School plan 2018 – 2020

Aurora College 8912

School background 2018-2020

School vision statement

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

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

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

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

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

School context

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

Aurora College, the state's first virtual school, commenced classes on Monday 2 February 2015. Our students meet specific criteria, including enrolment in a rural and remote government school as defined by the MCEETYA Geographical Location Classification.

The college is partially selective, with classes in English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 10. Years 7 to 10 students are chosen in the same way as students in all other selective classes in NSW government schools. With the home school principal's approval, students enrolled in Year 11 and Year may include those students who have been part of the Year 7 to 10 selective stream. The college enables these students to remain in their local school and community while providing the opportunity to study specialist subjects which their home school cannot currently offer.

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

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

School planning process

The Aurora College State Reference Group undertakes ongoing consultation, development and review of the Aurora College model. Members include the college's senior executive and representatives from the teaching staff, parents, primary and secondary school principals, and senior officers of the Department.

The brief of this reference group is to provide strategic advice to the Executive Directors, Learning and Leadership, Wagga, Tamworth and Connected Communities with respect to Aurora College, to improve learning outcomes for participating students and inform future delivery of the curriculum.

The school plan 2018-2020 draws upon the planning processes undertaken by the State Reference Group and the internal planning processes of the college. The formation of the school plan featured heavily in the agendas of the school development days and the two leadership conferences held in 2017.

The strategic directions for this planning cycle were determined through the collection and analysis of extensive feedback from students, teachers, parents, and partner school principals and staff. This document was developed in consultation with staff, the Aurora College State Reference Group and the Director, Public Schools.

School background 2018-2020

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Aspirational learners

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Quality teaching and learning

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Leading data informed practice

Purpose:
To develop a learning environment that promotes a culture of high expectations and which informs, guides and nurtures all students so they may achieve their goals and aspirations.

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

Purpose:
To ensure best practice teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy skills, so that all students may access the widest possible curriculum and participate fully in society.

Strategic Direction 1: Aspirational learners

Purpose

To develop a learning environment that promotes a culture of high expectations and which informs, guides and nurtures all students so they may achieve their goals and aspirations.

Improvement Measures

- Increased levels of resilience, confidence and independence in students.
- Increased number of students who feel supported in achieving their goals and aspirations.
- Increase in the number of students selecting higher level mathematics, English and science courses in Stage 6.

People

Students

Understand that the school expects every student will work to achieve their best and will embrace the opportunities available to them. They build skills to self-assess their personal strengths and weaknesses and to set goals.

Leaders

Leaders adopt a coordinated approach to curriculum design that builds partnerships between parents, students, and the community and develop programs that promote a culture of high expectations.

Teachers

Communicate high expectations of their students in all areas of the curriculum and actively support students to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Parents/Carers

Demonstrate support for the high expectations the school has of their children and they are active partners in embedding these into the school's culture.

Processes

Aspirational learners

Implement a curriculum that meets the aspirations of the community, promotes high expectations and enhances students' awareness of post school opportunities, through development of the:
- Mentor program
- Short course program
- Stage 3 opportunity class program

Holistic learners

Implement a whole school integrated approach to student well-being in which students can connect, succeed and thrive at each stage of their schooling, by enhancing the:
- New student transition program
- Student wellbeing program
- Tutorial support program
- Parent outreach program.

Evaluation plan

Progress towards improvement measures will be evaluated through:
- Student, teacher and parent evaluations
- Student reports
- Focus Groups
- Lesson observations
- Student work samples and reflections
- Teaching and learning programs
- Program data

Products and Practices

Product

A school culture that supports high expectations; reflected in a broader and more relevant curriculum and improved levels of student engagement and wellbeing.

Practice

Students demonstrate high quality planning and organisational skills. They display confidence and resilience and have a greater understanding of post school opportunities.

Leaders demonstrate purposeful leadership in the development and implementation of high quality curriculum.

Teachers embrace shared, whole-school responsibility to inform, guide and nurture all students so they may achieve their goals and aspirations.

Parents/Carers encourage and support their children to achieve their best and to apply newly acquired skills when confronted with barriers to their learning.

Strategic Direction 2: Quality teaching and learning

Purpose

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

Improvement Measures

- Increase in the number of students demonstrating active engagement with their learning.
- Increase in the number of students who demonstrate a capacity for self-assessment and reflection.
- Improved assessment practices inform teaching and learning, and provide meaningful feedback on student achievement.

People

Students
Students are motivated to achieve their best, developing a capacity for self-assessment and becoming reflective and self-managing.

Leaders
Leaders support a coordinated whole-school approach to high quality programming, assessing and reporting.

Teachers
Teachers develop diagnostic skills through targeted professional learning. They become increasingly skilled at identifying individual learning characteristics and effectively differentiating learning for all students.

Parents/Carers
Develop an understanding of and value the theories and models of learning that underpin the school's educational philosophy.

Processes

Curriculum differentiation
Draw on research to develop and implement effective planning, programming and instruction practices that provide appropriate learning opportunities for every student.

Quality assessment and feedback
Draw on research to develop and implement consistent, high quality feedback and assessment practices across the school.

Evaluation plan
Progress towards improvement measures will be evaluated through:
- Student, teacher and parent evaluations
- Student reports
- Teaching and learning programs, assessment tasks and lesson plans
- Student work samples and reflections
- Classroom observations and teacher professional development plans
- Professional learning evaluations
- Personalised learning programs

Products and Practices

Product
- Teaching and learning programs demonstrate curriculum differentiation and cater for individual student learning needs.
- Assessment practices inform teaching, help students achieve their best and provide meaningful reports on their achievement.

Practice
Teachers demonstrate understanding of the individual needs of their students and they work collaboratively with them to plan for and deliver responsive teaching and learning experiences.

Students demonstrate mastery of their learning with the support of assessment practices that emphasise growth and achievement and they progress at their own pace through curriculum.

Leaders demonstrate purposeful leadership in the ongoing development and implementation of high quality programming, assessing and reporting.

Parents/Carers support their children to achieve their learning goals with constructive advice about how to improve.

Strategic Direction 3: Leading data informed practice

Purpose

To ensure best practice teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy skills, so that all students may access the widest possible curriculum and participate fully in society.

Improvement Measures

- Increase of 10% in the number of students demonstrating expected growth in literacy and numeracy from Year 7 to Year 9.
- Increase of 10% in the number of Year 9 students in the top 2 bands in literacy and numeracy.

People

Students
Students build skills to self-assess by utilising the literacy and numeracy progressions.

Leaders
Leaders support an integrated whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy.

Teachers
Teachers become increasingly skilled in the use of diagnostic data to analyse students' strengths and weaknesses.

Parents/Carers
Demonstrate support of and value the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.

Processes

Research informed pedagogy
Draw on current research to develop and implement an integrated whole school approach to the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy skills.

Evaluation plan
Progress towards improvement measures will be evaluated through:

- NAPLAN data
- Teaching and learning programs, assessment tasks and lesson plans
- Student work samples and reflections
- Classroom observations and teacher professional development plans
- Professional learning evaluations
- Personalised learning programs
- PLAN2 student profiles

Products and Practices

Product
- Teaching and learning programs demonstrate explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.
- Literacy and numeracy teaching strategies are reflected in improved student progress and achievement data.

Practice
Teachers draw on current research and use diagnostic data to inform and differentiate teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.

Students demonstrate mastery of literacy and numeracy skills, reflected in the attainment of expected growth rates in NAPLAN.

Leaders demonstrate purposeful leadership in the development of a whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy.

Parents/Carers support their children to achieve expected growth in literacy and numeracy skills.