



Port Augusta Special School

2022 annual report to the community

Port Augusta Special School Number: 1399

Partnership: Port Augusta - Quorn

Signature

School principal:

Mr Tony Holden

Governing council chair:

Mr Michael Bunder

Date of endorsement:

21 March 2023



Government
of South Australia
Department for Education

Context and highlights

We began the year full of hope that Covid would not have a huge effect on us, as it had the previous two or three years, and generally speaking, it didn't. Like the rest of SA and the country, we were learning to live with it. Precautions were still necessary, but mostly it was 'business as usual'.

We began 2022 with lower than expected enrolments as our five new reception children were mostly no-shows. This became a real issue for us as we relied on those numbers to keep our staffing and class sizes as we had planned. We have had a number of chronic non-attenders in the past and it was an issue we didn't want spiraling out of control. School leadership came up with a strategy of supplying its own bus to pick up those students who relied on parents to drop them off and were considered long-term absentees. This had a significant impact on our chronic non-attenders and as the year progressed, our attendance figures became much more positive – 30% of our chronic non-attenders were now considered regular attenders.

2022 was a significant year for SACE at our site. For the first time we had six students completing year 12 and 33% of these were indigenous students. Our aim was to ensure all Year 12s had a pathway into the next phase of their lives, following school. We started the year with our most experienced teacher with this student cohort, but she won a leadership position in another school in Term 1. We then had to rely on a contract teacher, with much less experience. We had our DP play a mentoring role for the year 12 contract teacher and support was put in place to ensure she had what she needed to help her guide our students to success. Our key objectives were to have each student achieve their SACE and have an effective pathway for the following year.

100% of our Year 12 students successfully achieved their SACE in 2022, meaning 100% of our indigenous students were also successful. Most had a pathway into earning or learning and all staff helped these students celebrate their success at the end-of-year Year 12 Dinner. Our staff, students and parents were very proud and we all wished the students well as they departed to begin the next phase of their lives, as young adults.

As a Special School we had a number of triumphs during the year, too numerous to mention all. We trialed a different report format, one that included visuals as well as comments. It was very successful and parents accepted the change and made positive comments in favor of the new reporting format. Staff have not found the extra task of taking photo evidence of student learning to be that onerous, and some share the task with their SSOs.

We had a change in our Governing Council Chair and committee for the first time in many years and the school welcomed Mick Bunder to the role of Chairperson. He has completed his first term of office and he is busy preparing for 2023 with his 'new-look' committee of first-time-parents about to begin their second term of office. This group is joined by a couple of new parents with young children, so hopefully we now have a group to take us forward for a number of years to come.

The school is beginning 2023 with a wider focus on using music as a tool to engage and connect with students. Whilst 2023 is going to prove a challenge in terms of staffing, it is also shaping to be a year of opportunity for our students. We farewelled three of our teaching staff, who all won new positions for 2023. We wish them well and hope they enjoy their new roles. Two of them have won positions with limited tenures and have a right of return to PASpS in 2024. Both Rhian Griffith and Kyoko Miyamoto may return to us if their tenure is completed and not extended for 2024 and beyond.

As 2023 commences I can welcome Sarah Bull, who has a background in instrumental music, to our staff as a 0.8 NIT Teacher; I can also welcome Simon Cai, and Audrey Chepkemboi as classroom teachers new to the school. Both have won 12-month contracts.

Governing council report

I have been honoured to serve the Governing Council since the last Annual General meeting as chairperson and despite a very challenging year, we are still maintaining a forward momentum in improving the lives of our children attending the Port Augusta Special School. Several challenges have affronted us since the last meeting, being the Covid 19 pandemic, causing several cancellations of meetings, staff availability another and then the loss of some staff to other vocations and locations.

Heartfelt thanks go out to Kristy (finance), Rhian (teacher), Kelsey (teacher) and Kyoko (teacher) have moved on and previously been mentioned in school newsletters but thank you to them all for their input into the success of our school. At the AGM it was announced that we are also losing Sue (DP) to another role and we also pass on our thanks to her for her input into the success of our school and students.

