

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2025

Aurora College 8912



School vision and context

School vision statement

Aurora College aims to provide great teaching and inspired learning in a whole new context, by allowing students in rural and remote communities to connect locally and to learn globally.

Aurora is committed to building relationships which foster in its students, a strong sense of belonging to Aurora and to their home school. Remaining in their local community, Aurora students benefit from the enhanced opportunities that come from belonging to two education communities.

Aurora College is dedicated to creating opportunities that will build each student's capacity to become an autonomous, life-long learner. Aurora College embraces the philosophy of 'personal best', acknowledging that each student's drive towards self-improvement in a curriculum rich in higher-order thinking provides a strong foundation for success in life beyond the school years.

Aurora's vision is to develop students who are not only at ease in the digital world, but who are empowered through their knowledge, skills and creativity to become influential contributors to the knowledge economies of this century.

Finally, the college recognises the importance of developing each student as a 'whole' person. Aurora students have multiple and diverse passions and interests, and it is the desire of the college that students pursue these and also have a happy and balanced social life.

School context

The establishment of a virtual secondary school was a key deliverable of Rural and Remote Education - Blueprint for Action. Through a range of actions, the Blueprint aims to bridge the gap in educational achievement between rural and remote and metropolitan schools.

Aurora College, the state's first virtual school, commenced classes on Monday 2 February 2015. Our students meet specific criteria, including enrolment in a rural and remote government school as defined by the MCEETYA Geographical Location Classification. The college enables these students to remain in their local school and community while providing the opportunity to study with peers and specialist teachers from across the state. Our school offers:

- Year 5 and 6 students Opportunity Class lessons in Mathematics, Science and Technology
- Year 7 to 10 students Selective School classes in English, Mathematics and Science
- Year 11 and 12 students the opportunity to study one or more Preliminary and/or Higher School Certificate subjects that may not be available in their local school.

Students at Aurora College connect with their teachers and classmates in timetabled lessons through a cutting-edge virtual learning environment, which includes web conferencing software and a range of online information, communication and collaboration tools. Teachers and students also have the opportunity to work together at a residential school held twice per year.

Aurora College offers students expanded career options through innovative programs and strengthened partnerships with business, and with scientific, cultural and tertiary education institutions. Mentoring opportunities and masterclasses are key features of both the online and residential school programs.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

To ensure that all students grow in their learning through explicit and targeted initiatives, so they may access the widest possible curriculum and participate fully in society.

Improvement measures

Improved reading outcomes

Increase % of students achieving growth in reading

Achieve by year: 2024

READING GROWTH

An improvement in the % of students achieving growth in Year 9 PAT assessment scores in **reading**.

Improved numeracy outcomes

Increase % of students achieving growth in numeracy

Achieve by year: 2024

NUMERACY GROWTH

An improvement in the % of students achieving growth in Year 9 PAT assessment scores in **numeracy**.

Initiatives

Systematic data analysis for school improvement

- Develop personalised learning plans, deliver targeted tutorial support, and embed literacy and numeracy strategies in learning and teaching programs.
- Enhance the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to identify and target areas for further growth in literacy and numeracy through professional learning and teaching practice which is informed by research such as What Works Best and High Impact Professional Learning.

Analysis of achievement data of Aboriginal students

Analyse 2023 NAPLAN data to determine the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the top two bands and try to ascertain their growth percentage.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

The whole school community demonstrates aspirational expectations of learning progress and achievement for all students, and is committed to the pursuit of excellence. (SEF, L, LC, HE, E)

Teaching and learning programs are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable assessment and continuous tracking of student progress and achievement. (SEF, L, C, T&LP, E)

Assessments are developed and used regularly across the whole school to help promote consistent and comparable judgement of student learning, monitor student learning progress, and identify skill gaps for improvement and areas for extension. (SEF, L, A, WSMoSL, E)

The school identifies expected growth for each student. Students are achieving higher than expected growth on internal school progress and achievement data. (SEF, L, SPM, SG, E)

Analysis of data from external sources, including NAPLAN, VALID and HSC, demonstrates that student progress and achievement is greater than students at similar schools, and this data is consistent with strong student progress and achievement on internal measures. (SEF, T, DS&U, DA, E)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: What has been the impact of having explicit and targeted initiatives on student performance?

