Vermont Secondary College - 8420

School Self-Evaluation

Prepared Term One & Two/Semester One – 2012

Covers period 2009 - 2012

**Excellence**

*In the achievement of individual and team goals*

**Integrity**

*Of individuals in their words, actions and relationships*

**Respect**

*For self, others and property*

**Tolerance**

*Of diversity and individual differences*

**Responsibility**

*For our words and action*
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1. Executive summary

Vermont Secondary College has undergone substantial change in the last four years in response to the demands of our school community, DEECD initiatives, pedagogical innovations as well as the ever changing profile of our students and staff. These significant changes will be reflected throughout this self-evaluation which has given us the opportunity to reflect on the years 2009 to 2012 and to look to the future in the development of our next Strategic Plan – 2013 to 2016. We look forward to the challenges ahead over the next four year cycle.

Our teacher profile is ever changing due to retirements, family leave and people making career changes and as our veteran teachers retire we are making a conscious decision to employ graduates. It is important to maintain a balance of young staff, staff at the midpoint of their teaching careers and our highly experienced, long-serving staff. This allows succession planning to always be in motion and for the current leaders of the school to pass to the future leaders, a College that is much admired and sought after by the local community.

Currently our staff profile (Equivalent Full Time – EFT with 1.0 being full time) is made up of one Principal Class, three Assistant Principal Class, 11 Leading Teachers, 40.62 Expert Teachers (51 Teachers), 15.69 Accomplished Teachers (25 teachers), 16.6 Graduate teachers (24 teachers), 3.15 Instrumental Music Teachers (10 teachers) and 34 Educational Support Staff.

Our decision making and leadership structure took a significant change in 2009 when we developed a new leadership model with the implementation of the Strategic Planning Team. Previously the leadership team consisted of three consultative bodies: The Leadership Team consisting of 23 Leading Teachers & four Principal Class, The Senior Management Team made up of four Leading Teachers at Level 2 & four Principal Class and The Principal Class team. This model due to its size, numerous layers and factional representation proved to be unwieldy and ultimately unworkable in terms of consultation and decision making in achieving sound educational outcomes for the College.

The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) consists of 12 Leading Teachers (11 in 2012) and 4 Principal Class. This team meets regularly throughout the term and College year as well as an annual residential at the beginning of each year to set the agenda for the school year via the Annual Implementation Plan. The SPT agenda and decision making process is guided by the 4 Principal Class members who met formally and informally on a daily basis. There was a nice synchronicity in the first two years of the 2009 – 2012 Strategic Plan with the appointment of a new Principal and two new Assistant Principals in 2009, and the appointment in 2010 of 11 of the 12 Leading Teachers. All these positions were advertised externally along DEECD guidelines and were five year appointments.

This Strategic Planning Team model has served us well over the last four years in the implementation of the 2009 – 2012 Strategic Plan. It will also serve us well through the next Strategic Plan. The SPT model has given the College solidarity, structure and direction with a consultative structure in its decision making. The SPT has been further supported by way of professional development with a focus on leadership development. We have firmly established our Vermont Values and sense of purpose (refer 2009 – 2012 Strategic Plan) and we stringently adhere to these in all things that we do. These values and sense of purpose apply equally to the students, staff and broader College community. When looking at change we ask the question “Will this action benefit the educational outcomes for students”?

The SPT managed the consultation, data collation and analysis process for the School Self-Evaluation. Teams were established and feedback from the student leaders and parents via College Council & VSC Community Association in the three key areas of Student Learning, Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Student Pathways & Transitions was sought. Each team undertook further consultation with key stakeholders and undertook the writing of the evaluations. All staff, student leaders and parent groups were briefed on the evaluation process and invited to participate and/or contribute. Mr Rod Allen was appointed as our support person through the self-evaluation and review process.
Student Learning

The College can feel proud of its achievements with respect to improving the learning outcomes for students over the life of this Strategic Plan. The majority of trend data indicates continuous improvement and high achievement in this critical area. The Key Improvement Strategies (KIS) for all targets that were implemented included:

- Collaboratively developing a vision and an action plan for a stimulating teaching and learning environment through our Performance and Development Culture
- Building teacher capacity through a systematic, coordinated, well-resourced, collaborative mentoring partnership framework and structure
- Reviewing school organisational structures, streamline work flow processes and establishing resourcing priorities accordingly
- Building leadership capacity to affect this
- Building an International student program, with targeted links to our Languages program

The student outcomes indicating that we achieved our targets in the area of Student Learning include an improvement in VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) results through significantly ‘lifting the tail’ and the degree of value adding that is occurring with almost all studies showing at least 65% of students performing above their predicted score. In 2011, 88% of our VCE Year 12 students achieved an ATAR of 50 and above.

Another measure is the NAPLAN Matched cohort data for Literacy and Numeracy which shows that in Reading & Writing, while improving at a school level, we are slightly below the state mean in value adding while in numeracy the school performance in value adding was well above the state mean in 2009 -11. The ‘My School’ website data also indicates that VSC has achieved a slight advantage in overall student improvement over similar schools when comparing the data of students with the same starting point.

In relation to improvements in Student Learning measured via the Parent Opinion Survey elements such as, making learning fun, encouraging students to learn & persist and student motivation has exceeded our targeted expectations. The Student Attitudes to School Survey trend line for a ‘stimulating learning’ environment has shown constant improvement over the life of the Strategic Plan and supports the confidence shown by the parents.

Staff (teaching & Education Support – ES) have also shown an increased confidence in the College leadership team and there has been a strong upward trend in ‘school morale’ as indicated in the Staff Opinion Survey. This element includes recognition of good team spirit, energy, enthusiasm and pride in the school.

Finally there has been a significant increase in the number of International students at the College, however this has not been directly linked to the Language subjects we offer. The College estimates that given the high demand from our local neighbourhood for places this program will stabilise somewhere between 12 to 20 students.

Improving Learning & Teaching outcomes for students and staff will always be our core business and this will be driven through embedding the use of data into the normal practice of all teachers across Years 7 to 12. The range of data now available can be daunting unless it is collated and presented to teachers in a clear and concise manner that allows a way to facilitate its utilisation. This commitment to improved student outcomes has been reflected in the significant restructuring and development of the Leadership Team to support the process.

There are clear indications that Vermont Secondary College promotes the achievement of excellence in a learning environment that is committed to the development of lifelong learning skills that motivate and enable all students to achieve their individual goals and make a positive contribution to the local, state, national and global community.
Student Engagement & Wellbeing

The College can feel proud of its achievements with respect to improving the engagement & wellbeing of students over the life of this Strategic Plan. The majority of trend data indicates continuous improvement and high achievement in this critical area. The Key Improvement Strategies (KIS) for all targets that were implemented were:

- Collaboratively developing a vision and an action plan for a stimulating teaching and learning environment through our Performance and Development Culture
- Building teacher capacity through a systematic, coordinated, well-resourced, collaborative mentoring partnership framework and structure
- Reviewing school organisational structures, streamline work flow processes and establishing resourcing priorities accordingly
- Building leadership capacity to effect this
- Building an International student program, with targeted links to our Languages program

The College has made significant inroads over the last four years to the engagement & wellbeing outcomes for students and this has been measured via the Student Attitudes to School survey in the categories of School Connectedness, Student Safety, Teacher Empathy and Student Absences.

Student wellbeing is given a high priority within the College and is supported directly through the new House Structure and by a department lead by the Director of Student Wellbeing and assisted by a Student Wellbeing Support Coordinator. This team includes support from School Service Support Officers in the form of an Educational Psychologist, Speech Pathologist and Social Worker provided by Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) as well as a variety of external support agencies. The Director of Student Wellbeing has been extremely entrepreneurial in using past students to further support students in need as well as a great ability to source funding for specialist programs from various outside agencies. The College also has an Integration & Support Leader who manages seven integration aides.

‘Student Safety’ in 2011, while taking a dip, is still well above the 6 year average (2006-11). The data for ‘Student Distress’ shows a continued upward trend peaking in 2011, indicating that the students’ assess the College as an increasingly secure learning environment. There have been parallel improvements in student feedback on ‘Teacher Effectiveness’ and ‘Teacher Empathy’. Student attendance data has shown significant improvement which again indicates that the majority of students want to attend Vermont on a daily basis.

The extremely positive student data can be attributed to the significant whole school change which has taken place over the life of this Strategic Plan. There is no doubt that the implementation of the House system plus our ongoing evaluation and refinement has enabled better student connectedness between teachers and fellow students within House learning communities. The House system has enabled the establishment of a student leadership model to strengthen the profile of student voice and leadership capacity.

To streamline processes for identifying student needs and to support students at risk, the College has established the Junior and Senior Transition teams, with input welcomed from the College community. In addition the Student Engagement & Wellbeing Team (SEWT) has been formed to oversee and support the House model, and to evaluate and rewrite policy documents such as the Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Attendance.

