerational trauma and healing. These sessions have been attended by staff, the majority of parents and members of the community in a local support program
- Katoomba North Public School employs a speech therapist one day a week to facilitate effective support systems within the School and home. This includes working with the playgroup and the preschool connected to the School in order to gain early identification of students. The Speech Therapist also provides professional learning for all staff enabling them to understand and identify the various types of speech and language issues
- Wiley Park Public School provides occupational therapy support for students in Years K-2 to work on improving sensory and fine and gross motor skills.
- health professionals and university students from the Department of Rural Health, University of Newcastle, present information sessions and support programs for staff and students at Westdale Public School.

Gawura School in the independent sector operates as a broker or bridge to services for individual students e.g. securing links for speech therapy or access to a paediatrician.

Macleay Valley Vocational College also provides links to community services including, among others, Juvenile Justice, Centrelink support officers and counselling services, Mid North Coast Legal Service, Community Support Centre and YP Space. All are engaged with the College on a weekly basis, either running programs or supporting the students. Programs such as *Skill to Chill*, *Love Bites*, *Domestic Violence* and *Sexual Health* as well as a variety of presenters from Mid Coast Legal Service on topics such as Financial Advice, Sexting and Legal rights are all run at College. The Durri Medical Centre has maintained a close link with pregnant girls and supports other students to undertake medical checks. Home School Liaison Officers (HSLOs) and Aboriginal Liaison Officers from both the community and Police also assist visit the College as needed.

Transition to school

Schools often partner with local preschools and community services to ensure students are well prepared for school and that parents understand the importance of and support regular school attendance:

- the *Preschool Transition to School* initiative at Whalan Public School focuses on preparing Aboriginal children and their families for Kindergarten. The School identified the need to begin the development of PLPs for all Aboriginal children at the preschool. Personalised DVDs are developed in the PLP process and the preschool children, their siblings and families participate in the filming. The initiative provides an opportunity to visit classrooms and meet the School's teachers and Aboriginal workers. The school visit prompts conversations about starting school and strengthens the engagement of

children and their families in developing PLPs

- Bidwill Public School has implemented a transition program to ensure a smooth start in Kindergarten. Preschool students are included in all whole-school events including the *Books in Homes Program*. The *Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)* values and language are consistently applied across the School and preschool. Preschool teachers have access to whole-school professional learning, the Learning Support team and the library
- Boggabri Public School has established a *Smart Start* early learning program for preschool children turning 4 years of age before July 31 in the year prior to commencing Kindergarten. *Smart Start* runs two days a week and provides a space specifically designed and fully equipped for early childhood learning activities. The activities are designed to align with both the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* and the NSW Department of Education and Communities *Best Start Program*
- Cessnock East Public School has developed the *Bookworm Transition to School Program*, which involves a teacher visiting local preschools and reading quality picture books to children with a phonological focus. Pre-schoolers and parents visit the School for one hour a week, and are exposed to quality literature and given an activity to support the readings
- Broken Hill Public School has strengthened community engagement and addressed identified needs in the wider community by offering a playgroup and extended transition to school programs. An early childhood trained teacher is employed to implement an annual transition to school program working intensively in preschool and Kindergarten classrooms. This enables the preschool children to experience belonging to a wider community and building and maintaining relationships with others prior to commencing school
- Trangie Central School has developed the *Early Bird Transition to School* program for children in the year before entry to school. The program, developed from the Early Years Learning Framework, is designed to develop early learning skills that will enable the children to transition more successfully into Kindergarten. The *Early Bird* program results in young children having access to high quality learning experiences to develop skills in literacy, fine and gross motors, pre number, music, visual arts and social skills. The provision of this program enables staff to liaise with the families of students who require additional support
- At Cabramatta Public School interviews are held in Terms 3 and 4 for every Kindergarten family beginning the following year to ensure a smooth transition. New students are presented with starter packs containing pre-reading and language activities, School procedures and information. Teachers plan programs for incoming students based on their needs and parents are given information on how to prepare their child for Kindergarten.

Partnerships with businesses and other organisations

Schools are increasingly developing partnerships with external providers to support students, and to improve engagement and retention rates. For example:

- the *Gifted and Talented Rugby League* program established at Glen Innes High has an educational base, coupled with high engagement. The program has been in place from the commencement of the National Partnership and has continued to have a positive influence on the health, behaviour, social skills, academic and rugby league talents of the participants. The program has facilitated a strong partnership with families and the community that has enhanced connectedness for students and a decrease in school absences by those involved in the program
- Kurri Kurri High School has hosted a Business Breakfast to engage local businesses and community figures, including Westpac, Abigroup, Komatsu, local health services, independent businesses, the Mayor and Police Liaison Officers. A partnership with The

Beacon Foundation has involved student workshops focusing on preparing for job interviews, developing positive relationships, team building and setting positive and achievable goals for the future. Work experience and apprenticeship opportunities with Komatsu were created by the Beacon partnership. A partnership with Abigroup aligns theoretical geographical concepts to the construction of a large piece of infrastructure currently taking place within the students' local community. It involves site tours that link the Year 7-10 curriculum to the engineering and construction industries

- at Warren Central School the careers teacher liaises with external agencies, including Centacare, Red Cross, Barnados, Yarn Circles, Mission Australia, Warren Shire Council and the Local Land Council to provide students with work experience and transition to work options. Students are planning their future goals and aspirations, developing more positive self-concepts and are more engaged in school. Some have obtained full time employment
- Carroll Public School has continued its partnership with the Gunnedah Conservatorium of Music. The Conservatorium has been integral in providing quality music education programs, workshops, live performances and professional guidance for staff. The implementation of tailored learning programs such as Magical Musos to Maestros program has provided each student with the opportunity to develop their own unique talents and interests which have contributed significantly to high levels of student engagement
- Wellington Public School has engaged the services of a partnership broker to formalise the amalgamation of interagency support within the local community. It is envisaged that interagency support groups will participate in the implementation of connected learning plans. The broad aspiration is to increase the number of families taking a greater role in the education of their children with the School, with a particular emphasis on working with Aboriginal families.

Partnerships to support student transitions (including university)

Government schools continue to develop partnerships with universities to support pathways for students to further education and to improve retention.

For example, the *Plan-It Youth* program is conducted at Ashford Central School, in partnership with the University of New England (UNE), to broaden horizons and raise expectations for students. Students and the *Plan-It Youth* coordinators have visited UNE to consider opportunities for post school destinations. Stage 5 students have engaged in a program involving mentors from the community and the careers teacher to t and apprenticeships, and other vocational education courses. Other examples include:

- Peak Hill Central School collaborates with the Charles Sturt University (CSU), TAFE, and external agencies to create flexible alternative pathways for students from school to work or further education. Through partnership with CSU in the *Future Moves* program and links with North Parkes Mines and TAFE NSW, opportunities are created for all students but in particular for Aboriginal students, to enrol in a Certificate 2 course as a preparation for an apprenticeship. The program includes orientation for parents to university and a sequenced pathway of goal setting and career orientation from Kindergarten to Year 12
- Moorebank High School has an additional deputy principal (DP) with reduced whole-school responsibilities to lead the development of a pilot career guidance program. The program focuses on the use of the *myfuture* website for Year 10 students to explore career options and establish a career profile and transition plan. The DP coordinates a Careers Day, hosted at the School, with a range of external providers delivering workshop sessions driven by student interest. A whole year group work experience program with subsequent follow up and modification of transition planning as appropriate is in operation, with 73% of Year 10 students participating in the program. The DP organises a parent forum to review their child's Stage 5 achievements, plan vocational pathways and make Stage 6 subject selections

