2008 Annual School Report
Forster Public School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Messages

Principal's message

Forster Public School focuses on quality learning and high achievement for students. Learning programs are inclusive and cater for a diverse range of student needs. The school is a warm, supportive and nurturing environment for students and is conducive to learning.

This year, as always, parents generously and willingly stepped forward to work for the school in a variety of areas including classrooms, sport, canteen, library, fundraisers, committee membership and in the school gardens. All of these activities allow children to understand and gain a better sense of school community.

Our Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) has injected over $27 000 into the educational programs of the school.

Our students have continued to make excellent progress in all Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Their learning has been enriched by a wide range of extracurricular activities.

A major focus on literacy, numeracy and technology has enhanced the learning outcomes of students. This focus will continue in 2009.

Our Student Care and Discipline Program has been a priority and students were encouraged to achieve individual excellence. We aim to enable students to leave our school as creative, responsible, independent, tolerant and caring citizens who will be able to contribute in a meaningful way to society in the future.

Our graduating class of 2008 has produced some wonderful leaders. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate our school councillors for their efforts in 2008. House captains and canteen helpers are also to be commended. The standard set has provided a model for other students, showing dedication and integrity in their service to the school.

This annual school report is a snapshot of the school's achievements in 2008.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

Rick Clissold

P&C and/or School Council message

The P&C Association is an important part of Forster Public School. It acts in a partnership with the school to allow a forum for parents to learn about and discuss issues within the school and be informed about issues that affect students across the state in areas of funding, curriculum and teaching and learning. This is also an opportunity for the Principal to gauge parental opinion on a range of topics.

In 2008 the P&C was delighted to have donated in excess of $27 000 to the school. These funds have contributed to many projects, foremostly the upgrade of technology within the school including, a new sound system and stage lighting upgrade for the school hall, interactive white board and school computers.

This year we have also introduced many new and exciting fundraising ventures. Our monster market days proved such a huge success that we plan to make this an annual event. The "Creativity By The Sea" art show was an outstanding way to showcase the talents of each and every student in which over $7000 was raised. We have also continued with the traditional and highly successful Mothers' Day stall followed by Fathers' Day stall and Easter raffle and of course, the ever popular movie nights.

The P&C Association has a very important role to play in helping to determine and implement the future development of our wonderful school. The P&C framework provides us all with the opportunity to enrich the school as a quality learning environment for all students.

P&C meetings are held on the first Monday of each month in the school staffroom.

Tracey Horn

P&C President

Student representative's message

The Student Representative Council (SRC) for 2008 consisted of 12 outstanding student leaders who had an active year.

Activities include raising the flags, hat draw, running the assemblies every Friday, helping out with discos and reporting for the school newsletter. During Grandparents’ Day the school councillors assisted the grandparents and guests as well as coordinated the concert. The School Captains and Vice Captains travelled to Club Forster to attend the Sorry Ceremony. We also enjoyed setting up the bike fun day course and dressing up as bunnies for the Easter hat parade. Another major role was organising surveys for the school satisfaction evaluation. Some of the special occasions we held were ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

The highlight of our year was attending the Young Leaders Day with a variety of schools from the Great Lakes area.
We have enjoyed our year as the SRC and hope that the next team of Councillors can benefit from the learning experience.

In September of 2008, the Student Council surveyed 77 students from Years 3-6 to obtain their opinion of the Classroom Learning Environments at our school. There were 11 statements in which the students responded using a five-point scale from Always to Rarely.

Findings

Generally, students believe there is a positive classroom learning environment across the school.
- 92% of students believe that teachers expect students to do their best;
- 81% of students believe that teachers explain why students are going to learn something;
- 78% of students believe that teachers expect high standards of work from students;
- 38% of students believe that teachers give some choice in the activities they do; and
- 36% of students believe that teachers organise students to work in groups or teams.

Recommendations

We recommend that there be more opportunities in classes for students to work in groups and teams and for students to have more choice in learning activities.

School context

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>360</td>
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Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>92.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school’s attendance rate continues to be below region and state rates. Strategies will be put in place to address this to improve attendance at Forster PS.

Class sizes

In March 2003 the Government announced its commitment to publish primary class sizes in annual school reports in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible.