Parent feedback via the Parent Opinion Survey confirms a consistency of viewpoint in the community with ‘School Connectedness’, ‘Student Safety’ and ‘General Satisfaction’ maintained at levels well above State mean.

Finally in relation to Student Engagement & Wellbeing all feedback and data points in the right direction and strongly indicates that Vermont Secondary College is a safe and caring place that is accepting of diversity.
Student Pathways & Transitions

The College can feel proud of its achievements with respect to improving the Student Pathways & Transitions outcomes for students over the life of this Strategic Plan. The majority of trend data indicates continuous improvement and high achievement in this critical area. Over the past four years we have significantly enhanced the Student Pathways that we provide for our students thus allowing students to make a successful Transition into those pathways. In order to facilitate and achieve this we set five Key Improvement Strategies (KIS):

- Collaboratively develop a vision and an action plan for a holistic, comprehensive, systematic and integrated Years 7-12 student pathways program, where every student has a teacher mentor who is responsible for the management and support of the student’s learning, engagement, transitions and pathways development.
- Build teacher capacity to deliver the VELS interpersonal domain successfully through a systematic, coordinated, well-resourced, collaborative framework and structure.
- Review school organisation and structures streamline workflow and processes and establish resourcing priorities accordingly.
- Build leadership capacity to effect this change.
- Build strong and lasting relationships with parents, the local community and industry

It is with great interest to note that in the VSC 2008 Self-evaluation we said “The College is aware that there is an increasing demand to offer a more comprehensive and strategic pathways program and counselling service however the current time and resourcing in this area is restricting its development and therefore limiting our capacity to provide the depth and breadth of service required”.

In response to this the College has put significant resourcing into this area over the last four years and this decision has been further justified and driven by the enormous emphasis the state and federal governments and the DEECD have placed on Student Pathways & Transitions for young people.

While the significant improved student outcomes in Pathways & Transitions cannot be put down to one single factor there is little doubt that the employment and strategic placement of an extremely capable and committed staff into and around this area has been a key factor. Staff supporting the area has been a combination of a team directly responsible for the Pathways & Transitions area as well as various support staff crucial to its success. Staff have been further supported by ongoing professional development, on the job training and a commitment by the leadership team to support the area through resourcing.

As with all decisions made within the College data is crucial to improving student outcomes. The Pathways & Transitions team has been outstanding in the procedures it has put into place to track students and accurately enter data relevant to the area. It has successfully created faster data entry to allow more time for class and program planning and significantly improved the use and range of data available to plan and implement programs.

More targeted and strategic use of the MIPS (Managed Individual Pathways) funding through using staff expertise as well as outside providers has allowed this funding to be used specifically for the purpose it was intended. Our transition program provided at all year levels has continued to grow and these programs are subject to ongoing refinements to suit our clientele.

The provision of the new Pathways Resource Centre in the Stage 2 building program as part of the Student Services precinct greatly assisted the growth and recognition of this important area. This architecturally designed space combined with the resources required to support the area has greatly improved liaison and communication between Pathways staff and the broader College community. As a result our targets to achieve our student outcomes and key improvement strategies have all been successfully achieved.

Teaching staff still require a cultural shift to fully accept the fact that Pathways initiatives are a part of their teaching practice. The College will continue to build the confidence and aptitude of its teaching
staff through targeted pathways professional development. This can also be achieved through the reporting process where we need to incorporate improved reporting to parents of student achievements in the areas of personal learning and goal setting.

Areas for Continued Improvement & Recommendations for the Future

‘e’Learning Initiatives

- **‘Netbooks’** - Via the Federal government computer initiative the College has now purchased a total of 650 ‘Netbooks’. These ‘Netbooks’ have been distributed throughout the College among the Learning Areas and housed in trolleys so that a class set of computers can be easily transported to the classroom. With the ‘Netbooks’ we now have some 1,000 computers accessible to the College community.

- **Digital Projectors** – the College has installed digital projectors into the majority of classrooms complete with a fully integrated sound system. The fixed digital projectors save the classroom teacher significant ‘setting up’ time and allows for the presentation of digital educational resources via the internet through a laptop or ‘iPads’, projection of class notes or a DVD via the teachers laptop and PowerPoint presentations by the teacher or student.

- **‘iPads’** - will be introduced at Year 7 in 2013 and they will replace many traditional textbooks. This transition will be phased in for Years 7 to 9 over 2013 to 2015. As part of this planning 70 ‘ipad 2s’ have been made available to staff to use as an educational resource in preparation for the iPad introduction.

To support this sizeable increase in technology the College has spent considerable funds on upgrading the wireless system along with a much improved server/network infrastructure. Reliability of the infrastructure surrounding the extensive use of ICT is a work in progress and one that the College is well aware of. It is critical that we continue to provide all staff with targeted and relevant professional development so that the ICT is used to its full potential.

Outside of staffing, ICT is the College’s largest expense item and so it is crucial that we manage this area and its resourcing effectively and always with an eye to the future.

University Extension Programs

In 2012 VSC has two teaching staff training in the Melbourne University Extension Program in the fields of Mathematics and Biology. Once training is completed, the teacher is eligible to provide a weekly three hour tutorial at Vermont for students undertaking a selected Extension Program. This will allow VSC in 2013 and beyond to offer University Extension Programs to eligible VCE Vermont students and VCE students from neighbouring schools scheduled after normal school hours, so that they may attend.

Over the next few years we will invest in more staff training in The University of Melbourne and Monash University Extension Programs in subject areas such as Mathematics, Biology, Accounting and Business Management to further broaden the subjects we can offer our higher achieving VCE student’s as well as students from surrounding schools.

With our LEEP (Learning Extension & Enrichment Program) students moving into Year 10 in 2013 the University Extension Programs offer the perfect opportunity for Vermont to cater for their abilities and hopefully slow to a trickle the exodus to select-entry schools.

Senior Science Centre

With significant numbers of our senior students electing science based subjects (physics, biology, chemistry & psychology) a state of the art senior science centre is a major priority over the next four years. Our senior science wing is dilapidated and is not reflective of the high demand of student choices for science based subjects. It would also be highly beneficial in our offering the University Extension Programs, to VSC students and students from other destinations.
The Junior School Review & the Four Period Day

Over the last two years the Junior School Review Committee, as a subcommittee of Learning & Teaching, has following extensive deliberations and consultation made several key recommendations. The most crucial of these recommendations that will impact on the College from Years 7 to 12 is the introduction of a 4 period day. The Strategic Planning Team (SPT), Learning & Teaching Committee and Principal Class have voted unanimously for the 4 period day based on sound educational reasons and intended outcomes.

Another key recommendation from the Junior School Review has been an increased time allocation for Maths and Science in Years 7 to 9 to better reflect what our student population is asking of us in their senior school course selection as a pathway to tertiary studies. This ‘time equity’ between subjects can be achieved through the implementation of the 4 period day. Through this new model time allocation dedicated to the three critical areas of English, Maths & Science will be more closely aligned. This is very much in line with the DEECD and the state & federal governments focus on improving Literacy & Numeracy outcomes.

Years 8 and 9 have for a long time been the ‘forgotten cousin’ as we have focused so heavily on Year 7, the grade 6 to Year 7 transition as well as the studies offered in the senior school as students make the transition into employment and tertiary studies. With the key recommendations being taken on board from the Junior School Review including a significant realignment of subjects offered, including their time allocation, many of these concerns will be addressed. For far too many years we have been tinkering around the edges of the junior school curriculum. The 4 period day will allow for the realignment of learning areas and time allocation offered to each subject area over the three years in junior school and provide us with an opportunity to further improve classroom practice.

To allow the College to get the planning, infrastructure, staff professional development and costing in place the implementation of the 4 period day will be at the start of the 2014 school year. This plan of action would make 2013 the planning year, with 2014 being the implementation year and 2015/16 being the consolidation and refinement years of the 4 period day.

Co-curricular Programs & Student Leadership

While one of our greatest strengths is the offering of a well rounded education with an extensive co-curricular program we still need to examine the disruptive nature of the ‘embedded’ and co-curricular programs such as sport, excursions, camps, the Year 9 Personal Enrichment Program (PEP) and the pathways program. One recommendation that would go a long way to solving this issue at Year 9 would be through the running of all electives on an allocated day each week while core subjects are offered on the other 4 days. As previously mentioned we need to continue to embed pathways into the core curriculum rather than it being an ‘add on’. We need to also be aware as a school that real learning also occurs outside of the classroom and that there is a balance to be had.

Linked directly to co-curricular programs is the new House model and our acknowledgement that we need to continue to build the capacity of our student leaders. With the House model firmly in place we now have a structure that allows for the appointment and recognition of student leaders. We now need to continue to develop professional development for our student leaders as well as finding creative ways to use their skill set given the many competing demands made on their time and ours.