- Loyola Senior High School, in the Parramatta Catholic Diocese, implemented a University Hub at the end of 2012 to service the Mt Druitt community. This is a partnership with Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, the universities of Notre Dame, and Sydney, the Australian Catholic University, and local high schools. The Hub (using funds from the National Partnership and from the universities) funded the appointment of a university academic to Loyola responsible for:
 - advising years 10-12 students about post-school tertiary options
 - increasing tertiary education participation across the Mt Druitt area from the current 9% to the Diocesan average of 20% by 2015
 - seeking out university scholarship programs to support student entry
 - using Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) with students to learn the disciplines of focusing, listening, reading and responding
 - coordinating a visiting scholars program to model and enrich HSC candidature
 - modelling the life of a knowledge worker as an aspirational and achievable goal
 - assisting students with the emotional, social and economic transition from senior school to tertiary study.
 - liaising with students and staff from all schools in the Mt Druitt area to provide support and facilitate understanding of 'university' and what it means for life-chances
 - working with parents, other schools, businesses and communities to provide access to vocational pathway services.
- Year 12 students from the Australian International Academy Strathfield participate in the *Fast Forward* program run through University of Western Sydney. As part of the program, students are able to take part in a series of experiential learning opportunities relevant to their interests. Some of the workshops included policing careers, turning failure into success and making the most out of the first year at university. The Year 12 students found this to be very helpful in gaining further insight into their career choices
- As a result of its participation in the National Partnership, Kempsey Adventist School has recruited an experienced Careers Teacher. The new teacher has taken a key role in assisting the School's students from upper Primary through to Year 12 in the process of career planning and access to both tertiary and employment pathways. Through this initiative, many of the Schools' graduating HSC students have been linked to university early-entry pathways. Two key partnerships with Newcastle University and with Avondale College are continuing to evolve to support this process. Early Stage 6 students are taken on a week-long Study Camp where they spend time at both campuses and are linked directly into support from careers and course guidance staff from those institutions.

Homework Centres

Government schools continued to address student engagement and support student learning through homework centres, with 105 schools using this initiative in 2013 - up from 85 in 2011. Some schools indicated they are establishing learning centres and expanding senior study opportunities. Examples from government schools include:

- Wiley Park Public School works in partnership with the University of Western Sydney and the Canterbury Council volunteer program to staff the homework centre to support students with high learning needs in literacy and numeracy. The School employs teachers for tutoring. There has been an increase in the number of students achieving expected growth between Years 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN in reading and numeracy
- Chatham Public School has established a homework centre to improve academic outcomes for Aboriginal students. Forty per cent of Aboriginal students regularly attend

- James Busby High School employs a Head Teacher Administration to coordinate the homework centre. Students are better able to access and complete the literacy, numeracy and language components of their tasks. The School reports higher engagement and work submission rates, and completion of quality tasks
- senior students at Fairfield High School utilise the senior learning space as a hub of learning. The area provides concentrated support for senior students enabling them access to support for learning, study, technology, career advice and transition. The impact of this area has been profound with its influence evident through raised expectations, improved behaviour, reduced truancy and increased personalised case management for senior students at risk.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students - 1 January to 30 June 2013

Approximately 43% of Aboriginal students enrolled in NSW government schools are in schools participating in the National Partnership in 2013. Of all government National Partnership schools, 82% (445 schools) reported explicit strategies to engage the local Aboriginal community, including local Elders and artists.

Government schools are providing targeted and intensive support through a number of strategic initiatives to close the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

A number of integrated initiatives at the system, regional and/or school level have been implemented, responding to both student data and Aboriginal community advice. These are impacting on attendance, wellbeing, engagement and the improvement of literacy and numeracy outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Low SES schools in the Catholic and independent sectors have also utilised National Partnership funds to implement strategies to support Aboriginal students.

Building school capacity to meet the needs of Aboriginal students

School-based professional learning with the local Aboriginal community is improving teacher understanding of Aboriginal culture and the ways to better engage Aboriginal students.

- Canobolas Rural Technology High School is conducting school-based professional learning centred on the *Aboriginal Pedagogies: 8 Ways of Knowing*. This program is utilising regional training and the wiki site. Teaching and learning programs are reflecting the integration of the 8 Ways strategies. The implementation of an Aboriginal studies course meeting Board of Studies requirements continues, with members of the Aboriginal community providing support. The employment of Norta Norta tutors has had a significant impact upon the study habits and successful assessment task submission of Aboriginal students. The School reports improved growth in NAPLAN results for Aboriginal students over last three years
- Kempsey East Public School conducts professional learning programs which improve teachers' cultural awareness and effectiveness in supporting Aboriginal students. Strategies include Yarn Ups with local community members and visits to significant sites led by Elders and community members who are also invited to school events. All staff reported that their knowledge of their Aboriginal students, their families and their culture has increased
- in consultation with the community, Melville High School is conducting a cultural awareness program for all teaching and non-teaching staff. The program addresses health, welfare and social challenges that can affect the engagement in learning by Aboriginal students. The information and understandings from the program are transferring into the development of culturally inclusive programs
- School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) employed under the National Partnership at Cowra Public School participate in sustained professional development through in-

school training and courses to support their work with students. Training, delivered by the Learning Assistance Support Teacher and school mentor, involves developing teacher understanding of language learning including phonemic awareness and expressive and receptive language. The SLSOs are also trained in Aboriginal English, the *Reading to Learn* program and boys' education strategies. The Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) and class teachers are participating in the implementation of an attendance program for Aboriginal students, which is meeting targets for improved attendance.

Personalised Learning Plans

Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) were developed in 430 government schools. Parents and caregivers support teachers to tailor teaching and learning to the needs and abilities of individual students and set authentic learning goals for Aboriginal students.

- PLPs for Aboriginal students are developed at Cessnock Public School by the classroom teacher with support from the family. This has increased parental engagement with their child's learning. The focus is on supporting Aboriginal students' needs more precisely in K - 2 through the analysis of data from the *Language, Learning and Literacy* program and *Best Start* data to differentiate the learning for individual needs. As the school achieved its target to increase the proportion of Aboriginal students achieving in the top three bands in 2012 NAPLAN Reading, this strategy was continued in 2013
- PLPs are written for all Aboriginal students at Cowra Public School. Teachers are provided with additional release from class to meet in the Aboriginal meeting room, the Windradyne Room, with parents and carers to develop the PLPs. The PLPs include strategies to improve educational outcomes and consideration is given to issues relating to health and wellbeing that impact on the education of Aboriginal students. The Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) attends the meeting to provide support to parents. Aboriginal health workers also attend the PLP meetings where applicable
- teachers at La Perouse Public School are trialling electronic PLPs for Aboriginal students. A review of each student's progress towards the achievement of goals is being conducted throughout the year in consultation with parents. Attendance targets are included in each student's PLP. The School organises a bus run to transport students to and from school to improve the attendance rates. The AEO is involved in the development of the PLPs. The AEO conducts a phone home program for students not attending school.

Catholic Dioceses worked closely with Aboriginal parents to determine the best approach for their children, with the majority happy to proceed with a Personalised Learning Plan approach. These plans have proved to be fruitful in keeping the learning 'on task' and as a communication tool between the school and the home.

PLPs are a significant part of the support that is provided to Aboriginal students across the independent schools in the National Partnership. For both continuing schools and schools new to the National Partnership the engagement of Aboriginal Education Workers contributed positively to this process. Access to guidance and advice from the Aboriginal Education Consultant has also been contributing to more individualised student/community specific approaches being developed in independent schools. PLPs for Aboriginal students are in place and continually evolving in all 12 schools in the National Partnership.