Data: Will be collected and analysed by relevant teachers, leaders and teams: external student performance measures (NAPLAN and HSC); internal student performance measures (Literacy and Numeracy); teaching programs; classroom observations and student work samples.

Analysis: Analyse the data regularly to determine the

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

extent to which these initiatives have been achieved.

Implications: How do we continue to improve student growth and attainment at Aurora College? Where do we go from here? Future directions and next steps.

Strategic Direction 2: Student wellbeing

Purpose

To develop a learning environment which informs, guides and nurtures high levels of social, institutional and intellectual engagement for students while strengthening post school pathways that clearly link learning to future employment and study options.

Improvement measures

Attendance

There is a whole school focus on improving attendance to strengthen student sense of belonging, engagement and outcomes.

Achieve by year: 2027

Improve the attendance rate of students in the school.

Initiatives

Whole student wellbeing

Strengthen student wellbeing support to ensure higher levels of attendance, engagement, academic achievement, and better overall mental health.

- Improve student induction program, tutorial support and targeted wellbeing initiatives led by the Wellbeing Team.
- Strengthen support of students through effective communication and collaboration with all partner schools, developed through collegiality, professional development and improved administration systems.
- Establish and grow the Aurora College Parents and Citizens Association to promote the interests of the school, by bringing parents, citizens, students, and teaching staff into closer cooperation.
- Increase the role of the Aboriginal Education Coordinator to support improved networks with relevant support services, and to better meet the cultural and learning needs of Aboriginal students.

Strengthened partnerships

Enhance student participation and engagement in the wider community to support students as they transition into post-school options:

- Facilitate and enhance leadership opportunities for students locally via the Aurora SRC, and at state and national levels through initiatives such as the Rural Youth Ambassadors program.
- Increase the number of students continuing to study with Aurora College in Stage 6, by building stronger links with potential partner schools and post-school institutions, as well as developing a better awareness and understanding of post-school options and opportunities.
- Establish a Careers advisor position to support and guide students through the process of subject selection and post-school career options.
- Establish regional Community Liaison hubs to

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Teachers, parents and the community work together to support consistent and systematic processes that ensure student absences do not impact on learning outcomes by developing positive connections for all stakeholders in the school community. (SEF, L, LC, A, E)

High levels of student wellbeing and engagement is supported by an environment which is conducive to the learning styles and needs of individuals. Students are actively connected to their learning through meaningful, engaging and rewarding personalised learning experiences. (SEF, L, W, ILN, E)

The school has implemented evidence-based change to wholeschool practices, resulting in measurable improvements in wellbeing and engagement to support learning. (SEF, L, W, APAtW)

Partner schools and Aurora families are actively engaged in, and support, the learning of students, and work in close partnership with the school to support students in achieving their goals and aspirations. Effective partnerships support the development of programs that meet the cultural and learning needs of all students but in particular Aboriginal students so that it is relevant, challenging and reflects the high expectations of the school community. (SEF, L, LC, T&CoL)

The curriculum is enhanced by learning alliances with other schools or organisations so that students can be monitored longitudinally. (SEF, L, C, CP, E)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: What has been the impact of the various initiatives within the school so that students are engaged with the school environment on a number of levels?

Data: These data sources will be collected and analysed by relevant teachers, leaders and teams: TTFM; external student performance measures; internal student performance measures; learning and teaching programs; classroom observations; student work samples and

Strategic Direction 2: Student wellbeing

Initiatives

enhance student support and to raise awareness of the unique opportunities available to students of Aurora College in communities across the state.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

assessments; tutoring records.

Analysis: Analyse the data regularly to determine the extent to which these initiatives have been achieved.