Professional Learning Teams

To allow for team teaching and professional growth we will continue to look at resourceful ways to timetable House groups together for Maths, English, Science and other subject areas where possible. Learning Areas and teaching staff can be supported through their Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) which involves each teacher setting learning goals for the year, classroom peer observation, student feedback via a survey and evidenced based achievement of the learning goals set. Over the next four years we need to make team teaching, peer observation and Learning Walks commonplace.
In Conclusion

Over the life of this Strategic Plan we have invested heavily in the three key areas of Student Learning, Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Student Pathways & Transitions. While consolidating and refining the gains made in Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Student Pathways & Transitions it is critical that as our core business we focus on further improving Student Learning outcomes over the next four years with an emphasis on staff professional development, ‘Value adding’, ‘Extension & enhancement’ and ‘Lifting the tail’.

There is no doubt the Vermont's greatest strengths are the outstanding support we receive from our College community combined with excellent staff and a student population that is supportive and who, along with the staff, have a common sense of purpose. While facilities and other forms of resourcing are important it is the human factor that is most critical and holds the key to success. Happy and supported staff leads to happy and supported students and this leads to a supportive parent body. This equation is right no matter who comes first but the key is it creates a positive and engaged learning environment for all.

As a school we have deliberately not looked at the specialist model but rather offered a broad program that allows all students to find their niche. As one parent succinctly put it in a thank you letter to the College upon her child’s completion of Year 12 “Vermont Secondary College’s true worth lies in its ability to help the children grow as people, not just as students.”

2. Methodology

The formal self-evaluation process commenced at the beginning of 2012 when the Strategic Planning Team (SPT - College leadership group) met on 6/2/12 to discuss ‘the year of review’ and the process involved in writing the ‘School Self-Evaluation’ and developing the new Strategic Plan. Relevant DEECD documentation on the ‘Continuous Improvement Review’ was provided to the SPT and initial discussions regarding the process were commenced. Similar information was provided to the College Council at the meetings on 21/2 & 20/3 and to the teaching staff on 14/2, 2012.

The Principal team met early in February and developed a consultative model based on three working parties headed by Assistant Principals and Leading Teachers who had direct responsibility for the specific outcome areas of Student Learning, Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Student Pathways & Transitions. All relevant DEECD documentation regarding the ‘Continuous Improvement Review’ process was distributed or updated for the Principal team. Principal Team members were also involved in the working parties.

On 27/2/12 the SPT attended a school based briefing by our Regional Network Leader (RNL) Phillip White who presented the DEECD PowerPoint on ‘Preparing for School Review’. At this forum Phillip lead the leadership team through the process taking questions as required.

The School Self-Evaluation was the focus of the annual two day Leadership Team Residential held at Kalorama in March. Prior to the Residential the SPT was issued with additional documentation pertaining to the School Self-Evaluation process and a USB with all available and relevant school data pertinent to the last four years of school performance.

At the Residential discussion was held regarding the purpose of the self-evaluation and the best means of completing the review within the timeline. We then broke into Syndicate Teams to analyse the data and begin the process of answering the key questions relevant to the three key areas. Much progress was made at this Residential on the ‘School Self-Evaluation’. Over the next two terms feedback was sought via focus groups from the students, parents and staff in relation to the key questions for Student Learning, Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Student Pathways & Transitions. This information was then collated and fed back to the Syndicate Groups to assist in the writing of this document. Much of this feedback will be used again extensively in the second semester to develop the next Strategic Plan.
From these early meetings a timeline was established for the completion of the draft reports and for further consultation with, and feedback from, key stakeholders. At a full staff meeting, staff were actively encouraged to become involved in the process.

Draft reports from each syndicate group were submitted according to the timeline attached and the subsequent drafts were tabled for discussion and further development with the syndicate groups, SPT and the Principal team.

**The Next Steps**

The Self-evaluation Review Day will be held on Thursday 28th June and on this day strategic directions for the College will be outlined for inclusion in the 2013 - 2016 College Strategic Plan.

Following this day Rod Allen will present an initial document in table form to the Principal which will contain the following recommendations for *Student Learning, Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Student Pathways & Transitions.*

1. Goals, Improvement Areas, Key Improvement Strategies (KIS) & Priority Actions
2. The Priority Actions will be further supported by a series of minor actions to help us achieve these Priority Actions
3. Short term implementation strategies for the *three key areas
4. Suggested Targets for the *three key areas

The Leadership Team then has a right of reply on these recommendations and Priority Actions. This will be followed by a full draft report written by Rod which we can also choose to reply to.

Rod will then return to the College early in Term 3 to present a summary of the report to staff and College Council. The final full written review and its findings will be presented to the Leadership Team, staff and College Council. An outline of the timeline, process and team membership is below.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning</th>
<th>Student Engagement &amp; Wellbeing</th>
<th>Student Pathways &amp; Transitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Joanna Alexander (AP – Learning &amp; Teaching)</td>
<td>*Harry Ruff (AP – Student Services)</td>
<td>*Harry Ruff (AP – Student Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Trollope – LT for Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
<td>Kay Bird – LT Head of House</td>
<td>Bec Eames – LT for Pathways &amp; Transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Cabble – LT for Senior Provision (VCE)</td>
<td>Anne-Marie Fish – LT for Student Wellbeing</td>
<td>Kay Bird – LT Head of House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Dixon – LT for Literacy</td>
<td>Greg Cowan – LT Head of House</td>
<td>Greg Cowan – LT Head of House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Francis – LT for Numeracy</td>
<td>Stuart Johnstone – LT Head of House</td>
<td>Stuart Johnstone – LT Head of House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaun Gillespie – LT for eLearning</td>
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<td>Linda Cabble – LT for Senior Provision (VCE)</td>
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<td>David Greenwell – LT for College Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Stevens (AP - ICT)</td>
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<td>AP = Assistant Principal</td>
<td>LT = Leading Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brigitte Ankenbrand</td>
<td>+ Teacher representatives</td>
<td>+ Teacher representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date 2012</td>
<td>Team (Who)</td>
<td>What</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th February</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Team (SPT)</td>
<td>Principal outlined 2012 ‘the year of review’ and process involved in developing the new Strategic Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st February</td>
<td>College Council</td>
<td>Principal briefly outlined processes in the 2012 ‘year of review’ and for developing the next Strategic Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>27th February</td>
<td>EMR briefing to Strategic Planning Team (SPT)</td>
<td>Phillip White – Regional Network Leader (RNL) presented DEECD powerpoint ‘Preparing for school Review’</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th February</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Principal held staff forum on ‘Continuous Improvement Review and the ‘School Self-evaluation’ process. Staff invited to be actively involved in relevant syndicate groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th &amp; 18th March</td>
<td>Leadership Residential (SPT)</td>
<td>Residential on the ‘Continuous Improvement Review and the ‘School Self-evaluation’. Leadership team worked in syndicate groups relevant to their portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th February – 18th June</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Team (SPT)</td>
<td>Relevant syndicate groups continue to meet and develop/write ‘School Self-evaluation’</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th March</td>
<td>College Council</td>
<td>Principal further outlined 2012 process for ‘school self-evaluation’</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st March</td>
<td>Student Leadership Forum findings fed into council, VSC Community Association forums &amp; SPT</td>
<td>Held Student Leadership forum on the ‘School Self-evaluation’ using DEECD ‘suggested procedure for discussions &amp; planning’ document to stimulate conversations and review</td>
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<td>19th April</td>
<td>Broader school community</td>
<td>School community informed of process through College Newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td>24th April</td>
<td>College Council</td>
<td>College Council forum held on the ‘School Self-evaluation’ using DEECD ‘suggested procedure for discussions &amp; planning’ document to stimulate conversations and review</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8th &amp; May 9th</td>
<td>VSC Community Association</td>
<td>VSC Community Association (x2 meetings) forum held on the ‘School Self-evaluation’ using DEECD ‘suggested procedure for discussions &amp; planning’ document to stimulate conversations and review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday May 28th</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Team (SPT)</td>
<td>1st draft of Self-evaluation report completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 8th June</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Team (SPT)</td>
<td>2nd draft of Self-evaluation report completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday June 18th</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Team (SPT)</td>
<td>Final draft of Self-evaluation report completed in this week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday June 19th</td>
<td>Presentation to College Council</td>
<td>Final draft tabled and discussed at College Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 22nd June</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Team (SPT)</td>
<td>Final draft of Self-evaluation proofed &amp; forwarded to reviewer, Rod Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday June 28th</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Team for (SPT) Review Day presentation</td>
<td>On the Review Day strategic directions for the College will be outlined for inclusion in the 2013 - 2016 College Strategic Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Following the Review Day presentation</td>
<td>SPT, College Council and Staff</td>
<td>See ‘Next steps’ on previous page</td>
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3. School context

Vermont Secondary College was established in 1962 and is located in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It is a large, single campus, co-educational secondary college of approximately 1300 students, 970+ families, 100 teachers and 40 support staff. The College values of Excellence, Integrity, Responsibility, Respect and Tolerance reflect our ethos.

The College experienced continuous growth from the 1980’s until 2002 when enrolments were capped. At Year 7 in 2011 approximately 65.8% of enrolments were within the Vermont Secondary College neighbourhood, 14.7% were sibling claims and 19.4% came from ‘out of neighbourhood’.