As an example, at Kempsey Adventist School in 2013, all Aboriginal students have benefitted from the support of a professionally created PLP. The School's Learning Enrichment Department not only builds the PLP for each Aboriginal student, but also monitors the successful implementation and evolution of the PLPs through a consultative and ongoing close relationship with families and the students. The team has refined its approach after attendance at the *AIS ISCE Conference 2013 - Educating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Independent Schools*.

Specific support provided to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes

- Blackett Public School, as part of the Dharug Cluster including Hebersham Public School and Doonside Public School, has collaborated in the *Make it Count* Aboriginal numeracy project to support student learning in numeracy. Norta Norta has supported Aboriginal students by the employment of Aboriginal SLSOs to work specifically with Aboriginal students. The School has established connections with outside agencies which support student learning. This includes the implementation of the *Learning Ground*, which provides social skills support for students experiencing difficulties, and *Leap Into Learning*, an initiative supporting students with poor attendance.
- Windale Public School has trained SLSOs in the implementation of *MultLit* and *QuickSmart* and timetabled the SLSOs to support targeted Aboriginal students with one-on-one tuition five days a week as well as in-class support. Improvement in student achievement is evident in NAPLAN reading 2012 as all Aboriginal students in Year 3 achieved at or above minimum standards in reading and the percentage of students at or above minimum standards in Year 5 reading and Year 3 and 5 numeracy increased. As a result the program has continued in 2013. The AEO liaises with the Home School Liaison Officer in meetings about students with identified attendance concerns, with attendance rates for Aboriginal students improving.
- Glebe Public School continues to implement the successful *Winangaay* Aboriginal tutor program to focus on the needs of Aboriginal students in the areas of grammar, punctuation and numeracy in collaboration with an AEO. As all students in Year 3 and 5 achieved at or above minimum standard in literacy and numeracy in NAPLAN 2012 the program has continued in 2013.
- The employment of additional teachers and an SLSO at Moree Public School has enabled 68 students to benefit from individualised support programs including *MultLit* and *QuickSmart* literacy. Parent surveys indicate that students have increased in confidence and have a more positive attitude to school as a result of participation in the program. School data indicates that the majority of the targeted students are showing improvements in reading. As the School target to increase the percentage of students in Year 3 and 5 achieving at or above minimum standard in literacy and numeracy in NAPLAN 2012 was achieved, the program has continued in 2013.

Support provided to Aboriginal students to improve outcomes including engagement and attendance

A total of 263 government schools planned explicit strategies to engage Aboriginal students in 2013. Examples include:

- Lightning Ridge Central School - working closely with Aboriginal students, particularly in the final two years of school, improving attendance and engagement and offering a wider range of post-school options. The School has engaged its Aboriginal Education Officers, a Norta Norta senior tutor, and key personnel, including the members of the attendance team, to implement the program. The existence of PLPs has helped students remain focused on their learning goals. The difference in average scores between the School's Aboriginal students and all students across the State in all dimensions of NAPLAN 2012 has decreased. School data indicates that attendance is improving with the employment of AEOs highly effective in engaging with Aboriginal families through home visits, phone contact and discussions at school. The AEOs also engage in weekly attendance meetings, participate in data analysis sessions, and assist with the development of personalised attendance plans
- Sir Joseph Banks High School conducts programs for Aboriginal students to develop cultural awareness and improve learning outcomes such as the Koori Club, Belonging Days, the *Aboriginal 8 Ways of Learning*, a Koori Homework Centre and Learning Hub as well as visits to Bangarra Dance Theatre. The Learning Hub, co-ordinated by the National Partnership Head Teacher Student Engagement and Student Engagement Support Officer, involves teachers working with Aboriginal students in an area set aside

in the library where they receive assistance from teachers in assessment and homework tasks. Attendance records indicate that these strategies are successful in engaging Aboriginal students. Student feedback shows the assistance given by the teachers is highly regarded

- at Eden Public School, support for Aboriginal students is enhanced by the increased employment of Aboriginal School Learning Support Officers (ASLSO). The ASLSOs inform culturally appropriate professional learning for staff, support the implementation of an Aboriginal attendance program and the development of PLPs for all Aboriginal students
- Fennell Bay Public School has developed a School Parliament and Student Aboriginal Cultural Committee to provide leadership opportunities for students in the School. In 2013, the Community Partnership Team is led by the community engagement officer. The team aims to develop closer ties with other stakeholders including the School as Community Centre, Deadly Dads Group and Hunter New England Health. There is also a focus on parents learning about their children's learning
- at Cessnock Public School staff have been very proactive in the implementation of a whole-school attendance program where attendance phone logs are used to communicate with families about attendance. Teachers also use attendance tracking charts in class. Excellent attendance is rewarded at assemblies with parents and carers invited to attend. The program is assisting in the achievement of the School target to increase the average daily attendance of all students including Aboriginal students
- Shoalhaven High School has appointed a Head Teacher Administration to manage attendance and to promote positive improvements in student attendance. The Phone Home program to support the school attendance process continues to be refined. Alternative educational programs and facilities to support students' learning at school have been supported by employing a Work Smart coordinator. The School is evaluating the impact of the alternative curriculum pathways introduced in 2012 as a result of a whole school curriculum review in 2011 and continuing to establish partnerships with community groups, organisations and educational providers to support students at school.

In the Wilcannia-Forbes Catholic Diocese, the provision of a supportive environment for Aboriginal students has underpinned the community partnerships established at St Ignatius Bourke, St Patrick's Brewarrina and St Therese's Community School Wilcannia. Allied health professionals – speech pathologists, occupational therapists, counsellors, a dietician and educational psychologist provide professional services welcomed in remote western NSW. These services have not only had a direct benefit for students, but have also built capacity for teachers, equipping them to respond effectively to the diverse needs of students. The three schools have engaged Aboriginal community members and local resources as follows:

- St Therese's Community School Wilcannia – Aboriginal members leading weekly Paakantji language and culture study
- St Ignatius' Bourke – collaboration with guest speakers, games experts and story tellers to provide local history and input for the development of the *Cultural Awareness* program and teaching units
- St Patrick's Brewarrina – development of the Local Activity Plan to foster community connections and engagement; hosting the St Patrick's School Community Pool Party as the information evening for the beginning of the school year (parents who had not previously participated in the life of the School attended and are now regular visitors to the School); 'Bring A Friend to School' Day; student visits to the Preschool and Brewarrina Central School; valuing and promoting the culture and heritage of the Aboriginal families.

Early this year Blacktown Youth College redefined the role of one of the paraprofessionals. This new role, the Student Attendance Registrar, has been a very successful strategic move by the School and as a result student attendance has improved. The follow up, phone calls, family contact and negotiating attendance agreements which address students specific concerns and

needs are part of the individualised approach that is being taken. Across the College there is also an online rewards system, which automatically awards points for improved or excellent attendance. There are very appealing rewards if students can accumulate their points. Students are also awarded a school 'hoodie' for excellent attendance at the end of each Semester in Assembly.

Language programs

The value of teaching local Aboriginal languages has been recognised by many government schools, with 41 schools reporting that they were planning to teach Aboriginal languages in 2013. Schools report that the teaching of Aboriginal languages develops a sense of cultural and linguistic identity in students and is critical to student wellbeing and success.