The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2008 class size audit conducted on Monday 31 March 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K/21</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/22</td>
<td>K</td>
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<tr>
<td>K/23</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/24</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/25</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1/20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1/20</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/18</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3-4/27</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3-4/27</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4/8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/9</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5/3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5/4</td>
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<td>6/7</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>IS/IO</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>IS/IO</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC/32</td>
<td>IM</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>

Total 729

Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.
Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Moderate Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Severe Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Part Time Teacher</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teacher RFF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support Executive Release</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support RFF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Early School Support</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary AP Learning Assistance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary AP Behaviour Disorders</td>
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<td><strong>Total Teacher Entitlement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administration Manager</td>
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<td>School Administrative Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Education Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers Aide Special</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Non Teacher Entitlement</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.472</strong></td>
</tr>
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Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Date of financial summary: 30/11/2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>210 975.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>342 694.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>191 444.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>159 403.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>17 528.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>15 485.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>937 532.39</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the Parents and Citizens' Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Staff retention

Forster PS welcomed seven new staff members in 2008. Russell Mahar, Terry Channell, Katrina Pettet, Debi Burden, Joanne HAuritz, Michael Lavis and Fran Dupen, have made a significant contribution to our school. Lynelle Patterson and Karen Bousefield were welcomed back from maternity leave.

Ann Morrow, Phil Whitaker and Bob Byrne retired in 2008 after many years of outstanding service to public education. We wish them good health and happiness for the future.

Staff attendance

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the Department, was 94.8%.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>3</td>
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School performance 2008

Achievements

Arts

Our school has provided two days per week of specialist teaching in performing arts across the school. The major focus was in music where students learnt the basic principles of music through percussion, movement and singing. An art class was conducted for gifted and talented students in art during lunch times by Leah Jenkins. Works from this class were displayed throughout the school.
The students had the opportunity to experience the fun and talent of the Australian Army Military Band at Club Forster in Term 1, the enthusiasm of the North Sydney Girls High School Concert Band in Term 3, The Carlinhford HS Concert Band in Term 4 along with the laughter and frivolity of ‘Leaping Loonies’. Stage 2 enjoyed a wonderful trip to Star Struck where they experienced performances by students from other public schools.

A number of students were successful in winning prizes in community projects this year including a competition by Mid Coast Water involving colouring for K-4 and the design of a T-Shirt for Years 5 and 6. Students entered art works in the annual Arts Council Art Exhibition, the annual Pacific Palms Art Show and the inaugural Forster Public School “Creativity by the Sea” show. All students in all classes participated by creating artworks for sale and auction along with art works donated by local artists.

Our choir performed under the guidance of Mrs Davis at a number of community venues this year and the Senior Choir performed at ‘Shine On’, and the Stage 2 musical. At Christmas time the combined choirs led our students in a range of songs. Mr Hickson continued with his beginning guitar group and more advanced players. All players experienced electric guitar throughout the year as well as performing regularly on Fridays on the stage under the Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA). This gave students the opportunity to perform for an audience, building both their confidence and performing skills. Mrs Fran Dupen has formed a senior recorder group which met each week and performed at assemblies throughout the year. The Koori dancers performed at a variety of community functions, the opening of the Neighbourhood Community Gardens, National Aboriginal and Indigenous Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) at the Manning Entertainment Centre Taree and the North Coast Region Education Week ceremony. A Senior Girls dance group was formed this year under the guidance of Mrs Katrina Pettit. These dancers focussed on ballet and contemporary dancing and performed pieces in the K – 2 concert. In Term 3, 5/4 was involved in learning ‘Hip-hop’, ‘Salsa’ and ‘African’ dancing. Year 6 created ceramic works under the guidance of Mr Stuart Beaver and Ms Lindy Nixon.

Stage 2 students performed a wonderful piece of work titled “All Aboard” that demonstrated their knowledge of the adventures of Captain Cook. Each class embraced a different aspect of Cook’s travels along with life at sea and expressed it through song and dance.

The K-2 students performed the most moving, funny and wowing concert yet! Under the direction of Mrs Mary McLean, and the class teachers, the show, “Spaced Out’ was an outstanding success.

**Sport**

2008 was a successful year in sport activities with Forster PS teams performing very well in a wide range of Primary Schools Sports Association (PSSA) State Knockouts. Many individuals won selection in representative teams or represented as individuals in swimming, diving, athletics or cross country.

Highlights of 2008 included:

- one student representing NSW in touch football;
- one student representing Hunter Region in diving;
- two students representing Hunter Region in Australian Football League (AFL); and
- three students representing Hunter Region in tennis.

Student numbers representing Manning Zone at Hunter level included:

- six in Rugby League, two in cricket, two in netball, one in girls’ soccer and two in boys’ soccer;
- five in boys’ touch football, two in boys’ basketball, four in tennis and two in diving; and
- nine in swimming, 17 in athletics and seven in cross country.