While we receive students from a wide range of primary schools in the surrounding suburbs (Year 7 2011 intake involved some 50 primary schools) our three key ‘feeder schools’ Vermont, Livingstone and Rangeview Primary Schools accounted for 57.1% of our 2011 Year 7 intake. Demand for enrolment into Year 7 from outside our neighbourhood greatly exceeds available places.

Vermont Secondary College is proud of its proven record of academic achievement while preparing our young citizens for an increasingly diverse range of student learning and career pathways. The College is consistently ranked amongst the top non-select entry state secondary Colleges based on our VCE and NAPLAN test results that are consistently at or above State and ‘Like School’ levels of performance. VSC is an outstanding college in supporting students to achieve impressive VCE results and access tertiary pathways in high numbers.

We place a strong emphasis on knowing and valuing our students while personalizing and enriching their learning experiences and are committed to:

- Promoting the achievement of excellence in a learning environment that is safe and caring, and embraces diversity

- The development of lifelong learning skills that motivate and enable all students to achieve their individual goals and make a positive contribution to the global community

To support this learning environment we are blessed with an outstanding and dedicated workforce made up of teaching and Education Support staff, many of whom currently have, or have had, their own children attending the College. Combined with this the now completed Stage Two rebuild has greatly assisted the College in implementing new academic programs and allows us to further build upon our positive and productive learning environment.

Approximately 14.3% of our students access the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and this proportion has been constant over recent years. Students who have a language background other than English total approximately 29.8% of the student population, however just over half of these students have families that speak English at home. Our 2011 SFO (Student Family Occupation) index is 0.41 reflecting the generally mid-high socio economic background of our school community.

In 2010 after much planning in 2009 and in line with our 2009 – 2012 Strategic Plan we introduced four key elements to focus upon:

1. The implementation of the Vertical House structure for Years 7 to 12
2. The implementation of a Student Leadership model
3. The implementation of a Staff Leadership structure
4. The introduction of the Learning Enrichment & Extension Program (LEEP)

The vertical House structure for Years 7 to 12 along with the new Student Leadership model were introduced to strengthen the student voice, place greater emphasis on Student Leadership, provide opportunities that will empower our students and help them to develop a stronger sense of school connectedness. To underpin this structure we did away with the old Level Coordinator model and introduced Student Managers at Years 7 to 12 who remain with their student cohort over a three year
period to enable the Student Managers time to develop closer relationships and ‘social capital’ with the students & families.

Overseeing and supporting this structure are ‘Heads of House’ (Leading Teachers) who are involved in student management when appropriate, curriculum requirements and special student leadership programs and opportunities for the development of the house. Reinforcing this model are the three Assistant Principals, each attached to a house and supporting the Heads of House and Student Managers.

We also introduced Program Managers at Years 7, 8, 9 & the Senior School to take many of the administrative tasks away from the Student Managers thus allowing them to focus on student management and leadership.

Teaching staff, where possible, are assigned to teach within one house. Over time this will develop closer relationships in the classroom with the students & will develop greater continuity in curriculum level, knowledge and delivery.

Siblings, where possible, are allocated to the same house which over time develops a sense of tradition among families. Through this process Student Managers and classroom teachers are able to develop closer relationships/links with the students & families.

Teachers and students are now developing an allegiance to a house and are active supporters during activities such as sports days, performing arts days and a wide range of other engagement activities.

Aligned with this significant restructure was the introduction of the Strategic Planning Team (SPT - refer methodology) made up of the four Principal Class members and eleven Leading Teachers. This team was critical in the successful implementation of all initiatives.

SPT meets regularly to discuss, plan, develop, implement and evaluate all key issues involving the College program in line with their Mission Statement:

**Strategic Planning Team Purpose:**

To develop frameworks and make strategic decisions that allows Vermont Secondary College to be at the forefront of educational performance.

**Strategic Planning Team Theory of Action:**

The SPT will provide the Human, Educational, Symbolic, Cultural & Technical Leadership required to promote and sustain the development of a VSC learning community that is prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. All actions will be directly aligned with our College Vision & Values.

Finally the Learning Extension & Enrichment Program (LEEP) program was designed and introduced in 2010 to provide high achieving students with a learning environment that stimulates and encourages strong academic, social and emotional growth. The school community acknowledges the importance of providing a program that is both caring and supportive in structure.

The program adheres to state curriculum guidelines however all curriculum programs are specifically designed to encourage greater levels of student understanding and knowledge through a more challenging and intellectually stimulating learning environment.

Emphasis is placed on higher order thinking, problem solving and the understanding of more abstract, complex concepts. LEEP provides an opportunity for students to become involved in a program where multiple learning preferences are addressed through the means of a technologically diverse Learning Community. Links with the school and wider community are developed as a means to reinforce important connections and applications for each student and their learning. In 2012 we have one LEEP class operating at Years 7, 8 & 9.
Our students, staff and parents have a strong sense of Vermont Secondary College as a community school due to the long tradition of outstanding academic achievement combined with a comprehensive co-curricular program that encourages students to develop their talents and leadership potential outside of the classroom.

Vermont Secondary College enjoys an exceptionally high level of parental support particularly through College Council, the VSC Community Association, yearly College production, twice yearly working bees and the bi-annual College walkathon. This exceptionally high level of parent support, as measured by the Parent Opinion Survey, has remained consistently high over the last four years. General Parental Satisfaction with the College in 2011 was 5.73 compared to the State Mean of 5.40. We firmly believe the educational needs of children are best served in an environment where parents and guardians feel part of the school and its decision making processes. This data fully supports the notion that the cohesive, close knit Vermont community shares our vision, aims and values.

The College's comprehensive range of co-curricular activities, including our acclaimed instrumental music, choral and performing arts program supports the growth of students into confident, successful and contributing citizens. The College is also a premier sporting school with many students competing at a local, state and national level.

In a caring, well-disciplined atmosphere, the College expects and achieves high standards in all aspects of student leadership, endeavour, behaviour and presentation. Our College values are consistently reinforced in student learning, teaching practice and through school management.

Our Grade 6 to Year 7 transition program ensures that students new to the College feel welcome, comfortable and secure in the purpose built Year 7 Learning Centre. This combined with the Year 7 Integrated Studies program and supportive House structure contributes significantly to a smooth, safe transition into secondary school.

4. Evaluation of performance

All schools evaluate their performance in the following student outcome areas:
- Student Learning
- Student Engagement & Wellbeing
- Student Pathways & Transitions

Student Learning

What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?

The key Strategic Intent within Student Learning was to improve VCE, and literacy & numeracy performance across the College. A specific target was to improve the value-adding element of our VCE results which is the comparison of predictions based on the General Achievement Test (GAT) score and actual study scores.

There was a concerted effort made to achieve improvements in the nature and the quality of learning occurring in the classroom with a view to making this learning more stimulating for the students and for this to be evident in the eyes of the parents.

There was an equally concerted effort targeted at improving the school morale from a staff perspective based on the principle that happier teachers lead to happier students and this will, in a positive way, impact on teaching and learning outcomes.

Key Improvement strategies that were implemented included:
- Collaboratively developing a vision and an action plan for a stimulating teaching and learning environment through our Performance and Development Culture
- Building teacher capacity through a systematic, coordinated, well-resourced, collaborative mentoring partnership framework and structure
- Reviewing school organisational structures, streamline work flow processes and establishing resourcing priorities accordingly
- Building leadership capacity to affect this
- Building an International student program, with targeted links to our Languages program

**Student Learning - What student outcomes did we achieve?**

The College can feel proud of its achievements with respect to improving the learning outcomes for students. Nearly all of the trend data tells a story of continuous improvement and high achievement.

**Improvement in VCE results**

From the analysis of the data it is evident that we have achieved success in significantly ‘lifting the tail’. The percentage of our students that achieve study scores above the State mean has improved throughout the period of this Strategic Plan. Also significant is the degree of value adding that is occurring with almost all studies showing at least 65% of students performing above their predicted score. With respect to scores above 40, we have maintained our achievement and our advantage over the Government School State mean. In summary we are pleased to report that VSC is providing its VCE students with the opportunity to fully realise their potential.

**Literacy and Numeracy**

The NAPLAN Matched cohort data shows that:

(a) In **reading** and **writing** in 2008-10 & 2009-11, the school performance in value adding has been slightly below the state mean.

(b) In **numeracy** in 2008-10, the school performance in value adding has been slightly below the state mean and for 2009 -11, it was well above the state mean.

Interestingly, the ‘My School’ website data indicates that VSC has achieved a slight advantage in overall student improvement over similar schools when comparing the data of students with the same starting point.

**Student Learning**

It is clear that the improvement in the Parent Opinion Survey with respect to such elements as, making learning fun, encouraging students to learn and persist and student motivation has surpassed our targeted expectations.