Glen Innes High School is implementing the local Aboriginal language into the School to improve connectedness and awareness of Aboriginal culture. Local Aboriginal community members have been involved in this process. Cultural awareness camps are being conducted by Elders and the local Lands Council to increase Aboriginal students' knowledge of their culture. The School is analysing school-based and external assessment data to identify areas of improvement for individual Aboriginal students and providing in-class tutoring. The program assists Aboriginal students to complete classroom tasks, develop organisation skills and prepare for assessments. Other government school examples include:

- all students at Mogo Public School are involved in integrated cultural activities, led by Local Dhurga Aboriginal leaders, in the classroom and the community. Aboriginal volunteers, initially contacted by the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), help out across many key learning areas. Students also participated in the study of the local Aboriginal language, 'Dhurga', with all students able to use basic language at appropriate level and many, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, speaking the local language fluently
- a Dunghutti language program is conducted in all K-6 classes at Kempsey East Public School involving a 30 minute session with a tutor and an Elder each week. It is reinforced by the classroom teachers and signage around the School. A student survey indicates that all students have an increased understanding of the Dunghutti language, Aboriginal dance and art, local Dreamtime stories and significant sites as a result of the language program
- support programs for Aboriginal students have been strengthened at Narrandera High School by the teaching of the Wiradjuri language by an Aboriginal mentor. It is providing a relevant curriculum for Stage 4 students. The increased attendance and the 100% retention rate from Year 10 to Year 11 are indicators of the success of the program
- Alma Public School employs an additional teacher and a Community Liaison Officer to conduct the Paakintyi languages program one day each week. All Aboriginal students have the opportunity to participate in the language program.

In the independent sector, Gawura has a Wiradjuri language program as part of its curriculum, while at Manning Valley Anglican College the AEO is a language holder for "Gathang". Some secondary students are participating in Gathang language workshops - symbolism, names, verbs & tags. Three of these sessions have been delivered so far this year.

The Dhanggati Language program is delivered at Macleay Valley Vocational College every Tuesday for 2.5 hrs. Two Elders use the first 1.5 hours to teach Dhanggati Language and its methodology. During the next hour they investigate cultural awareness through student discussions and interaction. They have taken two of the Language students up to Greenhill Primary School to help teach the students there. This could be a great link for the College and its students and is also a possible future career path.

Wellington Christian School reports that an Aboriginal Elder, who assists with reading and maths groups two days per week, also works with small groups in the Wiradjuri language.

Community and family engagement – cultural immersion

Schools are continuing to work with their local AECG as it has been an effective way to enhance the knowledge and understanding of teachers working in schools with Aboriginal students. Aboriginal community members are pivotal in ensuring that programs are culturally appropriate and available when they are most needed. Consultation and/or collaboration with the Aboriginal community around school planning was reported by 445 government schools with 53 schools having Aboriginal Elders and community members providing classroom support in 2013.

- Bellambi Public School has established an Aboriginal Community Space as a designated area for use by the Aboriginal community and class groups. The School provides educational, physical and cultural resources and conducts information sessions in the community space for the Aboriginal community on how to help their children with reading. Teachers meet with the parents of Aboriginal students in the room to develop PLPs. The AECG is invited to hold their meetings in the community space. The School also operates a playgroup for Aboriginal children to assist in the transition to school. The children participate in a range of activities with current Kindergarten students and their teacher to familiarise them with the school setting
- Cessnock High School conducts an Aboriginal Cultural Camp for students from the High School and partner primary schools. The camp deepens the students' understanding of Aboriginal culture, and increases parent and community participation in student learning
- Dubbo College Delroy Campus has established an equity team to consult with the local Aboriginal community, the AEO, the school learning support team, the school counsellor and careers advisor, North North tutors and community agencies such as Mission Australia to coordinate activities to further engage students in their learning and support community engagement. The team has established a Learning Centre, Breakfast Club, and the Aboriginal Aspirations initiative. In consultation with the community, PLPs have been developed for all Aboriginal students. The equity team has liaised with the community in the establishment of an Aboriginal Cultural and Dance Program and a community garden
- the Airs Community of Schools (Airds High School, Bradbury Public School, John Warby Public School, and Briar Road Public School) has developed an extensive range of strategies to strengthen Aboriginal programs across the schools. The schools employ four Aboriginal teachers and nine additional Aboriginal support staff to implement and develop community-supported strategies. Examples include Aboriginal Numeracy Challenge days for Aboriginal students, a community and staff cultural awareness tour to North Western NSW and an Aboriginal transition to high school program
- an Aboriginal Cultural program has been developed between Maclean High School, the Elders, the AECG and Macquarie University. All students in Year 7 are part of both the cultural tour (with Elders as leaders) and the River of Learning Day, which is a day of celebration and recognition of Aboriginal Culture. Four Aboriginal workers are employed to support the programs. Aboriginal students attend the Macquarie University Science Week. The program is encouraging Aboriginal students to feel valued and respected and provide opportunities to be role models and assume leadership roles.
- the Aboriginal Education Team at Hunter River High School focuses on improving whole of school outcomes for Aboriginal students, and engagement with the local Aboriginal community. The School has formed an Elders Group bringing together Elders from the community, resulting in increased representation of Aboriginal people in school roles. The School meets with the AECG and provides information to students and parents on processes for dealing with racist incidents. It has developed a Local Cultural Awareness Program to provide sustained cultural immersion and to familiarise all staff with the local community structures, family links, local stories, traditions and cultures of local Aboriginal people
- Karuah Public School employs additional staff to support Aboriginal students, particularly those who fall below national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy including a homework centre for Aboriginal students and their families. It provides support for

students to complete tasks and opportunities for the Aboriginal families to access technology. The School maintains a positive working relationship with the local Youyoong AECG and offers both educational and artistic support to the students of Karuah Public School. The Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council maintains an active interest in supporting Aboriginal students and their families at the School

- Burke Ward Public School conducts information sessions for Aboriginal parents on how to support their children's learning at home. All students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) at the School have a PLP. Parents, staff and students have indicated that they like the constant communication allowing all stakeholders to work together to achieve common goals
- Catholic schools in the National Partnership on the NSW South Coast participated in a three-day cultural immersion program, which aimed to build teacher capacity to respond effectively to the needs of Aboriginal students, parents and the community. At the end of the program, teachers reported that they were better equipped to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.
- As part of the Kempsey Adventist School's NAIDOC program, staff at the School produced a 17-minute documentary film called *Kempsey Kids*. This film featured the stories of various students and their families, including one grandmother who is a member of the stolen generation. The film was warmly received by the School's Aboriginal community and has since been shown at two professional learning conferences in Sydney. The School's Aboriginal community has encouraged the School to consider the production of a full-length documentary in 2014, which would provide scope for the stories of the School's students and their families to be told in greater depth.
- Elders are regular visitors to Macleay Valley Vocational College; equally there are frequent community occasions where Aboriginal students and their cultural and community links are a significant part of the event. This year young Aboriginal women students were provided an opportunity to meet and interact with 35 prominent Aboriginal women who attended the College as a result of the College hosting the National Indigenous Women's Morning Tea.