Outstanding team efforts in NSW PSSA Knockout Competitions included:

- Hunter regional finals in: Rugby League, netball, boys’ basketball, AFL, tennis and cricket;
- State quarter finals in AFL;
- State finals in tennis;
- Representation in boys’ soccer, girls’ soccer, boys’ hockey, girls’ hockey, girls’ basketball, boys’ and girls’ touch football teams; and
- A pleasing result in boys’ cricket when they reached the State quarter finals.

Other successes included:

- winning in the seniors and U/10 at the Taree District Rugby League Knockout;
- winning the Buderus Sevens Rugby League Competition;
- attending the state sevens Rugby League finals in Sydney;
- representing the Lower Mid-North Coast at the state Rugby League Knockout finals open A division; and
- representation at local gala days and the skills coaching days at Forster PS.

Stage 1 sport programs included rotational gymnastics lessons with a qualified instructor.
Stage 2 and Stage 3 students undertook class-based physical education programs and rotational sports programs including skills in T-ball, indoor hockey, soccer and touch football, tennis, swimming, squash and walking.

Competitions
Many of our students took part in a wide range of state and national competitions. The achievements included:

- two Year 5 students and one Year 6 student who reached the top 100 receiving high distinctions in the Hunter Mathematics Competition with one Year 5 and one Year 6 student coming first in the Taree district;
- fifty-nine students in Years 5 and Year 6 who received merit (29) or distinctions (30) in the Hunter Mathematics Competition;
- twenty-five students who participated in the University of NSW Science Competition with three students receiving distinctions and five students receiving credits;
- twelve students who participated in the University of NSW Writing Competition with two students receiving distinctions and five students receiving credits;
- twenty-five students who participated in the University of NSW Spelling Competition with one student receiving a high distinction, four students receiving distinctions and seven students receiving credits;
- forty-eight students who participated in the University of NSW Mathematics Competition with seven students receiving distinctions and ten students receiving credits;
- twenty-six students who participated in the University of NSW English Competition with two students receiving high distinctions, four students receiving distinctions and five students receiving credits;
- sixty-eight students participated in the Australasian Maths Olympiad which saw two students come in the top 10% and four students in the top 25%;
- Stage 2 and 3 students entered in the Premier’s Spelling Bee, with the school representative winning the regional final and coming equal eighth in the state;
- winning all four divisions of the Lower North Coast Public Speaking Competition. One student also won the regional Multicultural Public Speaking Competition and represented at state level;
- the senior debating team performed well, winning three of their four debates; and
- first in Year 3 and Year 6 and second in Year 5 in the Taree District Public Speaking competition.

Academic
In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Yr 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3
In 2008 the Year 3 cohort of 94 students’ overall mean score approximated that of the North Coast Region, but was below that of the State.

Students did better in Writing and Spelling than they did in the Reading, Punctuation and Grammar areas of Literacy.

Strengths
In Writing, 76% of the Year 3 students scored in the top three bands. However, there is a need to improve so that there are more students performing in the top band.

In Spelling 69% of the cohort were in the top three bands and we need to continue to move more students into the top band.

The overall literacy band performance for Year 3 was below the state’s band performance. There were fewer students in the upper bands and a high proportion of students performing in the middle and lower bands.

The performance of students in reading is causing concern and this is impacting on the overall literacy result.

Target areas for improvement
In 2009, there will be a focus from Kindergarten to Year 6 on explicit teaching of analytical and inferential reading comprehension skills as well as punctuation. (Refer to Target 1)

A Kindergarten to Year 3 focus on early Stage 2 reading skills and strategies is to be pursued.
Continued enhancement of students’ vocabulary is seen as supporting the above focus.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

Over the last two years at Forster Public School the numeracy performance has tended to fall below the state mean.

In 2008, the overall numeracy scores for the 94 Year 3 students were below that of the state mean. The Number, Patterns and Algebra results were better than the Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry strands.

Boys as a group outperformed the girls as a group.

Forster PS had significantly more students in the lowest bands when compared to the state.

Strengths

The Year 3 cohort performed at or better than the state performance in a number of aspects. These included rounding off two digit numbers, continuing a number pattern, number sentences using diagrams involving multiplication, understanding length and net shapes.

Target areas for improvement

A continued focus on all numeracy strands especially in Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry with a strong emphasis on working mathematically across the strands. A greater understanding of the use of language in numeracy will support this endeavour. (Refer to Target 2).

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2008, the Year 5 cohort of 117 students, performed marginally below the average performance of students across the State in overall literacy. In Reading and Writing we were above the Region and slightly below the State.