I was invited and attended the graduation celebration of our year 12's in early December last year, and with my last five years, it was a pleasure to see the success of the very accomplished young people graduate and very much looking forward to their futures and I am sure you join me in wishing them all the very brightest of futures, congratulations to you all.

This year has begun with a flurry of new faces, students and teachers alike. We begin the year learning that Tony Holden placed a submission for upgrading playground equipment with Variety last year and has since informed the submission was successful for \$150,000. A major focus for the Governing Council is to assist Tony in equipment selection to assist facilitating the much needed upgrades.

On a final note at the AGM we learned Sue is also leaving us, accepting a new role and challenge in her career. We wish her the very best in the future and appreciate all her work for our school.

Michael Bunder

Quality improvement planning

Our 2022-2024 Site Improvement Plan has begun and key targets, actions and challenges have been identified. Some areas of concern were raised throughout 2022 and key issues addressed in a number of ways. Staff relationships, school culture and values were identified through the year as areas which needed targeted support, in order for us to begin our journey of Improvement.

The support of our ED was sought and advice given on how we could develop an appropriate process for moving forward. To begin with, we revisited Grievance Procedures as a whole staff so that all staff knew what was expected if they had a grievance and how to deal with it appropriately. To support this, we arranged for specialist people to visit from other sites, to observe us in action and to offer advice, if and when needed. Myself as site leader met with other leaders from Adelaide to see how special schools were operated from their perspective and I learned a lot about process development, documentation and step-by-step procedure list creation, and how to use these strategies to 'bullet-proof' our operations, improvement agenda, and school culture.

Training & Development was organized for Week 0, 2023 in developing effective school culture, and this was well-received by staff. Work on school values and classroom management has followed as a result of this.

What this has enabled us to do is to look at our SIP objectively and own it as a staff. We know the targets and we have identified strategies for reaching these targets. We know what supports we need and we are also aware of the challenges we face, both as individuals and collectively. 2022 saw us achieve some really impressive results – student goal achievement is up in each class, 100% SACE achievement and student pathways identified. Chronic non-attendance is down and as a result, literacy skill development is increasing as evidenced by results using our Developmental Writing Scale, from the Jane Farrell Balanced Literacy Program we were trained in using. Numeracy is the focus of Student Free Days in 2023 and a whole-school approach to teaching and learning in 'Big Ideas in Numbers, teaching pedagogy', will help us improve in our Numeracy goal, strategies and targets, moving forward.

To further support our improvement in numeracy, enquiry into using PAT M across our site has begun. This is a strategy that will enable us to collect another form of data to support informed program development moving forward.

Aboriginal Learner Achievement Leaders' Resource (ALALR)

Key element focused on for school improvement in 2022: Data Informed Planning

New improvement actions implemented via the Aboriginal Learner Achievement Leaders' Resource to raise the literacy and numeracy achievement Aboriginal learners:

In 2022, the Aboriginal Learner Achievement Action Plan addressed the first key element Data Informed Planning. The improvement actions implemented to raise literacy and numeracy achievement included: Weekly attendance data was collected, documented and monitored by the Deputy. Data was collated by the Senior Social Worker from the Professional Learning Community. The Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) conducted class lessons that addressed culture, food, dreamtime stories, area and language. She involved the students in significant-date celebrations which resulted in a variety of appropriate products. One of which was our school's statement on what Reconciliation means to us. These are displayed in our front office and main corridor. Her involvement to engage students provided a harmonious and cohesive student population. She organised whole school activities to celebrate significant dates, and these were informative and joyous events. The improvements made in 2022 have been that Aboriginal students are on the same footings as other students because they are regularly attending school.