In relation to the ‘stimulating learning’ component of the Student Attitudes to School Survey, the trend line shows constant improvement over the life of the Strategic Plan and when extrapolated indicates that we are on track to achieve our target. This includes such elements as making learning inspiring, interesting and enjoyable.

However there are concerns evident at Year 8, in the trend data related to the ‘stimulating learning’ component of the Student Attitudes to School Survey, where results have been consistently below the state mean.

**International Student Program**

There has been a significant increase in the number of international students at the College, however in reality this has not been directly linked to our Language subjects on offer. Language based exchanges and study tours to Germany, France & Malaysia have however, seen an increase in participation over the life of the Strategic Plan.
School Morale

With respect to the goal of strengthening the positive attitude of teachers, there has been a strong upward trend in school morale according to the Staff Opinion Survey. This included recognition of elements such as good team spirit, energy, enthusiasm and pride in the school.

Student Learning - Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

First and foremost in achieving improved student learning outcomes has been the significant contribution of our dedicated and hard-working teachers who have exhibited absolute professionalism in the conduct of their duties.

A key strategy for improving student outcomes has been to develop and improve the capabilities of teachers to create more stimulating learning environments. As part of the College’s Performance & Development Culture, the DIPP (Developing & Improving Professional Practice) process has utilised a ‘Stimulating Learning checklist’ devised by the College, the E5 Instructional Model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate) student surveys and collegiate observation as the key tools to reflect on and modify our current practice.

In addition there has been a concerted effort directed at improving teachers’ potential to incorporate e-Learning (ICT) into the delivery of the curriculum. The trend data from the student attitudes to school and parent opinion surveys shows consistent and significant improvement over the past four years.

The establishment and consolidation of the new House System has created opportunities to support student learning. Initiatives, such as teachers being timetabled within the one house/cohort, have the potential to improve student connectedness and allow teachers to understand and develop the learning potential of individual students. The establishment of house-based student transition teams, comprising Pathways Director, Well-being team and house representatives, has facilitated the tracking of individual students and their progress. At this point in time it is difficult to accurately assess how effective these initiatives have been, however they represent a springboard to explore similar opportunities in the next Strategic Plan.

The commitment to improving student outcomes has been reflected in the significant restructuring and development of the Leadership Team. The changes have seen the creation of leaders in Literacy & Numeracy, the expansion of the curriculum role to include two Learning & Teaching Directors as well as the creation of the position of an e-Learning facilitator.

The leadership capacity of our Learning Area Leaders (LAL’s) has been a major focus with the introduction of targeted professional development via the ‘Big Day Out’ training sessions held at the beginning of the school year. There has also been a dedicated effort to the development of a ‘sense of team’ amongst the Learning Area Leaders to help drive the change in teacher practice. This has undoubtedly resulted in greater continuity across all Learning Areas and a consistency of practice across the College and has broadened the opportunities for collaboration across different Learning Areas.

Another key initiative has been to significantly increase the amount of data collected and collated on student performance and potential. This has included the adoption of the ‘Edutest’ program that now sees all Year 6 students entering the College, as well as new enrolments in other year levels, undertaking the ‘Edutest’. This test generates a raft of data and can be used by individual teachers and also by the College to inform processes such as the creation of academically balanced classes at Year 7.

Essential to the success of these initiatives is to embed the use of data to inform the normal practice of teachers. A working party has designed a model for collating and presenting this data to teachers in a concise, easy to utilise way. This is supported by the College’s development of a software package that is easily accessible to staff to view the data and students results (VELS, College reports, ‘Edutest’, NAPLAN etc). Again it is too early to assess the full impact of these initiatives.
In 2010/11 the Numeracy Leader developed and introduced a whole school numeracy plan. Since its adoption the Numeracy performance for matched cohorts has shown a significant upward trend from the 2008-10 data to the 2009-11 data.

In 2010 an integrated curriculum initiative was introduced at Year 8 entitled the Collaborative Unit which is centred around an inquiry based approach to learning. This project linked learning across all Learning Areas under the banner of ‘Balance’. Its intended aim is to provide a platform to develop our students’ capacity for independent learning and the management of that learning. The nature of the task has undergone some significant modification however the fundamental idea has remained unchanged. In the future this project could act as a template for creating cross-curricula opportunities based on our house groupings and utilising the flexible learning centre.

The creation of LEEP (Learning Enrichment & Extension Program) has raised many issues. In what was an unpredicted outcome the classes have seen a significant exodus at the end of Year 8 as families pursue the opportunities for their child to attend select-entry schools. In fact the program has been too successful! In 2013 the selection process will be modified considerably to identify talented students from within our catchment area who we expect will remain with us through until Year 12.

At the VCE level, VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) analysis data is now being extracted from VASS (Victorian Assessment Software System) and made available to teachers for them to reflect on their practice. Other key improvement strategies that have been developed and implemented at the VCE level include:

(a) Joint planning and course development across Years 10, 11 & 12 to enhance continuity and sequence

(b) Cross marking between multiple classes

(c) The creation of Induction Packages for VCE students

(d) The application of John Munro’s principles pertaining to the importance of feedback and literacy

(e) The introduction of the Year 12 Study Camp to start the school year

(f) The same period has seen the introduction of a formal examination timetable for all Year 10 units

(g) Removal of Period 7 on Monday’s so that VCE students are in the College for the full five days thus creating greater continuity and learning opportunities

The impact of these initiatives has been evident in the improved performance of our students with at least half gaining ATAR scores in excess of 75. Whilst there has been no sustained improvement in percentage of scores above 40 this has remained consistently above the state mean. It has been a goal within our Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) in the past two years to aspire to lift this to 11% so more work is needed in this area.

The College’s achievements in ‘Value adding’ (Achieving study scores at or above the GAT predictions) has continued to show improvement and demonstrates the success we have had in building teachers’ capacity through the reflection on current practice.

Student Learning - How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?

To further support student learning there has been a dedicated budget to improve the quality of the learning environments within the College. This has included vastly improved Netbook availability, upgraded network infrastructure and the provision of Data Projectors in almost every classroom.
Further to this, in the life of this Strategic Plan we have seen the construction of the Flexible Learning Centre, 300 seat auditorium, VCE study centre, the creation of the Year 7 Transition Centre and the construction of an all-weather hockey field. These modern, state of the art facilities have provided opportunities for team teaching and dedicated home-group spaces for Year 7 classes as well as improved facilities for Physical Education and the broader College.

With respect to workforce planning and its impact on student learning there have been several key initiatives. These have included an extensive investment in e-Learning and Professional Development through the creation of the Leading Teacher position of e-Learning coach. This has been further supported through the following changes to the leadership structure:

- The creation of Leaders of Literacy and Numeracy,
- The appointment of two Learning & Teaching Directors, a Director of Senior Provision and a Curriculum Implementation leader.

The Professional Development (PD) budget has undergone a change in its management model. All PD funding is now being controlled in the one budget with the Assistant Principal and the Director of Learning & Teaching monitoring the program and applying school-wide criteria to the approval of PD funding. This has enabled the budget to be strategically targeted at the most beneficial PD opportunities for teams and individuals.

Through the work of our Director of Pathways students now begin the management of their Individual Pathways in Year 9 and develop a comprehensive and explicit plan that informs their subject choices as they move through the College.

There has been a concerted effort to increase the amount of time devoted to planning and appraising our curriculum. The Term Planner now reflects the number of meetings related to student learning:

- Learning Area meetings - 2 per term
- Learning Area Leaders meetings - 2 per term
- Professional Learning Teams – 1 per term
- E-learning – 1 per term
- Learning & Teaching – 2 per term

The development of our two intranet platforms has continued at pace. The role of MOODLE as the curriculum sharing resource has grown significantly and finally the College has a bona fide documented curriculum that is readily accessible. It is increasingly being utilised as a learning platform for students with class work, resources and podcasts being available to all staff and students.

Vermont’s E-Workspace (VEWS) has for the first time in 2012 opened a portal to parents to view reports and book interview sessions with teachers at the Student Progress Conferences. This has proved to be highly successful.

**Student Learning - What can we do in the future to continue to improve?**

Over the life of this Strategic Plan we have seen significant change at Vermont. It is crucial that these advances are embedded into our practice and that their effectiveness is subject to regular review.

One significant proposal is that Vermont SC introduces a 4 period school day. It is a firmly held belief that increasing the period length to 75 minutes is one strategy that will facilitate beneficial changes in teacher practice and subsequently improve student outcomes. This improvement will occur through increasing the opportunity for student reflection, teacher feedback and formative assessment. It will also significantly increase face to face teaching time by reducing the amount of time lost in transit and in ‘set up & pack up time’ currently existing in a 6 period day.

This reorganisation of the timetable also provides an opportunity to facilitate an increased focus on English (Literacy), Maths (Numeracy) and Science through the provision of more class time. This will
provide a mechanism for improving student outcomes especially in relation to the matched cohort data in reading, writing and numeracy.