Strengths

In overall literacy more than half of the students were placed in the top 3 bands. 50% of the cohort achieved the targeted growth of greater than 80 points. This approximated the recommended improvement.

In Reading, the Year 5 cohort tended to perform marginally below the state’s average performance. However, in some aspects such as analysing ideas in texts the students did well.

In Writing, there were a significant number of students who moved from the lower to the upper bands from Year 3 to Year 5.

In Spelling we have fewer students in the lower bands and we need to endeavour to continue this progress because we are underrepresented in the top band.
Target areas for improvement

There is to be an emphasis on reading comprehension strategies and responding to texts, particularly factual texts. This will be closely linked to a focus on vocabulary and punctuation. There needs to be a focus on syllabification. (Refer to Target 1).

In 2009, there will be a focus from Kindergarten to Year 6 on explicit teaching of analytical and inferential reading comprehension skills particularly in factual texts. (Refer to Target 1)

Our school’s progress in reading was above that of the state improvement. However, data from 2008 suggests that mobility continues to be a factor that needs to be considered when planning for the best learning outcomes for students at Forster PS.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

Although the Year 5 results approximate the region’s performance, they are below the state mean.

In 2008, these results were reflected across all strands of numeracy, particularly in Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry.

Student performance indicates that there were fewer students in the upper bands and too many students in the middle and lower bands.

Strengths

In 2008, the Year 5 cohort performed at or better than the state performance in a number of areas. These areas include continuing a number pattern, counting money, decimal place value and measuring a volume.

Target areas for improvement

A continued focus on all numeracy strands especially in Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry with a strong emphasis on working mathematically across the strands is recommended. Developing a better understanding and usage of the language of maths will also be a focus area.
NAPLAN progress in numeracy

The performance of 82% (96 students) of the Year 5 students can be matched with their performance in Year 3. This percentage tends to indicate that the mobility rate for Forster PS is high. This can present challenges for the continuity of student learning for some students at our school.

The expected growth of the students across the state is approximately 80 points. The average growth for matched students was 48 points. Girls tended to improve more than boys. However, the general progress of students is a concern.

Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

Forster PS continues to improve student learning to maximise school achievement to match or better national literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

Significant programs and initiatives

 Aboriginal education

The two funded programs that operated at Forster PS this year were the Parent School Partnership Initiative (PSPI) and In-Class Tuition (ICT). Both programs were to support children in the area of literacy.

The PSPI program began in Term 2 and was undertaken for 13 weeks. Tutors were trained by Mrs Barb Wright in the use of identified reading strategies.

All Aboriginal children in Kindergarten to Year 6 received some support. Tutors worked with children for 30 minutes each session for three mornings a week.
The ICT program began in Term 3 and was conducted for 5 weeks. This program supported identified children in Years 1-6. Tutors focused on students’ literacy development. Limited funds meant that not all children could be tutored on this program.

Tutors were very enthusiastic about their tutoring this year and made very positive comments about the programs and strategies they used.

Children made significant improvement both socially and academically in reading and writing.

Strong links continue to be forged between Forster Public School and the Great Lakes Preschool and the Great Lakes College Forster.

Monthly meetings of the Aboriginal Education Committee, comprising teachers, parents and interagency representatives, are held at the Great Lakes Preschool on the first Wednesday of every month.

Initiatives and programs which have benefited Aboriginal students include performance opportunities at the NAIDOC Assembly, opening of the Community Gardens, Taree Dance Festival and community NAIDOC Celebrations

Aboriginal students have also benefited from transition programs to Kindergarten and from Year 6 to 7.

Hunter New England Health Initiatives include:
- Monday morning breakfast initiative using our Sunshine Coach for travel;
- Aboriginal boys’ social skills program;
- senior girls’ health and hygiene program;
- the development of the Koori Garden; and
- the formation of a Girls’ Club, comprising of Koori senior girls and a friend to strengthen social skills and experiences.

Multicultural education

Multicultural Education is an important part of the curriculum at Forster Public School as it recognises and celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity. Multicultural Education is a cross curriculum perspective that can be incorporated across all learning areas.

Learning experiences include participating in the Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition, Harmony Week Activities with further opportunities throughout the year afforded across all learning areas. These activities challenge racist beliefs and stereotypes and raise awareness about power relationships and the abuse of human rights.

This year Stage 3 students were given the opportunity to participate in “The Holocaust Education Program”.

Our own history and heritage are studied and we celebrate our Australian traditions by participating in events such as ANZAC Day, Australia Day, Remembrance Day, NAIDOC Week and Sorry Day.