Improvements achieved in literacy and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal learners (Including individual student successes):

The focus has been on raising levels of improvement in numeracy and literacy through increased attendance. Over the year, students have increased their personal levels in reading, writing, communication and in ABLES- numeracy, personal, social and emotional. Focus on data shows increases in the levels of student's achievements over the terms and across the year. Nominated literacy assessments were scheduled across the year. These were based on the Jane Farrell Balanced Literacy Model and were conducted in conjunction with the ABLES Model. Nominated numeracy assessments began, and extra teacher training has been a focal point to then identify more appropriate assessments for our students, particularly Aboriginal students. This process will continue in 2023.

School performance comment

As a special school that has 0 students eligible to sit NAPLAN in each year level, we cannot draw conclusions about changes in performance from year to year, as other schools do.

We are currently in talks with PAT – organizers, re initiating PAT-M for our students from 2024 onwards – we hope to trial it this year. In all probability the testing will concentrate around Foundation level for most students and may progress up to a year 3 level for some of our students. The data collected will be to help us program more effectively and to ensure we can still stretch some of our students, where appropriate.

For our junior students we utilize ABLES (Abilities Based Learning Education Support) and report to their criteria. We currently use 3 of the assessment tools for reporting and they are:

- English – Reading and writing: covers the development of the use and interpretation of symbolic forms of representation leading towards early reading and writing.
- English – Speaking and listening: covers the development of functional communication skills leading towards recognition and use of the social conventions of communication.

- Personal and social capability (encompasses three tools): covers the development of skills to support personal/emotional and social/relational dispositions, intelligences and sensibilities. This includes self-awareness (specifically for autistic students) including the development of basic skills related to attention, memory and becoming an independent learner.

Our aim through 2022 was to improve the way we reported to parents and to lift the number of goals achieved by students overall. Our report format changed to include pictures of learning in each area. Staff took photos of student learning as support for their comments and as evidence of student progress. A pictorial record of student learning was included in both Semester Reports sent home in 2022 and this will continue into 2023. Parent feedback was that they preferred this type of report and found the pictures generally complimented the teacher comments. The number of goals achieved grew significantly and a likely, or possible explanation is that by including photos of student work, teachers had more evidence upon which to assess goal achievement. The school staff is committed to finding more ways to assess student work and validate their learning progress. All SACE work is assessed and graded as per the SACE Moderated Subjects guidelines and approved Learning Assessment Plans are used for each subject.

The Australian Curriculum Framework is used for teaching and learning programs in years 3 – 10 and our students are assessed using ABLES.

Our SIP clearly outlines 3 major goals:

- Our students will show improvement in Literacy skill development
- Our students will show improvement in Numeracy skill development
- All students will have a transition plan

We have been doing extensive work to consolidate our literacy skill development, based upon the foundation of Jane Farrell's Balanced Literacy Program. Teachers use the program, collect relevant data and analyse it during a special meeting time on Thursday afternoons. We use this data to show it pictorially and as a means to inform planning and programming.

We are teaching numeracy using the BliN (Big Ideas in Numbers) foundation and reporting using the ABLES standards for our junior students.

We ensure all of our students have a pathway plan for the year and build upon that to transition successfully the next year. School leavers all will develop post-secondary pathway options as part of their senior school studies.

Attendance

Year level	2019	2020	2021	2022
Primary Other	79.3%	55.6%	68.8%	59.1%
Secondary Other	79.9%	79.3%	85.4%	73.6%
Total	79.6%	66.1%	76.0%	66.3%

Data Source: Site Performance Reporting System (SPER), Semester 1 attendance.

NOTE: A blank cell indicates there were no students enrolled.

Attendance comment

Attendance issues in a special school are not uncommon – extra doctor, or specialist appointments and service provider visits, often lead to full day absences, when under other circumstances they might not have needed a whole day. Chronic non-attendance was certainly addressed in 2022 and significant progress was noted in decreasing non-attendance. Our DP and AEW made numerous home visits in the first semester and these were usually followed by an increase in attendance. but invariably it didn't last. Not much we tried proved sustainable, until we offered to pick-up and drop-off students using our own bus. This has proven to have the most long-term impact on attendance so far. It has had the added bonus of increasing our parent engagement, particularly with indigenous families, as they are waiting for the bus and engage with the driver and support personnel each day. Parents we had little to no contact with are now among our most communicative parents. We will continue to operate a bus service for our non-attenders and in 2023 so far, we have increased the number of regular users by over 100%. This is certainly helping us to drop the percentage of non-attendance at school.