Employment of Aboriginal paraprofessionals and education support workers

In 2013 government schools planned to employ Aboriginal community engagement officers or community liaison officers in 70 schools, and 15 schools employed additional executive to lead Aboriginal education strategies. Examples from this sector include:

- Bellambi Public School employs an Aboriginal community liaison officer to build relationships with Aboriginal students and their families and provide support in relation to key areas such as attendance, literacy, numeracy, Aboriginal languages and Aboriginal studies
- Eden Marine High School employs an Aboriginal community engagement officer to liaise with parents and work with teachers to develop strategies to improve student learning outcomes. The School has developed a middle school program for Aboriginal students in the High School and partner primary schools. The program is having a positive impact on student transition and teacher networking. Workshops are conducted for Aboriginal parents and carers to support the education of their children. A Welcome to Country DVD has been developed by community members to be used at school functions
- Hebersham Public School employs an Aboriginal school learning support officer to teach the Dharug language. Elders are employed to present professional learning to the staff on Aboriginal culture. Teachers have an improved understanding of incorporating Aboriginal perspectives in teaching and learning programs
- Ross Hill Public School employs an Aboriginal community engagement officer to implement a preschool transition to school program and the *Kinderstart* program for Aboriginal Kindergarten students

- Bomaderry Public School employs an additional teacher in an Aboriginal School Learning Support Team role. The specific focus of this role is on analysing assessment data in reading for all Aboriginal students. The school also employs an Aboriginal community engagement officer for the phone intervention program
- Cowra Public School has employed a community engagement officer (CEO) to work with four local preschools and liaise with parents, the community and local businesses. As part of the transition to school program the CEO organised for each of the preschools to visit the School for a variety of events including story time in the Kindergarten classes. There has been a strong rise in Kindergarten enrolments due to the work of the CEO. Preschool students join in activities with the Kindergarten students and teachers. This assists with the smooth transition from the Yalbalinga Aboriginal preschool to the primary school setting

At Gawura, in the independent sector, a K-6 teacher (Aboriginal educator) is an integral part of the team at the School, and at Manning Valley Anglican College the newly appointed AEO/ALO is also a trained teacher who teaches music at the School.

Namoi Valley Christian School reports that having an Aboriginal paraprofessional has opened up connections with the Aboriginal families of the School. The students have also appreciated having someone they can talk to, knowing that their culture and background will be understood.

Support for Other Disadvantaged Student Cohorts – 1 January to 30 June 2013

Initiatives for English language learners

National Partnership government schools implemented a ranged of strategies and programs to provide targeted support for English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Staff members from 49 schools participated in whole-school professional learning in ESL pedagogy with a particular emphasis on ESL Scales training to ensure that teaching programs were focussed on identified student need, with eight schools taking part in Teaching English Language Learners (TELL). Sixty-two schools indicated that they are implementing explicit strategies for ESL students including the employment of additional executive in 14 government schools to lead ESL pedagogy. Initiatives in the government sector include:

- an additional executive is employed at Lansvale Public School as the Assistant Principal (AP) English as a Second Language to support teachers in providing ESL instruction in small groups for Newly Arrived students and refugee students. The AP facilitates professional learning for all staff and parents and informs practice through action research with an ESL researcher. A culture of high expectations for ESL student achievement is being fostered
- Fairvale High School has established a community engagement team, which includes four part-time Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) in the language groups of Assyrian, Arabic, Khmer and Vietnamese. The team is responsible for supporting and nurturing stakeholder relationships; building knowledge of school operations and practices amongst parents and carers; developing a whole school understanding of the cultural diversity of the community and the design of school communications to the community. The community engagement team has made significant improvements in all areas including a 29% growth in information about student learning being sent home and a 28% growth in the diversity of the cultural backgrounds of families represented in school activities. Overall, 97% of parents and carers report having positive relationships with the School, a 47% improvement on the 2010 results
- Lakemba Public School employs two CLOs from Arabic and Bengali backgrounds one day a week. The CLOs are facilitating opportunities for the School to engage parents and the community by way of parent workshops and improving communication between the School and the community by translating the school newsletter. The School reports that the attendance of parents to the increased number of activities organised by the CLOs has improved. There has been a consistent representation, with an average of five

parents at School Development Day sessions and an increase in the number of parents asking questions about school and their children's learning

- Granville South Public School employs an Arabic speaking CLO, who organises parent excursions linked to curriculum, interprets, puts parents in contact with outside agencies and conducts three parent meetings per term to share how schools teach curriculum and how parents can support this learning at home. Twenty parents have been part of the *Reading for Life* program. This consists of a three-hour workshop on supporting their children with reading. After this session there is 15 weeks of literacy coaching over the phone or email for parents. Parents are feeling more confident about supporting their children at home
- Hebersham Public School employs a Maori/Pasifika school learning support officer (SLSO) to work in classrooms, the playground and to make contact with families and the community. ILPs have been developed for all Maori/Pasifika Kindergarten students with all parent and carers attending. A dance group, involving more than 80 students and a garden has been established with the Polynesian community. Cooking and garden lessons are provided with interested members of the school community volunteering to work in the garden. Connections with TAFE, Bunnings, Gardening Australia, Greening Australia, and Blacktown City Council are established for assistance with programs
- Fairfield West Public School employs two CLOs, one Vietnamese and one Assyrian, to assist in the implementation of parent workshops in literacy, numeracy and technology in the community languages
- Chester Hill Public School is conducting an action research project on developing strategies to assist ESL or dialect learners in the mainstream classroom. A classroom teacher is employed to release the Assistant Principal from class to facilitate the professional learning. ILPs are developed and implemented for targeted ESL students
- at Auburn West Public School the Assistant Principal ESL mentors Languages Other Than English and ESL teachers support the delivery of the curriculum relevant to the needs of every learner by:
 - supporting the development of an engaging curriculum that differentiates teaching and learning programs through mentoring, provision of demonstration lessons and team teaching
 - facilitating the development of exemplary ESL pedagogy amongst the ESL team
 - monitoring student progress through analysis of collected data
 - setting goals and teaching focus points based on data collection and school targets
 - supporting the integration of ICT into daily teaching and learning
 - the induction of new staff including early career teachers
 - providing teacher professional learning focusing on the needs of ESL students and the effective use of ESL scales for planning programming and assessing ESL students.

Auburn West Public School also provides preschool play groups and an Open Arms program for refugees and students newly arrived to Australia who will be beginning school in the coming year. In Years 1-6 these students have better access to oral language skill development and learning opportunities through a homework club attended by 25 students per grade in Years 3 - 6 and a refugee learning centre. The programs are supported by an Assistant Principal, a Community Engagement Officer, SLSOs and a homework/learning centre coordinator

- at Cabramatta High School the Head Teacher Literacy/ESL is leading the implementation of a whole-school *Successful Language for Learning Program* and targeted professional learning for all staff in reading, writing and ESL strategies. Two

literacy and numeracy coaches are employed to work across faculties with individual teachers. They demonstrate strategies, develop literacy links in content driven lessons, devise class based literacy strategies, team teach, provide feedback, support teachers with individualised professional learning plans and implement student focus groups.

Al Sadiq College Yagoona campus (independent sector) has initiated a focus on the language needs of the students as they enter Kindergarten. This begins with the assessment of Kindergarten students' language and literacy skills on entry using the ESL B1 scales.

Initiatives for Refugees

Schools in the National Partnership continue to provide explicit support for refugee students. Transition programs, specific instructional groupings and additional support through specialised tutors and homework centres are included in the strategies reported by 24 government schools, including:

- Bankstown Senior College has formed a discrete class of refugee students in Year 10 with the support of an ESL teacher. The teaching and learning program includes peer tutoring and mentoring in the students' first language
- a Year 10 into Year 11 (senior campus) transition program for refugee students is offered at Callaghan College Waratah Technology Campus. It provides mentoring, language support, goal setting, careers and senior school preparation. The ESL teacher at the senior campus coordinates the Refugee Homework Centre. Trained tutors are provided by Northern Settlement Services
- Hampden Park Public School has developed a transition support program for refugees and newly arrived students and their families, which includes hosting 'Welcome' morning teas and facilitating Settling In, a program for newly arrived and refugee students. A Homework Club has been established in response to parent feedback collected at one of these events. This was established in collaboration with personnel from local multicultural organisations, the Community Information Officer and education students from local universities. The success of this program has also led to the development of an Arabic Speaking Women's Group and the Implementation of Families in Cultural Transition program in 2013

Staff members from over 100 government schools were involved in a range of professional learning activities to promote an understanding of the needs of refugee students and enable them to implement effective curriculum and welfare strategies. They include:

- *Promoting Positive Behaviour and Learning* - assisting refugee students at school (29 schools)
- *Teaching Refugees in My Classroom* (24 schools)
- Targeted refugee programs - *Refugee Transition Program* (RTP) (40 schools)
- Targeted refugee programs - *Primary Intensive English Program* (PIEP) (30 schools)
- *Refugee Action Support Program* (20 schools)
- *Macquarie Mentoring Program* (6 schools)
- *Leadership Project: Refugee Student Support* (28 schools).
- Chester Hill High School continues to identify a wide range of strategies to support refugee students in addition to an extensive program to support ESL students:
 - teacher professional learning in *Teaching Refugees in My Classroom* assisted staff who reported gaining a greater understanding of the needs of refugee students that in turn enables the creation of better classroom resources
 - staff participation in the *Teaching English Language Learners* (TELL) course has enabled them to assess ESL and refugee student strengths and needs more effectively and better understand the language, literacy and numeracy demands

of the different key learning areas. The School aims, under the National Partnership program, to encourage 85% of teaching staff to undertake the TELL Professional Learning course by the end of 2013 to build teacher capacity and ensure changed practices and sustainability beyond the conclusion of the program

- the Drama, Industrial Arts and Visual Arts faculties are provided with an additional staffing allocation to collaborate with the Intensive English Centre (IEC). The aim of this initiative was to increase ESL and refugee IEC student engagement, especially those with low literacy and numeracy skills from Stages 4 & 5. It also provided IEC students with access to the Drama, Industrial Arts and Visual Arts curriculum being delivered in the IEC
- a refugee transition program supported by an additional staff position has been established. The program provides support for refugee students in accessing the curriculum and improving attainment. As a part of the transition strategy students attended Refugee & Migrant Pathways to Employment Expo which has increased student awareness of post-school options. Links were created with Max Employment resulting in part-time employment for one refugee student
- staff surveys indicate that refugee and ESL students are happier in their classes, more confident in their learning and are demonstrating improved literacy and numeracy outcomes
- in support of their peers, students in the Year 7 High Achievers' Class created film resources to be used by the Red Cross to support refugee transition in Australia. They worked in partnership with mentors from Red Cross Australia and Classrooms Without Borders.

Other disadvantaged students

Blacktown Youth College, in the independent sector, supports students with mental health and intellectual disabilities through the ongoing employment of paraprofessionals to do 1:2 tuition. Connections have also been formed with clinical psychologists who assess and provide advice reading to students with mental/emotional and behavioural disabilities and difficulties. ILPs are currently being designed according to these students' needs.

Vistara Primary School, another independent school, has a number of students on the ASD spectrum. These students have been supported by the whole-school approach and the implementation of strategies to engage learning through such devices as visible thinking routines, visual class timetables, consistent language and explicit teaching geared towards their needs.

Exemplary Schools - 1 January to 30 June 2012

Merewether Public School: improved educational outcomes for students at risk of disengaging from schooling

Merewether Public School is a government primary school in Newcastle with an enrolment of 166 students. As the School is a Centre for Excellence, additional staffing allocations are provided to enhance the professional learning of teachers and an educational paraprofessional supports literacy and numeracy programs K – 2. The school receives equity funding which is used to employ school learning support officers (SLSOs) to assist in the delivery of individual learning to students with specific needs. All teachers at Merewether Public School have been trained in the *Focus on Reading* program, an intensive professional learning program for teachers to support the explicit teaching of the key aspects of reading.

Analysis of NAPLAN results, student assessment data and school community surveys as part of the school's situational analysis found that student engagement, particularly in boys was an issue in all classrooms. Recommendations on reform based strategies to improve the engagement of boys were made. In 2013, the school has adopted a three-level approach to addressing boys at risk of disengaging from schooling.

1. National Partnership funds have enabled the employment of a Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) to coordinate a whole-school mentoring program. The HAT facilitates teacher professional learning in the refinement of quality teaching practices which supports the engagement of all students by integrating technology into teaching and learning experiences. These sessions are complemented by one on one mentoring. Teachers are supported in their planning of differentiated learning activities to engage all students.

1. An SLSO in Boys Education is employed, utilising National Partnership funds, to support the engagement of boys in Years 3-6. This SLSO supports and mentors these identified primary boys to better engage in literacy learning driven by individualised learning plans (ILPs). The SLSO Boys Education also assists teachers in the classroom and the playground.

2. The SLSO Boys Education works closely with the HAT to engage the parents of students at risk in terms of learning. A series of parent information sessions is being conducted every term on aspects of literacy and numeracy learning.

Data is beginning to demonstrate the effectiveness of these strategies. In the 2012 NAPLAN, Year 3 boys improved by 35 scale scores from the 2011 data in Reading. Year 5 boys were 25 scale scores above the State average growth in Reading. Ninety per cent of Year 5 boys achieved greater than or equal to expected growth in reading. School referral records show a significant improvement in engagement of the targeted boys in learning. All of the targeted boys complete their literacy tasks as agreed in their ILP.

Teacher feedback confirms that the fortnightly individual mentoring of all teachers with the HAT is regarded as highly effective in designing differentiated learning activities. Classroom teaching programs indicate that differentiated learning activities are being delivered to students.

Classroom observation data collated by the HAT indicates that:

- all teachers implement explicit teaching strategies focussing on quality criteria and clear learning goals
- the employment of the SLSO Boys Education is effective in increasing the on-task learning time for targeted students.

Teachers report that the SLSO is effective in engaging with the parents of the identified students and the feedback from parents has been positive.

Alexandria Park Community School: improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students

Alexandria Park Community School is a dual campus, partially selective K - 12 government school in metropolitan Sydney. Of the 390 students, 75% are from a Language Background Other Than English and 15% of students are Aboriginal. The school has a junior, middle and senior structure with Opportunity Classes in Years 5 and 6 as well as a selective stream in Year 7 - 12 for academically gifted and talented students.

When the school commenced their participation in the National Partnership there was a significant gap in the achievement levels for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. In the 2010 NAPLAN Year 5 writing 74% of Aboriginal students achieved less than the expected growth compared to 34% for all students. Similarly, in Year 5 numeracy, 29% of Aboriginal students achieved less than the expected growth compared to 20% for all students. To support improvement in the outcomes for Aboriginal students, the school has utilised National Partnership funding to employ three additional classroom teachers to provide in-class support for students not meeting standards, a Head Teacher to manage partnership projects and an Aboriginal SLSO to support lower achieving students.

The school has focused on building the capacity of staff particularly in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The *Accelerated Literacy* and *Teaching English Language Learners* (TELL) program is being implemented as is Collaborative Strategic Reading, a program that teaches students to use comprehension strategies while working cooperatively. Teacher professional learning on the Literacy Continuum K-10 and the Numeracy Continuum K-10 has been delivered.

Other reform-based strategies which are being implemented across all Key Learning Areas as part of a whole school planned sustainable model include:

- whole school analysis of NAPLAN using SMART to analyse strengths and weaknesses
- use of assessment data including Best Start and NAPLAN to inform teaching and assist in the development of effective PLPs
- the Learning Support Team working with teachers to adapt and refine explicit teaching strategies
- targeted support by the Aboriginal school learning support officer
- use of high interest/culturally inclusive literature to increase engagement
- strengthening parent and community partnerships including the Elders group meetings, parental engagement in PLPs, mens' group, parent workshops, NAIDOC Week celebrations, community newsletter and transition programs.
- engagement of role models from the local Aboriginal community to promote literacy and numeracy
- a sports development partnership project with the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy.