In 2009 Forster Public School will endeavour to ensure that all Staff are exposed to the Aboriginal Cultural Education Woromi Program and that protocols such as Acknowledgement of Country are undertaken at our Weekly Assembly.

Respect and responsibility

In 2008, Forster PS has successfully aligned school values and practice. The school has continued to encourage a happy, peaceful and stimulating learning environment which allows for social justice and individual achievement for students.

Our successful Care and Discipline Program has encouraged a positive school tone which has been an ongoing goal of Forster PS.

In achieving a positive school tone, staff, students and the school community have combined as a team within classrooms, the playground and meetings within the school. Volunteers and School Learning Support Officers work with class teachers and executive staff to offer a comprehensive range of academic, social, emotional and physical support to students.

All staff continue to recognise and value individual differences and encourage a positive classroom and playground atmosphere to achieve the highest possible results. This has been evident by the increased number of Principal’s Awards and medallions presented in 2008.

The children of Forster PS continue to benefit from the many additional programs that support the school’s Code of Conduct.

These include:
- the Principal’s Award program;
- provision of breakfast and lunches;
- playground behaviour and environmental care awards;
- Seasons for Growth program;
- Koori Tutoring Program;
- chess club;
- girls’ self-esteem initiative;
- lunchtime music sessions; and
- Learning Assistance Mentor Program (LAMP).
Programs for Students with Additional Educational Needs

Support for students with additional educational needs is a high priority at Forster PS and a variety of support programs are available.

Support Unit

There are three classes in the Support Unit catering for students with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. Each student has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) prepared in consultation with their learning support team. Recommendations from therapists and outside agencies are incorporated into the personalised learning plans when possible.

In 2008 students in the Support Unit commenced regular horse riding lessons with Riding for the Disabled. The students are enthusiastic and growing in confidence and skills.

Riding for the Disabled is a successful new program for the Support Unit

Students from the support unit participate equally in whole school programs such as assemblies, sport, camps and the merit and discipline system. They also have the opportunity to participate in extra curricular activities such as representative sport, choir and public speaking.

Many students also integrate into regular classes for specific activities. The resulting social interaction has encouraged the positive attitude and support which staff and students demonstrate towards students with disabilities.

Funding Support

Support for students with disabilities in regular classes was received for 14 students. The school received $94,500 in funding which was used to employ School Learning and Support Officers to assist classroom teachers in the implementation of personalised learning plans for these students. Learning support team meetings were held twice during the year to prepare and then review the personalised learning plan for each student with the necessary accommodations and adjustments to ensure access to the curriculum on the same basis as other students.

Learning Support Team

The Learning Support Team has met weekly to discuss the needs of students in the school. Referrals to the learning support team have been consistent and appropriate school based support programs have been put in place to meet the needs of students. Many students have accessed the support teacher learning assistance (STLA) program and consolidated skills particularly in English. Department of Education and Training (DET) support services and outside agencies have been accessed as required to meet specific student needs.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery has been taught by two teachers in 2008. This program is effective in assisting Year 1 students to meet learning outcomes in literacy. Eighteen students were provided with intensive assistance. Fourteen of the students successfully completed the program, two are continuing in the program and two have been referred for additional assessment and support.

Environmental Education

It has been another year of growth in the vegetable garden as the project continues to be utilised by K-6 classes as an interactive learning environment.

Kindergarten students planted snow peas and looked after the management of compost and worm farms. Year 2 successfully germinated various herb seeds, with the produce now being marketed through the “Farmers Patch” in Lake Street. It has been a year of gastronomic delights for Years 4 & 5 who have enjoyed preparing a variety of meals from their garden produce. Year 4 have also supplied salad leaves such as lettuce, rocket and baby spinach to the school canteen. An exciting project was the year 5 potato planting. The children experimented with two varieties of potato and eagerly awaited the harvest. Year 5 students also investigated the influence of soil acidity and alkalinity on plant growth. Despite adversity, we have three blossoming trees in our citrus garden.

The involvement of the Koori boys group in the “Bush Tucker Garden” this year has added momentum to the project. The boys worked with enthusiasm and determination to clear the site and prepare the material for the internal garden walls. As always with gardening, work is ongoing.

Our efforts in the garden this year were once again recognised when we were awarded 1st...
place in the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Gardens Regional competition and 2\textsuperscript{nd} place in the state competition.