The work of Hattie, Marzano and Dinham clearly identifies that the greatest improvements in student performance can be achieved by improving classroom practice. The most effective way of achieving this will be through the growth and development of our Professional Learning Teams. Through the implementation of a 4 year plan, teacher capacity in a range of areas can be targeted. Each year there will be a mandated focus on a specific Learning & Teaching goal and this can be further supported through the Learning Areas. Key goals should include the provision of feedback to students, differentiation of the curriculum and the use of student data to inform goals and outcomes. At the foundation of this will be the provision to staff of accumulated data from various sources including VELS, previous College reports, ‘Edutest' and NAPLAN results.

The considered allocation of staff across all year levels should, in the future, reflect a commitment to improving learning outcomes for Year 8 students in response to the trends evident in recent Student Attitudes to School Surveys.

It will be in the best interests of the College to review the mechanisms and processes applied to the recruitment of new staff. The emphasis of the selection criteria and interview questions should be on pedagogy so that the existing experience, knowledge and potential for growth new staff bring to the College aligns with our focus on elements such as differentiation, feedback, ongoing assessment and improved learning outcomes.

In response to our VCE data it has been agreed that we should adopt specific strategies that target our more able students in order for them to fulfil their potential i.e. scores above 40. The nature of the tasks that students complete should be challenging to their understanding and require them to identify links between concepts. This should start as early as Year 7 as open-ended inquiries and continue through all levels as the student progresses. It has also been agreed that as a matter of course, all VCE subjects embed the practice of creating ‘Glossaries’ as per the Australian Curriculum.

As part of a whole school approach to literacy, the College will adopt, and embed John Munro’s ‘Developing a Literacy Development Strategy’.

**Student Engagement & Wellbeing**

**What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?**

Our 2009-12 Strategic Plan targeted improvements to engagement & well-being for students via the Student Attitudes to School survey categories of School Connectedness, Student Safety, Teacher Empathy and Student Absences.

The four Key Improvement Strategies (KIS) to facilitate this were to:

- Collaboratively develop a vision and an action plan for a holistic, comprehensive, systematic and integrated Years 7-12 student pathways program, where every student has a teacher mentor who is responsible for the management and support of the student’s learning, engagement, transitions and pathways development.
- Build teacher capacity to deliver the VELS interpersonal domain successfully through a systematic, coordinated, well-resourced, collaborative framework and structure.
- Review school organisation and structures streamline workflow and processes and establish resourcing priorities accordingly.
- Build leadership capacity to effect this change.

Embedded within this was the establishment of Drug Education units across the Year 7-10 curriculum and cyber-safety initiatives with subsequent evaluation and review.
Student Engagement & Wellbeing - What student outcomes did we achieve?

The Student Attitudes to School survey indicators suggest that ‘Student Safety’ has shown a slight decline in 2011 but is still well above the 6 year average (2006-11). The data for Student Distress shows a continued upward trend peaking in 2011, indicating that the students assess the College as an increasingly secure learning environment. There have been parallel improvements in student feedback on Teacher Effectiveness and Teacher Empathy. In addition, student attendance data has shown significant recent improvement.

This extremely positive student data can be attributed to the significant whole school change which has taken place over the life of the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan. To meet the Key Improvement Strategy of a comprehensive, holistic mentoring plan for each student, the House system was implemented in 2010, and ongoing evaluation and refinement has enabled better student connectedness to teachers and fellow students within House learning communities. The model has provided Student Managers in each House with a clear focus on student wellbeing and engagement, enabling them to mentor students and monitor their progress over their three years of Junior and Senior School. The House system has enabled the establishment of a student leadership model to strengthen the profile of student voice and leadership capacity. Targeted professional development for all staff on E5, Calmer Classrooms and Restorative Practices has developed teacher capacity to mentor and advocate for individual students, and contributed towards a more personalized learning environment.

In order to support teacher empathy and rapport, the College has implemented software programs designed to assist in tracking, recording and sharing student information and data. The VEWS program enhances teachers’ knowledge and understanding of individual student’s learning and personal support needs, and has been updated recently to facilitate parent access to their students’ learning progress and attendance data.

In streamlining processes for identifying student needs and making collaborative decisions to support students at risk, the College has established the Junior and Senior Transition teams, with input welcomed from the College community. In addition the Student Engagement & Wellbeing Team (SEWT) has been formed to oversee and support the House model, and to evaluate and rewrite policy documents such as Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Attendance.

Parent feedback via the Parent Opinion Survey confirms a consistency of viewpoint in the community that School Connectedness, Student Safety and General Satisfaction have been maintained at levels well above State mean.

Student Engagement & Wellbeing - Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

The College leadership has been committed to effective change management practices and processes, building staff and student leadership capabilities and teacher capacity through ongoing professional development and support within the College.

The introduction of the House system has seen a significant paradigm shift in the College culture over a short time period, and initial student concerns around this whole school change can be linked to the small dip in the Student Safety data. On the other hand, students have indicated an increase in Teacher Empathy, Teacher Effectiveness and Stimulating Learning, pointing to improved relationships between students and their House teachers as well as the quality of the teaching & learning that is occurring in the classroom.

Confirming this upward trend is the Teacher Opinion Survey that shows Student Motivation and Student Behaviour (school & classroom) which are all extremely positive and reinforce the opinions of the students.
Establishing and streamlining processes to identify student needs and students at risk through the Junior and Senior Transition teams and the Student Engagement & Wellbeing Team (SEWT) has been a significant move in the right direction. All three teams allow us to oversee, support and continually evaluate the effectiveness of the House model.

One key area that needs further consideration, development and implementation in the life of the next Strategic Plan is the embedding of drug education across the curriculum and year levels. We need a more integrated approach to Drug Education including a focus on the wellbeing of young people which incorporates an understanding of protective health factors.

This could be achieved through greater use of internal expertise to deliver programs to smaller, targeted student cohorts such as on the Year 12 camp and in the Year 9 PEP program. We also need to consider embedding such programs into the curriculum such as in Year 7 & 8 science. A key concern here is that many staff exhibit a reluctance and lack of understanding in teaching and influencing students in relation to these protective behaviours. Clearly we need to provide the teachers with relevant professional development to give them the confidence in this critical area of student wellbeing and support.

**Student Engagement & Wellbeing** - How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?

Outcomes for students in the Engagement & Wellbeing element of the School Strategic Plan were in the main met, thanks to the effective use of resources, both very strategically but also at foundation levels.

The team built around Student Engagement & Wellbeing, including the Leading Teacher overseeing Student Wellbeing, were provided with a suitable time allowance to engage with a range of students; to oversee the implementation of a range of programs and initiatives and to advise parents, House and Student Services staff on a range of engagement and wellbeing issues.

An additional ‘wellbeing programs coordinator’ was employed to develop and oversee a range of initiatives targeted at students identified as at risk or with special interests e.g. Community Services, Social Justice, Amazing writers. As a pre-service teacher and former VSC student, the coordinator proved to be particularly effective in providing beneficial, targeted programs. Combined with this was the effective use of volunteers and tertiary student placements to enrich current programs and options.

Professional Development was provided to staff and particularly House teams with regard to wellbeing management strategies such as Calmer Classrooms, Restorative Practice and E5.

The House structure has allowed for improved information flow for transition teams and meetings. The House structure also allowed us to cater for students across a range of programs such as World Vision fundraising and various competitions to improve student/staff connectedness. Student Managers still require refinements to the house model to allow them to further support and mentor the students they are responsible for.

The new, centrally located Student Wellbeing Centre was established, providing discreet, ample space for the Student Services team including visiting specialists, student withdrawal spaces and a specialised activity room. The new facilities also catered for improved communication between the various stake holders with Student Managers, Heads of House and the three key areas of student support in Student Engagement & Wellbeing, Student Pathways & Transitions and Integration all in extremely close proximity to one another.

The introduction and use of a new software package (VEWS) has created a Mapping Tool for the storage and dissemination of transition, pastoral and academic information including the tracking of attendance. This sharing of relevant student information/data further supports the new wellbeing structure which increases the knowledge base on a student, for staff to readily access, as the student moves up through the year levels.
Student Engagement & Wellbeing - What can we do in the future to continue to improve?

The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team (SEWT) can be justifiably proud of the outcomes achieved for and by students over the four years of this School Strategic Plan. The focus of the team must now shift, from the many structural changes implemented, to the philosophical underpinnings that informed it and to the programs that required to effect real change.

SEWT will need to develop an engagement and wellbeing framework to underpin our Student Engagement and Wellbeing policy, by drawing on: the DEECD’s Careers Blueprint Personal Development element; the DEECDs Calmer Classrooms initiative; the E5 instructional Model (Engage element); Restorative Practice; the VSC Classroom Relationships document; and our own current programs like Year 9 PEP and Year 7 Integrated Studies & Transition Program.

More targeted feedback will also need to be sought, initially by use of the ‘Safe Schools Framework’ survey for staff, students and parents. More focused student feedback will also be sought via student focus groups. This will allow us to make much more effective use of data for proactive rather than reactive purposes.

These initiatives will allow us to make clearer links between the philosophy of our approach and the practice of our classroom teachers, who have the greatest influence on, and carry the greatest burden of, the social, emotional and academic development of our students.

SEWT will continue to refine the House model, developing the capacity of House staff to support the students whose care they are charged with, particularly targeting staff who can act as key mentors for their class groups, similar to the Year 7 Integrated Studies teachers. Professional Development will be required to build the capacity of all staff with regard to use of the data available about their students and their attendance/engagement, personal development, reflection, resilience and protective behaviours.

Student Pathways & Transitions

What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?

In our School Strategic Plan 2009-2012, we aimed to enhance the Student Pathways that we provide for our students & to enhance the processes whereby they make successful Transitions into those pathways. In order to facilitate and achieve this we set five Key Improvement Strategies (KIS):

- Collaboratively develop a vision and an action plan for a holistic, comprehensive, systematic and integrated Years 7-12 student pathways program, where every student has a teacher mentor who is responsible for the management and support of the student’s learning, engagement, transitions and pathways development.
- Build teacher capacity to deliver the VELS interpersonal domain successfully through a systematic, coordinated, well-resourced, collaborative framework and structure.
- Review school organisation and structures streamline workflow and processes and establish resourcing priorities accordingly.
- Build leadership capacity to effect this change.
- **Build strong and lasting relationships with parents, the local community and industry

As a result our targets to achieve these student outcomes and key improvement strategies were:

- To have 100% of students from Years 9 to 12 to have an Individual Pathways Plan, with a clearly defined pathway *with goals to obtain that pathway.
- To have all students from Year 7 to 12 with a designated teacher mentor.
- To maintain apparent retention rate from Year 11 into 12 above the state mean.
- To have 98% of exiting Year 10 students transferring to a clearly defined pathway / educational setting.
To increase confirmed On Track destination data for Year 12 students from 87% to 95% over three years.
To increase to and then *maintain VET/Alternative Training enrolments from 9% to 15% over three years for students in Years 9 to 12.
**To continue to offer a range of individualised Alternative Training / Engagement Programs for targeted students in Years 9 to 12.
**To consolidate existing links and build new opportunities for students with local industry, community groups, the tertiary sector and past students.
**To continue working towards implementation of DEECD Careers Blueprint for years 7-12, with a focus on Junior School.

**It is important to note that due to the changing educational landscape and needs of the College over the 4 years of the Strategic Plan, both it, and the four Annual Implementation Plans (2009 to 2012) were modified in terms of Key Improvement Strategies and associated targets.

Student Pathways & Transitions - What student outcomes did we achieve?

Staff involved in the Pathways and Transition programs can be justifiably proud of the progress made towards achieving the goals set in the Strategic Plan.

All students in Years 7 to 12 have access to a teacher mentor, including their classroom teacher, through a wide range of College programs on offer. At Year 7, Integrated Studies teachers, act as a mentor for the students in their role as the classroom teacher for 18 periods per fortnight plus a daily form assembly.

Teacher mentors are also accessed through areas such as the extensive co-curricular program in areas such the College Sports, Performing Arts and Music programs. Each student is also supported by a Student Manager for each House group who stays with the same cohort for a period of three years. This is further supported by House staff for all levels as well as a Head of House. Careful tracking and support of all students also occurs through the Transition teams. The Junior Transition team and three Senior Transition teams meet regularly to discuss students in need of support on a range of academic and emotional levels.

Of great success is the fact that 100% of students in Years 9 through to Year 12 now have an Individual Pathway Plan which includes a clearly defined pathway including goals to achieve that pathway. Creating stability in maintaining the Individual Pathway Plan has been the fact that ‘real retention’ rates for Vermont Secondary College from 2006 – 2011 is at 71% while the State mean is 47.9%.

‘Apparent retention’ rates have also been maintained above State means with Years 7 to 12 at VSC being 83% with a State mean of 67.7%. For Years 11 to 12 VSC sits at 93.5% with the State mean at 78%. Of note is the ‘Apparent retention’ rate for Year 10 into 11 with the State mean at 92.2% while VSC sits at 85.9%. The percentage of Year 10 VSC students exiting to a clearly defined education or training pathway has trended upwards and we have attained 100% successful placement/transfer in 2010 and 2011. This has been a deliberate strategy on our behalf.

Targeted students at Years 7 and 8 have an Individual Pathway Plan. For example, a Koorie Education Learning Plan (KELP) for indigenous students while Integration Support students and students identified as ‘at risk’ have Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). Also for students identified as ‘at risk’, we have created sustainable, customised individual pathways plans and programs, drawing especially on local community and College parent employment links.

The number or % of students at Vermont enrolled in a VET subject is a reflection of our student’s cohort and the needs/demands of the local community. The number of students enrolled in VET and/or an alternative training setting has increased from 9% to 14.8%. The initial target of 15% of our student cohort enrolled in a VET subject is now regarded to be an upper limit for our student body as compared to the state mean of 27.4%.
VTAC (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre) and Destination Data clearly demonstrates that a growing number of Vermont graduates are entering tertiary studies, with an increase in numbers heading to university courses rather than TAFE courses. In 2012 (VCE class of 2011) 100% (99.4% first round offer. One student, 0.6%, received a direct offer = 100%) of all VSC graduates received a first round offer. In 2011 (VCE class of 2010) 96% of VSC graduates were offered and commenced tertiary courses.

The On-Track destination data ‘response rate’ for Year 12 students has improved from 87% to 95% over the last 3 years. However it is felt that On-track is a poor measure of student destination as it only draws on students who have agreed to participate in the survey and then responded in a timely manner. For example in 2011 only 130 of a cohort of 187 students participated in this destination data collection method. Previously no individual was performing the 6 month check for ‘On-track’ destination. So to further tighten the accuracy of the destination data the Pathways team has now introduced a systematic approach making effective use of Cases21 (school administration computer system used by Victorian government schools to support their administration & financial management) which is now fully accessible to the relevant staff in the Pathways Resource Centre. This will also ensure future use of the now more accurate, VASS/VTAC data available to the College and leadership group to support decision making processes.

In line with improvements to our data collecting and recording methods is the fact that all exits in Years 7 through to 12 have been located and therefore 100% of transition tracking has been achieved. We have continued to broaden student choice and work towards a sustainable program that works within our timetable/structures.

Further building industry/community links has been critical in this broadening of choice. We have continued to identify and offer a range of individualised Alternative Training & Engagement Programs for targeted students in Years 9 through to 12. These students have been identified, tracked, case managed and supported by the Wellbeing and Pathways team and the Junior and Senior Transition teams which were introduced and developed as part of this Strategic Plan.

As a part of this process, it was critical to work towards consolidating existing industry/community links while building fresh opportunities for students with members of the College community, local industry, community organisations, the tertiary sector and past students. Building and consolidating industry/community links has included a wide range of new programs and methodology which includes initiating, consolidating or expanding a range of parent and community information evenings/expos, including the Year 6 to 7 Welcome Evening, Year 7 parent/teacher/student family BBQ, the ‘Year 12 & beyond – where to from here?’ expo and targeted information & skills-building evenings for families. We now run a number of industry link programs for Years 9 to 12 which involves on-site training opportunities by external providers for staff, students and parents such as Food Handling, Responsible Serving of Alcohol and Worksafe white cards.

Internally the College now offers 1:1 Course counselling (including parents) for years 9 into 10, 10 into 11 and 11 into Year 12 as well as Transition Evenings for Years 8 into 9, 9 into 10, 10 into 11 and 11 into 12. Another success has been the introduction of On-line course selection, a significant time saving option which has enabled an expanded Year 11 to 12 transition program, and the introduction of a Year 9 to10 transition program. Essential to this has been ensuring that the Director of Pathways & Transitions is a core member of VSC’s Learning and Teaching team.

Other industry/community links that are now firmly established include VSC membership on two Local Learning & Employment Networks (LLENs), maintaining links to the Mullum VET cluster while assisting in the establishment of the new Eastern Network VET Cluster (thus providing a link to more ‘like schools’) and joining the Waverley & Whitehorse Careers associations.

Our tertiary links have also grown and established through continuing links with Deakin, Monash and Melbourne Universities (M-Teach) by providing professional placements for student teachers, the planning for the on-site delivery of University Enhancement programs and through encouraging visits from and arranging visits to a wide range of higher education providers (e.g. RMIT, Swinburne) and training/employment providers (e.g. MEGT).
The Pathways Team has continued working towards the implementation of the DEECD Careers Blueprint for Years 7 to 12 through mapping the Blueprint against current VSC programs, identifying gaps, and refining and implementing programs to undertake the competencies. This is with a view to reviewing curriculum links, and developing and embedding elements in core classroom activities.

As a part of the Careers Blueprint there has been a deliberate focus on the Junior School by introducing the Blueprint to the Junior Review team, through mapping our existing program at Years 7 & 8, and altering and each year refining the MIPs (Managed Individual Pathways) program.