Since the school's commencement on the National Partnership, the school has achieved measurable improvements for Aboriginal students evidenced in NAPLAN. In 2012, 73% of Aboriginal students met the national minimum standards (NMS) in writing, representing a 9% growth from 2009-11. Thirty per cent of Aboriginal students met the national proficiency standards (NPS) in writing, representing a 24% growth. In numeracy, 94% of Aboriginal students met the NMS representing a 1% growth from 2009-11. Thirty three per cent of all Aboriginal students met the NPS in numeracy representing a 31.3% growth from 2009-11.

Staff feedback indicates that the strategies are enabling teachers to plan, implement and monitor students' individualised programs in response to their learning needs. Classroom observations indicate that TELL is being embedded into teaching and learning across all KLAs.

While there has been growth in achievement there is still a gap between achievement levels for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in writing and numeracy. The target for 2013 is therefore to increase the percentage of Aboriginal students meeting the NMS in writing and numeracy.

Cowra Public School: improved student attendance and engagement, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Cowra Public School is located in a rural area of central west NSW, and has an enrolment of 327 students. Of these, 19% are Aboriginal while 2% of students are from a Language Background Other than English.

When the school commenced participation in the National Partnership in 2009, the attendance rate for Aboriginal students was below that of non-Aboriginal students. The school identified the interconnecting challenges of school attendance and engagement, particularly for Aboriginal students, as areas to address to improve student learning outcomes. In 2013, National Partnership funding enabled the employment of additional staff to support programs aimed at improving the attendance and engagement of all students, particularly Aboriginal students. Additional staff include four school learning support officers (SLSOs), with one designated Aboriginal SLSO, to tutor students on an individual basis in Years 2 - 5 in literacy for 30 minutes each day for a 13 week period. A Community Engagement Officer is employed to liaise with and raise the profile of the school within the wider Cowra Aboriginal community.

The school has continued to develop and refine its reform based strategies to address the gap in attendance rates. Other strategies to support improvement in attendance and engagement include:

- forming Stage 3 boys and girls groups involving Aboriginal community members, focussing on cultures and beliefs, to mentor disengaged Aboriginal students
- Aboriginal Elders leading professional learning for all staff on cultural understandings professional learning in Reading to Learn (R2L)
- following up on absenteeism by classroom teachers and the Aboriginal education officer
- developing PLPs for all Aboriginal students
- letters are sent home to parents and referrals are made to the home school liaison officer (HSLO) when student attendance is of concern.
- student rewards and assembly acknowledgements for good attendance targeted training for the SLSOs including understanding language development, Aboriginal English and R2L
- extending the links between the school and the Yalbalinga Preschool
- integrating iPads and interactive whiteboards into innovative teaching and learning experiences.

The school's approach to improving student attendance and engagement focuses on building positive relationships with the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), Elders, parents and the wider Aboriginal community.

Attendance records show that Aboriginal student attendance was 91% in 2012 compared to 85% in 2008. The individual daily literacy 13 week tutoring program, conducted by SLSOs, has been successful with the average growth in reading age being 11 months and some students moving up 2 years.

Teacher feedback demonstrates that the provision of on-site professional learning to all staff with a focus on innovative classroom practice has assisted to further engage Aboriginal students in their learning. Feedback from the local AECG confirms that the addition of Aboriginal workers has made Aboriginal parents and community more comfortable coming to the school and speaking to staff. Surveys of teachers and parents demonstrate that the greater depth of the staff's cultural understanding has increased their confidence in engaging meaningfully and purposefully with community members.

Hebersham Public School: increased engagement with parents and the local community.

Hebersham Public School is a metropolitan government school located in western Sydney. The enrolment is currently 595 with 49% of students from Language Backgrounds Other than English. The largest group of these is made up of students from the Pasifika communities. Sixteen per cent of students are Aboriginal. *Accelerated Literacy, QuickSmart* literacy and numeracy, *Jolly Phonics* and *Reading Recovery* are key programs within the school.

The school commenced on the National Partnership in 2010 and conducted a rigorous situational analysis which identified the need for more effective partnerships between home, school and community as a key area for improvement to make a measureable difference to student outcomes. The 2012 school evaluation team responsible for the ongoing collection of data recommended a number of strategies for 2013. These strategies focus on increasing engagement with parents and the local community and include:

- establishment of a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program as a strategy for engaging students in practical learning while promoting strong parent and community participation. The program is a fully integrated food education program that reinforces literacy and numeracy, science, cultural studies and environmental sustainability. In addition, the program delivers observable social benefits as students spend structured time in a productive vegetable garden and home-style kitchen as part of their everyday school experience. The school is working with the Polynesian community to assist in the development of a Polynesian garden section.
- teaching of the Dharug language utilising the support of the local Aboriginal community.
- employment of an Aboriginal and a Maori/Pasifika community officer to increase the participation of parents and community members through a front office presence and communications in the school newsletter. These officers assist in the coordination of meetings between teachers, students and parents to develop PLPs for all Aboriginal students and ILPs for the Pasifika and Maori Kindergarten students.
- employment of Aboriginal Elders to present professional learning on the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives. The Elders also work with preschool children and their families in the Koori Play and Chat playgroup conducted at the school's Yallinggen Allawah hall.
- facilitation of literacy and numeracy information sessions for parents including the Books in Homes and Mathematics K-6 programs.
- development of three cultural dance groups, Samoan, Cook Islands and Polynesian with the support of community groups.
- Since the commencement of the National Partnership, the school has noted a significant improvement in parent and community engagement. The school cites the following evidence of success:
 - results from NAPLAN 2012 indicate that 12 students were 36 scale scores above the State average growth for Year 5 Aboriginal students in reading. Other results show an impressive trend in improvement for Aboriginal students in Year 3 in reading, number, patterns and algebra
 - all Pasifika and Maori Kindergarten students' parents attended the planning meetings to negotiate learning goals for their children
 - in 2012, 65% of Aboriginal parents and carers attended their child's PLP meeting compared to 44% in 2010
 - survey responses from parents and carers attest to the effectiveness of the engagement process for both the Aboriginal and Maori/Pasifika community
 - observations of the Koori Play and Chat playgroup indicate increased parent attendance with parents taking on more of a decision-making role for the playgroup.

Moree Christian School: learning through collaboration.

Moree Christian School is an exemplar of a school making significant differences during the first six months of implementation of the National Partnership school plan. It is a remote K-10 school with 94 students located in the town of Moree. Approximately 11% of the students are Aboriginal and another 10% of students are LBOTE.

In July 2012, to overcome the impact of the School's remote rural location limiting access to expertise, the principal approached Regents Park Christian School (a small Sydney based primary school in the third year of the Low SES National Partnership). This was initially to seek guidance and advice on how to develop the plan and to discuss their experience in implementing National Partnership strategies. This proved to be very effective and resulted in the principal of MCS leading her staff in the collaborative development of a very clear and explicit plan focussing on three areas for 2013: Teacher Quality, Literacy (Reading), and Transitions from home to Kindergarten and primary to high school.

Through data analysis, the school established that the attendance rate of 94% was not only stable – but was a strength in the school as this was relatively consistent across various student cohorts (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal). However, a clear need to focus on literacy and in particular reading was revealed. To improve the teaching of reading across the school and to impact on student engagement, a sequence of strategically timed professional learning experiences were initiated at the whole school level. In the primary school a literacy specialist was employed to observe and mentor teachers to develop their capacity in literacy. This teacher also provided an opportunity for the school to separate primary classes into learning stages.

The teachers were supported in this learning with release time for collaboration, planning and implementation of the new practices and approaches. As this process was developing it became clear that the Class 5/6 teacher was developing significant expertise in using Reciprocal Reading techniques effectively in his classroom. This meant that the employment of the additional teacher, originally to allow the school to separate the primary years into Stages, also provided sufficient timetabling flexibility for the Stage 3 teacher to model this in the Stage 2 classroom. The Stage 2 and 3 teachers then had opportunity to collaborate. This is building a solid foundation from Year 3 – 6 using common language and strategy.

MulitLit has been used as an intervention for targeted students, supported by the employment of a paraprofessional. Targeted students on average have progressed through 12 Levels of the *MulitLit* since its implementation during the year. Three of the six students participating in the intervention are Aboriginal students who have made greater progress than the average of the group and two of these Aboriginal students are in the top half of the group's highest achievers.

The principal has been released from some teaching to mentor other staff. Two experienced teachers, supported by the principal, have undertaken greater responsibilities by supporting teachers in implementing strategies to target the focus of literacy. To further maintain this focus, the school has employed a library paraprofessional to provide lunchtime and recess library borrowing, also communicating to the community the school's focus on literacy.

Through these measures, in only six months the school has developed higher quality scope and sequences, implemented differentiation in programming and in classroom practice, and developed whole-school literacy strategies allowing for a smooth transition from primary school to high school.

The mentoring by an experienced teacher from the community has provided a greater sense of the school as a teaching/learning team. The feedback from both the mentor and the staff is that this has been a beneficial strategy and has developed pedagogical dialogue and communication.

The school has identified that mentoring, release for teachers to observe modelled pedagogy as well as maintaining strong professional development in focal areas are important future directions.

St Therese's Primary School, Sadlier: Supporting Aboriginal Students

St Therese's Primary Sadleir is a Catholic systemic school within the Archdiocese of Sydney. The School is located in south-western Sydney in the Green Valley area. It is a two-streamed primary school with girls and boys from Kindergarten to Year 6.

There has been a focus on Aboriginal Education over the past four years as part of the National Partnership agenda.

In 2013 the key improvements in Aboriginal Education include:

- a formal school-community partnership agreement
- PLPs for each Aboriginal student
- a school attendance strategy
- a school-wide plan for literacy teaching/learning
- a school-wide plan for numeracy teaching/learning
- a school-wide Professional Learning Plan which focuses on building leadership and teacher capacity to support the delivery of Literacy and Numeracy strategies
- a Professional Learning Plan which supports the achievement of the National Professional Standards for principals and teachers.

In recent years the school has maintained a consistent level of overall student enrolments. Meanwhile, Aboriginal student enrolments have almost doubled in the period from 2007 to 2013. Currently Aboriginal students comprise 9% of total school enrolments.

The school has employed a dedicated staff member to coordinate Aboriginal programs. There are a variety of programs to support the Aboriginal students in their learning. These include *Reading Recovery*, *Quicksmart Mathematics*, literacy support in reading and counting.

The school has worked to build respectful relationships between students, staff and community to ensure that its culturally diverse community feels secure and respected.

A key focus of the work of the teacher coordinating the Aboriginal programs has been the development of PLP's for each student. The focus of the plan allows opportunities to include both the student and parent voice. The teacher has also worked collaboratively with the Teacher Educator employed as part of the National Partnership to enhance reading outcomes for Aboriginal students.

The school has recognised the importance of good attendance in its annual report to the community, and has established formal monitoring of student attendance, which includes strategies developed to support Aboriginal students. The overall attendance trend for the school is good and well in excess of 93% for non-Aboriginal students. However, the attendance rate of Aboriginal students from year to year has been less predictable. There has been an improvement in Aboriginal student attendance in 2013 to 93.1%, which may be due to the school's building community awareness and actively developing return to school plans to assist students and families to maintain high attendance rates.

St Patrick's Primary School, Guildford: Addressing literacy needs through improved teacher capacity

St. Patrick's Primary School, Guildford, is a systemic Catholic primary school in south-western Sydney within the Diocese of Parramatta. In 2013 there are 563 students from a wide range of multi-cultural backgrounds, with 88% of the school population from non-English speaking backgrounds. There are 49 students who receive funding for Special Education, while 111 other students receive further support in Literacy through school-based intervention programs.

As part of the National Partnership, St. Patrick's continues to focus on improving the literacy levels of all students, with a particular focus on reading comprehension, through the building of teacher capacity.

National Partnership funding has allowed the school to address the literacy needs of the students through the temporary employment of highly skilled literacy teachers to work with the most vulnerable students through in-class and one-to-one support, particularly in the early years. The literacy teachers build the capacity of the class teachers, particularly New Scheme teachers, by sharing their expertise. Teacher Aides have also been employed to assist students with their learning in the classroom.

National Partnership funding also has allowed the school to continue to provide professional development opportunities for staff. A number of staff attended a course run by the Primary English Teaching Association Australia. Six staff new to the school this year, most of whom are New Scheme Teachers, will attend a full day of professional development on the effective teaching of specific comprehension strategies. This day will be led by Tony Stead from the Dynamic Learning Group.

The school's focus on literacy has seen a restructure of the timetable with all classes now having a two-hour uninterrupted Literacy Block. Data Walls are being used to track student progress, resulting in teachers feeling a greater sense of whole-school ownership and accountability. The school has also purchased new reading materials for the *Reading Recovery* program, which assists the most vulnerable students in Year One.

Four more interactive whiteboards have been installed in classrooms, with professional development opportunities provided for the building of teacher capacity in their use to improve student learning across all Key Learning Areas. Funding continues to be used to purchase quality resources tailored to meet the literacy needs of the school.

The impact of the National Partnership continues to be positive. The building of teacher capacity around literacy has resulted in greater teacher accountability, which in turn has benefited the children. The 2012 NAPLAN results show tremendous growth in Reading results from Year 3 to Year 5. The average scaled score growth for students across the State and Diocese was 77 points, while the students at St. Patrick's achieved an average scaled score growth of 101 points. That trend is expected to continue for 2013.

Individual teachers are far more confident identifying the specific needs of individual children. This has resulted in improved teacher capacity to implement actions to cater for those individuals and on the future planning for all students.

As 2013 progresses, key literacy staff will continue to help build teacher capacity with a focus on improving the learning outcomes for all students. The up-skilling of staff has seen a greater emphasis on explicit teaching during their two-hour uninterrupted Literacy Block.

Section 3 – Milestones

Part 1 - Milestones not reported/not achieved/partially achieved in 2012 Annual Report

Milestone (state and territories may wish to identify whether the milestone relates to all sectors or a particular sector within their jurisdiction)	Detail of achievement against milestone (<i>Quantitative and Qualitative</i>)	If not achieved or partially achieved, reasons why (<i>Qualitative</i>)	Strategies put in place to achieve milestone and updated timeframe (<i>Quantitative and Qualitative</i>)
Not applicable – New South Wales achieved all milestones specified for the Annual Report for 2012			

Part 2 - Milestones in Progress Report - (Achieved 1 January to 30 June 2013)

Milestone	Detail of achievement against milestone (<i>Quantitative and Qualitative</i>)	If not achieved or partially achieved, reasons why (<i>Qualitative</i>)	Strategies put in place to achieve milestone and updated timeframe (<i>Quantitative and Qualitative</i>)
State progress report (January – June 2013)	Completed		
All continuing schools have completed an Annual School Report which includes National Partnership activity for the previous year.	Completed		
NSW has revised its Implementation Plan for 2014.		Not applicable given NSW has signed up to the National Education Reform Agreement	

Part 3 - Milestones that will progress through the 2013 calendar year (with no set milestone date)

Milestone	Detail of achievement against milestone (<i>Quantitative and Qualitative</i>)	Strategies put in place to achieve milestone and updated timeframe (<i>Quantitative and Qualitative</i>)
All NSW milestones are linked to set milestone dates, as identified in the revised Implementation Plan.		