Behaviour support comment

The fact we are a special school means we will see behaviour not commonly seen, or necessarily accepted in mainstream settings. Incidents of violence have increased during 2022. The main reason for this is because two of our new students resort to hitting as a means of getting their own way, or responding to issues they cannot express their feelings about in other ways. One is non-verbal, whilst another has limited verbal capacity and vocabulary. Both become easily frustrated and are quick to tantrums that include hitting out. In a way both of these students use violence as a form of trying to bully others into giving into them, though neither would understand the concept of bullying, as such. A third student came to us with behaviour concerns and would not normally meet the criterion for a special school as he has no intellectual, or physical disability as such. In all cases support is put in place to monitor and help with supporting A Choices. We use a proactive Positive Behaviours model and extra support staff to assist..

Parent opinion survey summary

Parents are satisfied generally with how the school is operating, but there are areas for definite improvement:

- Communication could be better, for example one parent receives nothing from her child's teacher. This is not acceptable and we want staff to have open communication, in a variety of ways with all parents.
- The majority of parents know what standard the school expects and is open to discussions with relevant staff on behalf of their students' progress. But some do want help with their child's learning needs and want to know what the school is doing, what works and what does not.
- Most parents believe there is common respect from both staff and students at the school. Respect is one of our values and we must be prepared to make it part of our school culture.
- When we communicate with parents it should always be based on our values and we must reiterate the importance we place on respect, responsibility and safety at our school.
- It was clear that parents believe we know their children and consider them important.
- 100% firmly believe education is important and that staff works toward delivering an environment that is conducive to effective and prosperous learning.
- Some parents do not think we provide enough feedback to students and that there is room for improvement in this area. This is something we will work toward in 2023.

Generally speaking, parents support the school and want the best for their children. Although we have effective ways of communicating with our parents, we can always do better. We have had a rise in parent interest in joining the Governing Council in 2023, and we included a record number of new enrolments, each of whom has indicated their desire to remain on the committee in 2023. This is an extremely positive sign for us, moving forward.

Intended destination

Leave Reason	Number	%
NT - LEFT SA FOR NT	1	33.3%
TG - TRANSFERRED TO SA GOVERNMENT SCHOOL	1	33.3%
U - UNKNOWN	1	33.3%

Data Source: Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS) Data extract Term 3 2022. Data shows recorded destinations for students that left the school in the previous year.

Relevant history screening

All necessary paperwork is produced by staff, copied and kept on file, at the beginning of every year. Staff present their WWCC clearances and teacher registrations, as well as Covid compliancy documents. Our administration SSO collates copies of these documents and ensures they are updated in each staff members file. Admin then informs the Principal if anyone is non-compliant. Teachers whose credentials are close to expiry are warned via email to update.

2022 - All our staff are compliant with necessary qualifications, clearances and registrations. Teachers' registration certificates have been sited and SSO contracts / top-ups have been signed off. All teachers at this school are qualified and registered with the SA Teachers Registration Board.

Qualifications held by the teaching workforce and workforce composition

All teachers at this school are qualified and registered with the SA Teachers Registration Board.

Qualification Level	Number of Qualifications
Bachelor Degrees or Diplomas	15
Post Graduate Qualifications	14

Data Source: Department for Education HR Management Reporting System, extracted Term 3 2022 .

Please note: Qualification data is indicative only and reflects what has been recorded in the Department's HR system. Staff who have more than 1 qualification will be counted more than once in the above qualification table. Therefore the total number of staff by qualification type may be more than the total number of teaching staff.