**Transition links with preschools**

Forster PS has eight feeder pre-schools with which we liaise closely. A visit is made to each preschool and follow-up phone calls are made to discuss:

- enrolment procedures and issues;
- transition visits;
- orientation day; and
- placement of children into classes.

During 2008, over 65\% of preschool children had more than one visit to Forster PS. Visits included an orientation walk, visits to classrooms, lunch, playground experiences, joining in Kindergarten assemblies and dance sessions.

**Progress on 2008 targets**

**Target 1**

*To increase the integration of technology into classrooms.*

Our achievements include:

- 60\% of staff worked in grade/stage teams to develop units of work which incorporate technology;
- our computer coordinator worked in classrooms supporting staff integrate technology into classroom practice;
- 7 staff participated in Quality Teaching Action Learning (QTAL) that focused on developing units of work incorporating outcomes driven programs which integrated quality teaching elements including Information Communication Technology (ICT);
- 63\% of students published at least 1 piece of work on Eduweb each semester;
- 100\% of staff willingly participated in ongoing professional learning to improve technology skills and knowledge;
- 70\% of staff increased their skill level in at least two application areas from fair/poor to good/very good; and
- staff discussed ways to assess the computer competencies of their students in an agreed format, this will be finalised in 2009.

**Target 2**

*To increase the descriptive and technical vocabulary of students K-6 across all stands of literacy.*

Our achievements include:

- 12.5\% improvement in the performance of Year 3 students in the top band (Band 6) in the National Assessment Program in Writing;
- matched the Year 3 national performance in the National Assessment Program in Writing vocabulary criterion;
- most targeted children in K-2 improved their technical and descriptive vocabulary knowledge and skills by more than 10\%;
- 23\% improvement in the performance of Year 4 students achieving above the 50\textsuperscript{th} percentile in the ACER Reading Vocabulary test;
- closely matched the state Year 5 National performance in the National Assessment Program in Writing vocabulary criterion; and
- a decline in the performance of Year 5 students in the top band (band 8) in the National Assessment Program in Writing.

**Target 3**

*To increase the performance of all students K-6 in working mathematically with an emphasis on mathematical language.*

Our achievements include:

- 33\% of students from Year 3 at Forster PS performed in the top two bands (Bands 5 and 6) in Number, Patterns and Algebra;
- 20\% students from Year 5 at Forster PS performed in the top two bands (Bands 7 and 8) in Number, Patterns and Algebra;
- 24\% of students from Year 3 at Forster PS performed in the top two bands in Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry;
- 18\% of students from Year 5 at Forster PS performed in the top two bands in Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry;
- 26\% of students from Year 3 at Forster PS performed in the top two bands in Overall Numeracy; and
- 22\% of students from Year 5 at Forster PS performed in the top two bands in Overall Numeracy.

**Key evaluations**

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2008 our school carried out evaluations in learning and corporate programs.

**Educational and management practice**

Schools are continually endeavouring to improve the educational and management practices within the school environment.

In 2007, school culture was evaluated. In 2008 learning was evaluated to further promote best practice at Forster PS.
Background

One hundred Year 3 to 5 students, 40 parents and 25 teachers were surveyed using the Department of Education and Training (DET) SchoolMap instrument for learning.

Findings and conclusions

Within the surveying of students, at least 80% of respondents indicated ‘almost always and ‘usually’ to the following statements:

• The school expects me to do my best.
• I try to do my best and take pride in my learning.
• Samples of my work over time help me see how I have improved.

Areas in which students were less satisfied included:

• undertaking new and different activities in the classroom;
• getting a good balance between working individually and working in teams or groups;
• having people other than the teacher help students with their learning; and
• having the teacher talking to parents about the students’ learning.

Students would appreciate teachers giving more consideration to:

• communicating more fully with parents;
• perhaps having other adults including family members assist in the classrooms; and
• providing opportunities for students to mix their learning on an individual basis with working with other students in groups and teams.

Within the surveying of parents, at least 90% of respondents indicated ‘almost always’ and ‘usually’ that:

• teachers provided a balance between independent and group activities (97%);
• the school expects students to do their best (97%);
• the classroom is an interesting place to learn (95%);
• students demonstrate pride in their learning (94%); and
• their children do things in the classroom that are new and different (90%).

Areas in which parents were less optimistic included:

• their children looking at their own personal work samples to demonstrate improvement (45% satisfied); and
• the time spent by teachers in talking to parents about their child’s progress (66% satisfied).

Teachers’ responses were very positive in terms of the learning environment across the school. In nine of the twelve areas surveyed, teachers responded at least 84% in favour of the item.