Implications: How do we continue to develop student and staff wellbeing at Aurora College? Where do we go from here? Future directions and next steps.

Strategic Direction 3: High impact teaching and learning

Purpose

To ensure a challenging, engaging and responsive learning environment underpinned by high quality, collaborative planning, programming, assessing and reporting practices, which maximise the potential of every learner.

Improvement measures

Pathways

There is a focus on positive transitions into meaningful post school pathways.

Achieve by year: 2027

- An increase in the proportion of students' HSC results in the top three achievement bands in 2027 compared to 2023 and 2022.

Initiatives

Highly effective teaching practices

Maximise the potential of every learner through a focus on high quality explicit teaching, and collaborative assessment and reporting practices.

- Strengthen collaborative support for teacher performance, cross-faculty collaborations and evidence-based programs guided by the School Excellence Framework.
- Strengthen processes and policies to support higher levels of Aboriginal attainment at all stages, by implementing learnings from targeted professional learning and through effective collaboration between classroom teachers, the Aboriginal Education Coordinator and relevant support services.
- Review and improve the use of formative data sources, while monitoring and reflecting on teaching effectiveness through Collaborative Models of Inquiry.

Whole school approach to effective evidence-based teaching and learning

Ensure highly effective, innovative and exemplary learning and teaching practice across the school.

- Establish an Instructional Leader position to lead the ongoing development and implementation of best practice learning and teaching in a virtual environment.
- Establish a High Potential and Gifted Education (HPGE) Coordinator position to support the effective implementation of the department's HPGE policy and ongoing professional learning related to the needs of high potential and gifted students.
- Improve the coordination and delivery of the Science Practical program through the appointment of a Science Practical Coordinator and through the production of relevant learning and teaching resources.
- Enhance student voice within assessment and

Success criteria for this strategic direction

There is a high functioning professional learning community within the school that is focused on continuous high-impact teaching and learning to ensure every student experiences high-quality teaching. (SEF, T, PS, IoP, E)

Teachers are engaged in strong collaborations to inform and support the continuity of learning for all students, with a particular focus on High Performance and Gifted Education. The school uses embedded and explicit systems that facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation and the modelling of effective practice. (SEF, T, L&D, CP&F)

Evidence-informed teaching methods including Cognitive Load Theory, PBL, LISC & HPGE Differentiation optimise learning progress for all students and are embedded across the school. (SEF, T, ECP, ET, E)

Teachers collaborate within and across stages and key learning areas to share student data, curriculum knowledge and effective teaching and classroom management strategies. Teaching staff demonstrate and share their expertise within their school and at a state wide level. (SEF, T, L&D, E&I, E)

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: Has the introduction of an Instructional Leader improved the knowledge and abilities regarding effective high impact teaching and learning strategies? What has been the impact of the HPGE policy and Coordinator on creating a challenging, engaging and responsive learning environment? Have all staff and faculties engaged with the initiatives? Have school wide practices been developed to support the implementation of the initiatives?

Data: Teacher feedback and evaluations, High Impact Professional Learning implementation and evaluation, teaching programs, classroom observations, student work samples, coaching records, staff / student surveys, pre and post teacher assessment. TTFM survey data.

Initiatives

- reporting practices
- Develop and implement a project based learning component in the Stage 4 to enhance the relevance of the curriculum and improve the engagement of students with their learning.
 - Develop staff understanding of the Aboriginal Pedagogy Framework and effectively implement learnings within teaching programs.

Excellence in professional standards

Ensure a school culture is established which supports the professional standards of staff to attain higher levels of accreditation:

- Enhance support of all teachers in all stages of their career, from beginning teacher through to teachers who are working towards Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation.
- Continue the ongoing review of all learning and teaching programs and the progressive review of curriculum delivery by each teaching faculty.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Analysis: Analyse the data to determine the extent to which these initiatives have been achieved.

Implications: How do we continue to ensure high impact teaching and learning at Aurora College? Where do we go from here? Future directions and next steps.