Workforce composition including Indigenous staff

	Teaching Staff		Non-Teaching Staff	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Full-Time Equivalents	0.0	10.0	1.1	6.6
Persons	0	11	2	9

Data Source: Department for Education HR Management Reporting System, extracted Term 3 2022 .

Financial statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$1,687,036
Grants: Commonwealth	\$3,100
Parent Contributions	\$8,467
Fund Raising	\$0
Other	\$20,085

Data Source: Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS).

2022 School Annual Report: Tier 2 Funding Report*

*Tier 2 funding provides additional resources to support students who are unlikely to obtain the desired outcomes without further support.

Tier 2 funding section	Tier 2 category (where applicable to the site)	Briefly describe how the 2022 funding was used to improve the relevant Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) outcomes	Outcomes achieved or progress made towards these outcomes
Targeted funding for individual students	Improved wellbeing and engagement	We invested heavily in programs we know to work for our students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-Being student free day for staff. - TV BY Me – increased funding and time allocation - PODD – extra funding put into PODD expertise and purchase of resources 	The above led to specific outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress on staff well-being, following low point of staff perception data. This led to increased focus on student well-being. - Students and staff communication and interaction increased. - Student involvement with PODD has increased. - Student involvement with TV By Me has increased leading to more confident students.
	Improved outcomes for students with an additional language or dialect	Paid for PODD support person to work directly with students on a one-to-one basis PODD expertise provided to teachers and SSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased focus on literacy skill development - Increased numeracy skill development
	Inclusive Education Support Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding directed toward cost of Aboriginal Education Worker - home visits, cultural awareness, data collection, high-quality classroom practice. - Funding for extra SSO support for two students – one physical disabilities and the other behavioural and intellectual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . improved attendance - Improved attendance and less suspensions for one student specifically. One-on-One support - Improved learning outcomes for a student with multiple (severe) physical disabilities. One-on-One support
Targeted funding for groups of students	Improved outcomes for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rural & isolated students - Aboriginal students - numeracy and literacy including early years support First language maintenance & development Students taking alternative pathways IESP support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AEW employed to work with students and families. - Construction of Yarning Porch - pick up / drop off bus service for Reception children / Yr 1 - SSO Support – extra hours and contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease in chronic non-attendance - Transition pathway plans for all school leavers

Program funding for all students	Australian Curriculum	Teachers and SSOs received training and development, resources and support in curriculum requirements. This involved hiring curriculum expertise, for service delivery on Student Free Days (SFDs). It also required purchase of resources using appropriate school processes. Leadership provides support for teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased literacy skills for students - increased numeracy for students - improved transition processes across the school
Other discretionary funding	Aboriginal languages programs Initiatives	- funding went toward employment of an AEW, whose primary role was to work with individual students on project work around 'Attending to Culture'. She also facilitated home visits between leadership and parents of chronic non-attenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduced number of chronic non-attenders. Initially we reduced our chronic non-attenders by 33% and this has lasted (and since increased) into 2023. - Students gained positive insight into culture - students completed a 'walk-about' wall
	Better schools funding	This funding was used to update our technology within the classroom - it went toward the purchase of nine new smart TVs for our students and teachers to use - one in every room, including activity room, teacher prep room and each of the classrooms. - Funding went toward specialist equipment, facilities and resources and improvement of service – i.e. increased SSO hours toward student support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students use interactive technology - Students can access in-class internet, podcasts and free-to-air tv programs - Students use the large screen tvs for work, presentations and improving self-confidence. - Students supported with extra SSO help and support, where needed
	Specialist school reporting (as required)	- School funds additional SSO2 positions to help increase the expertise we put in place for students. – PODD, and HPE support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased learning opportunities in physical development and health. - Increased means of communication. - can use the PODD effectively
	Improved outcomes for gifted students	Funding was provided for specialist music and art equipment, including funding an art teacher to deliver painting to students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students given the opportunity to participate in both art and music programs. - some students participated in the 'Stobie-pole' art creation program.