Teachers acknowledged that students’ taking responsibility for their own learning and that students’ self-assessment in terms of reflecting on their learning, could be enhanced.

Teachers believed more favourably than students in:

• the provision of a stimulating class environment;
• the level of communication between class and parents; and
• the balance between individual and group work.

Future directions

Consideration needs to be given to teachers:

• critically reflecting upon their innovative teaching practices;
• finding ways to enable students to undertake more group work;
• finding ways for students to undertake or demonstrate learning in a variety of ways; and
• enabling improved communication with parents about student achievement.

Curriculum

Corporate Programs

Background

Staff identified a need to carry out a review of the Corporate Programs used by teachers to plan lessons. The review was carried out through discussions between staff in stage meetings and a survey. The survey consisted of 17 multiple choice questions and opportunities for written comments. Approximately 70% of staff responded and data was collated and analysed with recommendations made after several meetings of the Curriculum Review Team. Three parents participated in this review.

Findings and conclusions

There was overwhelming support to retain corporate programs but all staff indicated that there was a need to significantly update these programs. Most staff believed that the corporate programs provided an avenue for a consistent approach towards teaching and towards assessing student achievement and reporting to parents. Overwhelmingly, staff indicated that corporate programs were practical and save time in preparation and delivery. There was a clear indication that staff believed that corporate programs were not sufficiently resourced.
Future Directions
Additional resources (time/money) should be allocated to provide staff with the necessary training and development in current programming practices which is to include philosophies.

Whilst the inclusion of syllabus outcomes and the use of a system of lesson registration (recording) exists, there needs to be more evidence of the following in every Corporate Program:
- Foundation Statements.
- Variation in learning tasks to meet the needs of students in need of remediation/extension.
- Quality Teaching strategies.
- Information and Computer technology (ICT).
- A greater recognition for new Program initiatives.

Staff to further develop a set of consistent marking criteria across KLA’s, particularly English and Mathematics.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction
In 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Surveys were distributed to all teaching staff and a random sample of students and parents to identify strengths and areas for further development in the area of school satisfaction. Approximately 53% of parent questionnaires, 100% of student questionnaires and 91% of teaching staff questionnaires were returned.

Their responses are listed below.

Findings
Areas where at least 90% of respondents indicated ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’:
- The school is a friendly school that is tolerant and accepting of all students.
- Students are the school’s main concern.
- The school has supportive welfare programs.
- A wide range of extracurricular activities are offered.
- Student achievements are recognised through the school reward system, (Bronze, Silver, Gold Awards).
- Forster Public School has competent teachers who set high standards.
- The school maintains a focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Students really liked to go to school each day and felt that teachers were fair to them.
- Students felt that their teacher helped them do their best and that what they learnt would be useful to them when they left school.
- Students felt they achieved a satisfactory standard with their work.
- Parents and teachers felt the school offered challenging programs for its students.

Areas of parent, staff and student dissatisfaction
- Staff indicated a need to improve student access to computers and technology programs.
- Staff and parents agreed that the site was well maintained. Teachers strongly indicated that classrooms needed to be better resourced.
- Some parents and staff indicated that the school did not promote its uniform policy.
- A significant number of students did not get excited about the work they are asked to complete, indicated that that learning was not fun and that they did not like to do extra work.
- Some students felt they were not popular with other students and felt lonely.
- Some parents felt that the school office did not respond to enquiries and requests in a friendly and prompt manner.

Future directions
Additional school funding needs to continue to be allocated to asset replacement and classroom supplies to enhance classrooms resources.

The school needs to review and better promote its uniform policy to parents and students.

The school needs to continue to resource technology programs and infrastructure to enhance student access.

Teachers need to explore ways to further engage students in their learning.

The welfare committee needs to explore ways to broaden playground activities to cater for the diverse needs of students.

Students continued to enjoy movie nights in 2008.

Professional learning
Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) took place throughout the year at:
- School Development Days;
• training afternoons after school at least twice per term;
• stage meetings which occur fortnightly; and
• additional training courses offered to individuals at regular intervals and usually occurring outside the school premises.

School Development Days
School Development Days occur on the first day of Terms 1, 2 and 3. The topics covered during this year’s School Development Days included;
• school targets in literacy, numeracy;
• Information and Computer Technology; and
• consistency of teacher judgement and quality teaching principles.

Afternoon Training Days
Training which occurred outside of the School Development Days, usually on a Tuesday afternoon, covered such topics as:
• student discipline and welfare;
• student assessment and reporting;
• compliance training – Child Protection, Safety In Sport and Risk Management procedures, anaphylaxis awareness, Diabetes awareness, Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Care; and
• corporate programming.
Generally, all teaching staff are engaged in these activities.