Further down the track we need to consider a more formal relationship with the Past Students Association to make greater use of alumni links as well as stronger links with the VSC Leos Club supported by Vermont South Lions Club.

We have achieved all targets in Student Outcomes for Pathways & Transitions over the life of the current Strategic Plan and can be justly proud of the results. This has been further endorsed by parents through the excellent results received in the Parent Opinion Survey for Transitions over the last three years.

Student Pathways & Transitions - Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

The success and improved student outcomes in Pathways & Transitions cannot be put down to one single factor, but rather down to a wide range of initiatives fully supported by a strong committed team approach taken by the Leadership and Strategic Planning Team.

Crucial to a significant overhaul of the Pathways & Transitions area, and recognition of how crucial this area was becoming, was the appointment of key personnel. Two of the most successful decisions over the last four years has been the appointment of a new Director of Pathways & Transitions and the appointment of an Education Support (ES) member to assist the Director in a full time capacity. The provision of a new Pathways Resource Centre in the Stage 2 building program as part of the Student Services precinct greatly assisted the growth and recognition of this important area.

Combined with this was the appointment of an ES Registrar to coordinate all enrolments & exits from 7 to 12 and the appointment of an ES Attendance Officer supported by the introduction of the new VEWS student management software to record all daily absences, class selections and student movement. The support staff have allowed for a more rigorous and effective use of the four key sources of data management and student tracking: Cases21, VASS, Timetabler and VEWS which are now fully integrated.

The growth of this area with newly appointed key personnel, an architecturally designed space and the resources required to support the area greatly improved liaison and communication between Pathways and range of ES staff responsible for Cases21, Finance and Attendance, Registrar. This model brought about greatly improved liaison and communication within the Student Services area supported by the New Strategic Planning Team to overview and direct implementation.

Data now drives so much of what the College does and the Pathways & Transitions team has successfully implemented ‘on-line web preferences’ for Years 9 to 12 course selection, created faster data entry to allow more time for class and program planning and significantly improved the use and range of data available to plan and implement programs. For example much of this data was used at a staff Professional Development (PD) day to inform staff of progress and allow for future planning.

All this accurate data collection enables earlier identification of issues impacting on individual student outcomes. It allows for a clear understanding and approach to internal transitions, as well as improved enrolment/exit processes. This enhanced and more accurate use of data also greatly assists the transition and planning process in relation to attendance, Student Family Occupation (SFO), English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), Wannik, VELS, NAPLAN – Years 7 & 9, EduTest - Year 7 & new enrolments, VCE and culminating in the GAT. To support our higher achieving VCE student’s two staff have commenced studies in the Melbourne University student enhancement program in Maths and Biology. This will, in the future, allow the College to offer these two courses on site for our
higher achieving VCE students (such as the LEEP students) as well as students from surrounding schools.

While personnel and data are crucial to success, this new structure has enabled a significant improvement in the conversations and information sharing that now occurs to support student outcomes, pathways and transitions.

These conversations and information sharing have taken several forms including ‘up skilling’ students, parents & staff to access relevant information and to make/give more informed choices in relation to course selection, clear subject recommendations on reports for pathways, Careers Fast-track sessions at Years 10 & 11 which parents are invited to and more directed course counselling, also involving parents, including a new Year 9 to 10 counselling program to address concerns of the more open Year 10 course selection.

Other improved student outcomes we have achieved has come about through refining the Junior Transition team with expanded membership and weekly meetings as well as implementing three House-based Senior Transition teams to bring the key stakeholders together for regular meetings to discuss, track and case manage the progress of individual students. The new House structure and expanded Student Management teams have provided the platform for this centralised team approach. The House model has as a requirement that all staff teach in both sub-schools, thus providing a transfer of skills and backward design from VCE. Due to part-time status only a handful of staff are not able to be timetabled to teach in both sub-schools. To further support this model we have expanded our already extensive Year 6 to 7 Transition program, including House meetings at the first Information Evening and we have also implemented Year 7 and 8 student focus groups. Interestingly student focus groups have indicated that we still have some gaps in the transition program, particularly from Year 7 to 8.

Other elements of the SSP for Pathways & Transitions where we did not achieve improved student outcomes as initially envisaged was really due to the changing nature of educational and structural landscapes within the College. While our House system was successfully implemented and has already been refined, neither it nor the mentoring model is in the form originally envisaged. However, further planning is continuing, particularly as part of our Junior School Review.

The Parent Opinion Survey in 2011 indicates a slight downward trend in the ‘Transition’ element, despite the many new initiatives implemented an outlined here. This could perhaps indicate a lack of communication or misunderstanding, as we are offering more information sessions/evenings, more pathways options and family directed programs than ever before.

The Careers Blueprint still needs to be implemented in a more sustainable way that is embedded into the Years 7 to 12 programs. We have not yet managed to have all teaching staff engage with their classes on pathways related discussions, for goal setting, subject and learning reflection etc. Our Industry and Community links, though developing, are still limited, and we must be more entrepreneurial in establishing a greater range of industry/community connections.

**Student Pathways & Transitions - How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?**

As previously discussed the majority of SSP outcomes in Student Pathways & Transitions were met and a key reason for this was thanks to the effective planning and use of resources in key areas such as staffing, time management, facilities, funding, ICT & facilities. Resources in this area were strategically targeted towards the key outcomes but were also aimed at the foundation level to support the significant improvements that needed to be made. The majority of these have been discussed at length under the section - Student Pathways & Transitions - Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes? Below is a snapshot of our effective management of resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes in this area:

- The Director of Pathways & Transitions was provided with a suitable time allowance: to engage with a range of students, parents & staff, to oversee the implementation of a range of
programs and initiatives; to advise parents, House and Student Services staff on a range of engagement and pathways issues.

- The appointment of an Education Support (ES) member to assist the Director in a full time capacity.
- The appointment of an ES Registrar to support the transitions area and coordinate all enrolments & exits from 7 to 12.
- The appointment of an ES Attendance Officer supported by the introduction of the new VEWS student management software to record all daily absences, class selections and student movement.
- A Year 7 Transition Coordinator was reintroduced and subsequently granted an increased time allowance.
- The provision of a new Pathways Resource Centre in the Stage 2 building program as part of the Student Services precinct was established and provided with a class set of netbooks for student use.
- The introduction and use of new software for subject selection (web preferences), tracking (Mapping Tool), data storage and sharing. Also a more rigorous and effective use of the four key sources of data management and student tracking: Cases21, VASS, Timetabler and VEWS which are now fully integrated.
- House model and structure allowed for improved flow of transition information
- House teams and individuals were subsequently trained and used for a range of student counselling and support programs, including extensive course counselling programs involving a large number of these key staff.
- An overwhelming majority of senior school (Years 10 to 12) students receive placement in their first choice subjects.
- The House structure was also used to engage students across a range of Pathways programs. Some of these programs were individually tailored and developed for integration students and students coming into the College from Blackburn English Language Centre (BELS).
- Introduction of the revised staff allotment allocation, with greater input and oversight from Learning Area Leaders (LAL’s) and Principal Class

Areas within Student Pathways & Transitions that require further resource management includes better succession planning and use of staff time. For example the team is limited to the Director for implementation and driving many of the programs. Due to VET teaching commitments she is never available on Wednesdays.

College staff, although a lot further down the track, still require a cultural shift to fully accept the fact that Pathways initiatives are a part of their teaching practice – it is still regarded as an add-on rather than a part of quality classroom teaching by some. In this case the College needs to build the confidence and aptitude into its staff through targeted pathways professional development. Tied to these concepts is the fact that the Pathways program was not able to gain support for immediate implementation of the DEECD Careers Blueprint as a major initiative.

Finally, through the reporting process we need to incorporate improved reporting to parents of student achievements in the areas of personal learning and goal setting.

**Student Pathways & Transitions - What can we do in the future to continue to improve?**

The Student Pathways and Transition team can be justifiably proud of the outcomes achieved for and by students over the four years of this School Strategic Plan. To continue to improve on these outcomes, the team has identified one key goal: to bring about a shift in thinking (the proverbial ‘culture change’) that brings the pathways and transitions focus into the mind of every classroom teacher, and thus into every classroom. In that way, pathways should clarify the ‘me as a person and learner’ focus for each student, linking their classroom learning to their future, by building the requisite skills and attitudes.

This goal will need to be closely linked to and integrated with both the ‘Student Engagement and Wellbeing’ and ‘Student Learning’ elements of the next School Strategic Plan, initially by investigating how the DEECD’s Careers Blueprint can enhance the learning of students and staff teaching in the
College. This will require careful collaboration with the Learning and Teaching committee, and the support of all Learning Area Leaders and their teams, ultimately to support all students in their transitions into, through and out of the College, and to make the right decisions for their learning with regard to subject, course and career selection.

To aid achievement of this goal, we will continue to work towards all students having an up-to-date and well considered pathways and learning plan. Further refinement of the House model and the role of House and teaching staff will be required in order to achieve the above through an integrated, personalized mentor program that improves planning, tracking and follow-up for student learning plans.