Individual Training
This year a specialist workshop was provided for non-permanent staff wishing to enhance their employment opportunities or those wishing to pursue a leadership role within the Department Of Education and Training. Further opportunities are planned for 2009.

A significant amount of funding was allocated to training staff in the review processes used in evaluating our Corporate Teaching programs.

Staff are able to access school based and off site courses. A total of $39 413 was allocated to Teacher Professional Learning and a further $11 866 was provided by the school’s general funds. In 2008, the average expenditure per teacher on professional learning was $1 210 and 71% of staff accessed the school’s Teacher Professional Learning funds to attend courses.

School development 2009 – 2011

Targets for 2009

Target 1

To improve higher order comprehension skills in reading through explicit teaching.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• target a particular comprehension strategy across the school each week;
• develop programs and provide training for explicit teaching of comprehension skills;
• access to the NAPLAN (Smartdata) teaching strategies;
• provide training for staff in the administration, tracking and interpretation of benchmarking and other K-6 assessment which measures comprehension;
• develop staff awareness, training in and implementation of Accelerated Literacy strategies in reading; and
• provide support in developing corporate programs at grade and stage level as required.

Our success will be measured by targeted improvement of at least 10% in student achievement using pre and post assessments indicating:
• significant improvement in the performance by kindergarten students in expected reading benchmark level;
• 70 % of Year 1 students achieving at least a reading benchmark target of 16;
• 68% of Year 2 students achieving at least a reading benchmark target of 21;
• 70 % of Year 3 students achieving at least a reading benchmark target of 24;
• 35% of Year 3 students achieving bands 5 and 6 in Reading in NAPLAN;
• 37% of Year 5 students achieving bands 7 and 8 in Reading in NAPLAN; and
• 100% of classes K-6 targeting specifically identified reading strategies.

Target 2

Enhance K-6 teaching practices with particular focus on mathematical language, measurement strategies and tracking student performance.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• training staff in the use of explicit teaching strategies involving mathematical language;
• displaying and referring to mathematical language in classrooms;
• establishing maths oriented activity days in terms 2 & 3 involving specific mathematical concepts;
• participating in the Great Lakes Learning Community mathematics project;
• continuing participation and training in Count Me In Too (CMIT);
• providing stage meeting time for professional dialogue and discussion;
• examining and training staff in the use of NAPLAN (Smartdata) teaching strategies to improve identified weaknesses;
• exploring and implementing electronic data collection from Go Maths;
• developing a consistent numeracy testing process K-6;
• developing teaching and learning programs based on collated data; and
• tracking and responding to students with identified needs and talents.

Our success will be measured by:
• 35% of Year 3 students achieving bands 5 and 6 in numeracy in 2009 NAPLAN;
• 41% of Year 3 students achieving bands 5 and 6 in Measurement strand of 2009 NAPLAN;
• 30% of Year 5 students achieving bands 7 and 8 in numeracy in 2009 NAPLAN; and
• 28% of Year 5 students achieving bands 7 and 8 in Measurement strand of 2009 NAPLAN.

Target 3
To increase the integration of technology into classrooms.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
• teachers, working in grade/stage teams, create 1 Eduweb topic for each semester;
• releasing a member of the Technology committee, for 1 day per week for 7 weeks, to work with teachers in their classroom or in the computer lab on strategies for integrating technology into the classroom program;
• teachers begin to establish a set of minimum school based Information Communication Technology (ICT) competencies for each grade;
• teachers establishing small grade based teams to begin to establish consistent criteria for assessing competencies;
• teachers beginning to implement the assessment of school based competencies;
• utilising regional ICT Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) programs where appropriate and school staff to provide training, to increase staff ICT competencies; and
• releasing members of the Technology committee to attend term meetings of the Great Lakes Learning Community Technology Support Group and the North Coast ICT forum.

Our success will be measured by:
• 100% of staff, working in grade/stage teams, develop units of work which incorporate technology and elements of Quality Teaching;
• 80% of students publishing at least 1 piece of work on eduweb each semester;
• 75% of staff assessing the computer competencies of their students in an agreed format;
• 75% of staff will increase their skill level in at least 2 application areas from fair/poor to good/very good; and
• 90% of staff working in grade or stage teams will develop and use units of work that incorporate technology.

About this report
In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

12 Students  Student Counsellors
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Georg Fiebig  Parent Representative
Nicole Murcutt  Parent Representative
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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: