Black Mountain School Board Report 2013

Figure 1: Views of Black Mountain School

This report supports the work being done in the ACT Education and Training Directorate, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2010-2013 "Everyone Matters". It complies with reporting requirements detailed within the Education ACT 2004 and the National Education Agreement.

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The school website is www.bms.act.edu.au.

Inquiries about this publication should be directed to:

Black Mountain School
Dryandra Street
O'Connor ACT 2601

General Inquiries:

Telephone (02) 6205 6377

About our school

Introduction to School

Black Mountain School (BMS) fulfils an important role within the ACT public education system, providing students and their families with a unique and specialised placement. BMS is a secondary specialist school located in O'Connor. The school specifically caters for year 7 to year 12 students with learning needs, requiring a special education program and facilities. In 2013 there was formal acknowledgment of the need to offer greater placement options for families with children with mild intellectual impairment living in northern Canberra. As a result BMS now offers programs for these students via its Compass program. Many students present with additional challenges such as physical disability, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), profound and multiple learning disabilities or complex medical conditions. Over the past few years the school has been operating at capacity with 16 full-time classes in operation. Parent choice has a great deal to do with this. The school believes that the quality of its staff, programs, and facilities are key attractants for potential and future enrolments.

As a secondary school which graduates students directly into their post-school life, BMS is focussed on 'capacity-building for independence, maximum participation and quality of life'. The general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum provide the standards for this personalised academic and social learning which is both challenging and enriching. Educational priorities are established which assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. It is essential for young people with a disability to have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, feel connected with and contribute to their world, and be confident and involved leaners and effective communicators.

Student Information

Student enrolment

In 2013 there were a total of 107 students enrolled at this school.

Table: 2013 Student Enrolment Breakdown

Group	Number of Students
Male	65
Female	42
Indigenous	4
LBOTE	16

Source: Planning and Performance

Students are enrolled from across the ACT and surrounding NSW.

Student attendance

The following table identifies the attendance rate of students by year level during 2013. Student attendance rate is the percentage of school days attended by students in each year level at the school. Student attendance is measured over two school terms; that is from the first day of the school year for students in term 1 to the last day of term 2.

Table: 2013 Attendance rates in Percentages

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
7	91.6
8	90.7
9	90.3
10	95.7

Source: Planning and Performance

The school experiences very high levels of student engagement in their learning. Non-attendance issues are with few exceptions, a result of illness, both chronic and acute. The school manages student non-attendance through regular contact with parents and a unified approach to pastoral care and health. This occurs formally at the Personal Future Planning Process (PFPP) and In-school Review (ISR) meetings and informally, via phone calls and communication books. A designated pastoral care team, as well as school nurses, is always available to discuss non-attendance issues.

Staff Information

Teacher qualifications

All teachers meet the professional requirements for teaching in an ACT public school.

The proportion of teaching staff with certificates/degrees/diplomas and a postgraduate qualification is shown below.

Table: 2013 Qualification of Teaching Staff in Percentages

Qualifications	% Teaching Staff
Certificate/Diploma/Degree	100
Postgraduate	24

Source: School Data

Workforce Composition

In 2013 the workforce composition of the school is highlighted in the following table.

Table: 2013 Workforce Composition Numbers

Role	Total
Administrative Service Officers	36
General Service Officers & Equivalent	1
School Leader A	1
School Leader B	1
School Leader C	4
Teachers	20
TOTAL	**63**

Source: Workforce Management

Note: This table includes pre-school staffing

There is one indigenous staff at this school.

Volunteers

Volunteers worked 373 hours in the school during 2013.

School Board

It has been my pleasure to have been the Chair of the Black Mountain School Board for the past four year during which time the school has continued to grow and develop in dynamic and innovative ways. I am leaving the role with the confidence that the membership of the Board will continue to actively represent the interests of the students and the school, though I encourage new parents to participate in this important forum to assist the principal and executive leadership team in managing the challenges ahead.

We are fortunate in the ACT to have such a premium educational facility to support students with special needs. The leadership team, led by Frank Fogliati, are highly competent and committed to delivering quality educational outcomes that are individually tailored to our student's needs. They are constantly sourcing new ways of delivering quality services and embrace the opportunities that are presented through innovation and change. The teachers, support staff and administrative staff are equally committed to the delivery of educational programs in a supportive environment that delivers knowledge and skills necessary to the student's participation in home, school and community activities. In my experience this has been nothing short of exceptional through the commitment demonstrated and achievements realised with my daughters' educational development.

My thanks to the Principal and school staff on their dedication and commitment to providing quality programs and a quality environment that makes a positive difference to

the lives of our students. I also acknowledge and thank the Black Mountain School P&C and the School Board on their valued contributions through the year.

Peter Brown
Board Chair

School Review and Development

In 2013, the ACT Education and Training Directorates *Strategic Plan 2010-2013* provided the framework and strategic direction for the school's plan. This is supported by the *School Improvement in ACT Public Schools Directions 2010-2013* and the *School Improvement Framework* which are the overarching documents providing support to achieve high standards in student learning, innovation and best practice in ACT public schools.

All ACT public schools participate in a four year cycle of school review and development. Schools take part in a continuous cycle of review comprising annual self assessments against their school plans. In the fourth year schools undergo an external validation process. This process provides an independent and unbiased assessment of the schools progress towards achieving system and school priorities.

Black Mountain School will be validated in 2016. A copy of the last validation report can be found on the school website.

School Satisfaction

Schools continually use a range of data collection tools to gain an understanding of the satisfaction levels of their parents and carers, staff and students. In August/September 2013 the school undertook a survey to gain an understanding of school satisfaction at that time. Staff, parents and students from year 5, and above, with the exception of students in special schools, took part in an online survey.

Overall Satisfaction

In 2013, 86% of parents and carers, and 91% of staff, at this school indicated they were satisfied or highly satisfied with the education provided by the school.

In 2013, 14 national parent survey items and 12 national student survey items were included in the surveys. These items were approved by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for use from 2013. The following tables show the percentage of parents and carers and students who agreed with each of the national items.

Table: Proportion of parents and carers in agreement with each national opinion item

Item	(%)
Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best.	92
Teachers at this school provide my child with useful feedback about his or her school work.	89
Teachers at this school treat students fairly.	95
This school is well maintained.	95
My child feels safe at this school.	95
I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns.	100
Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	89
My child likes being at this school.	94
This school looks for ways to improve.	92
This school takes parents' opinions seriously.	94
Teachers at this school motivate my child to learn.	92
My child is making good progress at this school.	84
My child's learning needs are being met at this school.	86
This school works with me to support my child's learning.	90

Source: 2013 School Satisfaction Surveys, August/September 2013

This information can be considered alongside information available on the *My School* website (http://www.myschool.edu.au).

These results as well as the continual review of school performance contributed to the evaluation of our school plan and the development of annual operating plans. The school plan is available on the school website at bms.act.edu.au

Professional Learning

During the 2013 school year, BMS committed to a contextually specific professional learning (PL) program. Over a period of four days in late January and early February the school focussed on:

- **Professional Learning Communities (PLC)-** further evolution of the PLC culture at BMS. 2013 was a continuation of the PLC as a collaborative structure. Key aspects of the PL included: a commitment to student learning, a focus on results, strong relationships, collaborative enquiry, supportive, transformational leadership, and alignment of belief and effective practices.
- **Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)-** PBS is the universally accepted and understood practice for successful student behaviour support and pastoral care
- **Team-Teach-** This is specifically designed for implementation in secondary specialist schools. It is accredited training for children and adult services in positive handling

strategies through a whole setting holistic approach, working with leadership and management, actively committed to reducing restraint and risk.

- **Behaviour Support Protocols-** BSP is the revised system of student support as created by ACT ETD in late 2010
- **RED (Respect, Equity, and Diversity)-** The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) framework for ensuring a workplace culture that is respectful, courteous, and fair and that values individual differences as a core aspect of building a positive workplace culture.
- **Providing Safe Schools P-12-** An ACT Directorate policy ensuring ACT public schools and colleges will promote and seek to provide a supportive learning environment in which all students can expect to feel safe
- **Mediating conflict and conflict resolution-** As per ACT ETD and ACTPS guidelines
- **Emergency Management-** The protection of ACT public school, staff and students is a priority. The Emergency Response Guide is aimed to assist the school community to improve emergency responses.

Specific actions from the above include:

- Staff were trained in the implementation of the new socio-emotional toolbox
- Collaborative ongoing work with Paula Bird and her team from Shared Services, commencing in January 2010 addressing Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) across the school
- Purchase of specific equipment as suggested by Shared Services to achieve current best practice in WHS
- Regular professional learning workshop sessions on various topics such as safe lifting, manual handling, use of patient lifters etc. In late January 2013 a whole day was devoted to this
- Regular professional learning workshop sessions and staff meeting discussions/workshops on PBS
- Refining our specific response actions to emergency situations. This was routinely discussed at staff meetings throughout 2013

Learning and Assessment

Performance in literacy and numeracy

NAPLAN Assessment

Students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in all ACT schools participated in the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This program assesses skills in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation and numeracy.

In 2013, 100% of year 7 students and 100% of year 9 students were exempt from testing based on nationally agreed criteria.

Performance in other areas of the curriculum

Within the guidelines of the school's curriculum, and specifically addressing the areas of academic learning, social skills, independent living skills, and leisure and recreation options, the school seeks to maximise the successful transition to post-school life for every student. Additionally many of our students are engaged in authentic work education programs both on-site and out in the community, targeting genuine long-term employment opportunities.

As a secondary school which graduates students directly into their post-school life, BMS is focussed on 'capacity-building for independence, maximum participation and quality of life'.

As part of its drive for continual school improvement, BMS is focussed on building effective community, corporate, and academic partnerships. One example of this is the development of 'social capital' focussing on social relations that have productive benefits and the value of social networks, bonding similar people and bridging between diverse people. The school, assisted by the parent body, takes on many worthwhile enterprises, such as producing commissioned artwork for organisations such as Tandem, running school canteens at other ACTDET schools, and contributing to the productivity of the territory through our weekly horticulture crew at the Yarralumla Nursery. BMS believes this provides tangible and public evidence of the importance of schools and community in partnership.

The Black Mountain School curriculum aims to build student capacity for participation in society with independence and quality of life. Students need an ongoing, highly prioritised and coordinated program to deliver the goals to be achieved by graduation as set by parents/carers and staff during the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process. These goals are envisioned in the student's Personal Futures Action Plan (PFAP) which is developed with parents/carers on enrolment and modified as required at successive annual ILP meetings.

Within the overarching framework of the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum, BMS integrates all the school's processes from the creation of the PFAP to the development of each student's personalised curriculum. The PFAP provides the rationale for selecting 'capacities' from the BMS curriculum as the basis of long-term and short-term ILP goals.

The framework for the PFAP is domains: Vocational Training; Community, Leisure and Recreation Options; Residential; Transport and Mobility; Finance; and Advocacy, Legal and Citizenship.

Our curriculum also incorporates programs such as week-long interstate camps, appropriate work placements, two-way peer support with local high schools and colleges, and engagement in sporting clinics.

Progress against School Priorities in 2013

Priority 1
Supporting successful transitions for all students.

Targets
- Gain baseline satisfaction data from the relevant parties (BMS staff, parents/carers and Principals from feeder schools) along significant points of students' transition (into BMS and year to year at BMS).
- Increase the proportion of BMS teachers satisfied with the preparation for the transition of new students into BMS.
- Throughout the school day, increase the number of uses of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) by identified students by 20 percent above the baseline data.

School improvement domains covered with this priority
Learning and Teaching, School Engagement, Leading and Managing

Progress

In preparation for post-school life, it is critical that each transition point for our young people is as seamless as possible, with key information recorded and shared between providers. Significant transition points can be determined as arrival into Black Mountain School (BMS), year to year whilst at BMS, and the transition from BMS into the post-school community. One critical aspect of information sharing is the continuation of the young person's communication system. The external validation panel in 2012 commended BMS for the work already completed on transitions.

In an effort to implement agreed and consistent transition processes for sharing and recording student information from feeder schools to BMS, the 2012 guidelines were revised based on feedback and a more individualised approach taken for each new student entering BMS dependent upon their unique needs. Our transition officer had extensive contact with each feeder school, gaining key information about each student.

As well as our transition officer working with feeder schools, a portion of the More Support for Students with Disabilities (MSSWD) National Partnership Funds grant received in 2013 was used to assist in transitions. There was a significant increase in collaboration between schools, with BMS staff visiting feeder schools to gain insight into transitioning students and whole school approaches to communication. BMS co-teachers created new student profiles that were well received by teachers in preparation for 2014. This process will be used again in 2014 to gather and disseminate information.

Key aspects to new student transitions in 2013 included: creation of a verbally agreed upon Transition Action Plan for each new student; Transition Officer visits and observations at feeder schools; Co-Teacher observations of new students at feeder schools; new student and families Transition Morning Tea at BMS; acquisition of essential documentation; creation of new student profiles; and additional transition visits/gradual transitions as needed, both with and without support provided by the feeder schools.

In 2012, quantitative satisfaction data in regards to new student transitions was sought but unable to be obtained from feeder schools. The verbal feedback obtained assisted in making necessary changes to the processes in 2013. Effective data collection tools designed to measure satisfaction of transitions are yet to be created and it is recommended that using this target as a performance measure be reviewed. Despite this, strong support for the revised and individualised transitions into BMS was gained and represented in a number of ways.

Qualitative data indicates that transitions into BMS have been highly successful. Parents have made verbal and written comments to the school, indicating that they are very pleased with the ease and success of the transition into the school by their child.

- Three students participated in individualised transitions, resulting in full-time attendance at BMS throughout Term 4, 2013.

- 12 out of 14 new student families for 2014 attended the Transition Morning Tea in Term 4 2013, including two from interstate. The remaining two families gave their apologies.

Feedback from the feeder schools indicated that all schools were supportive of the individualised approach to transitions. Two of the feeder schools supported additional student visits to BMS by providing their own staff to assist in creating successful transition visits. Reflection from BMS staff indicates that a continued individualised approach to transitions is required for each feeder school due to the differing systems of operation of the schools. Further investigation into the needs of BMS for a successful transition may be required in the future, such as how best to obtain key student documentation and information from all stakeholders.

Key improvement strategies in the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan for BMS include implementing systematic practices for recording and sharing student information from year to year at BMS, and from BMS to post-school providers. Whilst the 2013 Annual Operating Plan focus was on systematic practices for students transitioning year to year at BMS, due to the efficiency of the Pastoral Care Coordinator, work was also completed towards improving systematic practices from BMS to post-school providers.

Systems were developed to assist in information transfer between staff as students transition year to year at BMS and from their final year into their post-school community. Actions completed towards assisting year to year transitions within BMS included:

- Within Annual Professional Discussions, all teachers have a transition-based priority from the BMS Professional Quality Indicators ensuring all appropriate student support plans were completed throughout the year to assist in dissemination of key student information.

- Parental involvement in twice yearly formal discussion detailing priority areas for learning (ILP goals), visions for post-school and steps to accomplish these. This information is recorded within the young person's Personal Future Action Plan (PFAP), allowing information to be easily shared year to year.

- Creation of a BMS module in the 2013 Satisfaction Survey.

- Allocating two weeks of Term 4 to staff handover of student information (supported by in-built relief teachers and LSAs).

100 percent of students involved in an appraisal in 2013 had all appropriate student support plans completed. Data from the BMS module of the 2013 Satisfaction Survey showed that 93 percent of parents and carers agreed or strongly agreed that the PFAP is a useful planning tool. This was also supported by 81 percent of teachers. This indicates support towards the PFAP as a critical document for sharing information year to year at BMS. Due to the high number of staff absences in late Term 4 2013, the allocated time to allow staff additional time to share student information was unable to be implemented as all relief staff were utilised to maintain the continuation of daily class programs.

Whilst the above actions are crucial to the sharing of student information, they are not an effective measure of staff satisfaction in regards to this information exchange. It is recommended that this target be reviewed for 2014.

Actions completed towards assisting student transitions from their final year into their post-school community included the creation and trialing of a digital resume as a means for distributing critical information about our graduating students to post-school providers. In 2014, the school will gather feedback about the effectiveness of this tool. Greening Australia, one of our post-school partners, recently wrote to us about one of our 2013 graduates stating:

> *He has a fantastic attitude towards his work. He's showing initiative and exceeding my expectations in terms of his ability to work unsupervised. We are really happy with these positive early signs. His performance is a tribute to you and the other BMS staff and all the hard work you guys put into your students, preparing them for life after school.*

In late 2013, BMS appointed a Transition Coordinator to further these links. Working in collaboration with the Pastoral Care Coordinator, this role will see relevant partnerships in the broader community strengthened. Strengthening parent, carer and community engagement, and promoting BMS leading practices throughout the network have been identified as focus areas for 2014.

Seventy-six percent of the student population at BMS use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC); and every student has a minimum of one communication ILP goal. It is imperative that staff at BMS gain skill sets to enhance student fluency and outcomes, independent of the type of AAC device or system. There is strong research into the requirement of communicators to model communication with symbols rather than verbal language alone in order for AAC users to develop their own communication skills.

Actions from the More Support for Students with Disabilities (MSSWD) National Partnership Funds grant include: creation and implementation of a core vocabulary based on input from Cranleigh Primary School and other evidence-based research for the purposes of staff modelling communication to students; a highly successful trial of a communication focused class using the core vocabulary; 'expert users' coaching and mentoring staff throughout the school; and professional learning to all staff. Outcomes from this work include a major

cultural shift across the school, paving the way for implementation of a whole school communication approach in 2014.

- 70 percent of teachers indicate their students requiring AAC are using it 'much more' or 'all of the time'

- 59 percent of teachers are modelling AAC use 'much more' or 'all of the time'

- 82 percent of teachers indicate that a common set of symbols for modelling purposes is 'very important' or 'important'

- 71 percent of teachers indicate that the proposed BMS core vocabulary will assist them to model.

Of the targeted class, 100 percent of the students are users of individualised AAC systems.

- 33 percent of students achieved their semester 1 communication ILP goal, with a new communication goal created for semester 2

- 66 percent of the students achieved their communication ILP goals by the end of Semester 2

- 33 percent of students did not achieve their communication goal by the end of semester 2.

It is recommended the target measure be modified for 2014 as accurately assessing an increase in the number of student AAC use is inherently challenging. Achievement of communication ILP goals and effectiveness of staff modelling may be more accurate indicators of student outcomes and adoption of a whole school approach to communication.

Plans for 2014 include: implementation of the BMS core vocabulary for the purposes of staff modelling; increased interactive workshops and professional learning; collaborating with parents and students from Radford and Merici Colleges as communication partners; and further collaboration with feeder schools.

Innovative solutions to missing links in transitions were also realised with the business plan for a Café Garden Gallery. This gallery will be based at BMS and open to the public. It allows students from all of the work education classes opportunities to develop their skills in a structured and supported environment prior to generalising their skills in the broader community.

Priority 2

Improving social capital through increasing all staff's engagement in whole school collaborative systems and structures.

Targets

- Gain baseline data of staff who are at the 'achieving' level across all indicators in an effective Professional Learning Community (PLC) capacity matrix.

- Increase the proportion of staff who believe there is effective communication amongst all levels of staff from 58 percent (2012 Staff Satisfaction Survey) to 68 percent (2013 Staff Satisfaction Survey).

- Increase the proportion of staff who feel they are valued and appreciated from the lowest score of 50 percent (Teachers: appreciation indicator - 2012 Satisfaction Survey) to all indicators scoring greater than 70 percent (2013 Staff Satisfaction Survey).

School improvement domains covered with this priority

Learning and Teaching, School Environment; Leading and Managing

Progress

2013 sees the continuation of Black Mountain School as a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Key aspects to a PLC include: a commitment to student learning; a focus on results; strong relationships; collaborative inquiry; supportive, transformational leadership; and alignment of belief and effective practices.

A number of key actions took place throughout the year:

- Embedding of indicators for a PLC at all levels: PLC, executive team, Professional Learning Teams (PLT), classroom team and coaching

- A further alignment of PLT with a shared student focus (High and Complex Needs, Communication, and Work Skills) with a shared Co-Teacher, allowing for increased collaboration

- Clear indicators and expectations of classroom teams, including: classroom team meetings; clear roles and responsibilities; accessibility to key student information; and capacity building

- Further exploration of an equitable, negotiated and flexible Co-Teacher role, allowing for leadership and innovation

- All staff involved in a minimum of two classroom team meetings per week

- Continuation of 100 percent of all permanent and contract teachers engaged on weekly coaching and mentoring with Executive staff

- Inclusion of collaborative Annual Professional Discussion goals (with a focus on either improving pedagogical practices or effective team communication) for both teachers and Learning Support Assistants

- Continued focus on best practice pedagogical strategies, evidence-based student learning results, clear documentation of student ILPs, programming, data collection and reporting

- Upgrade of facilities to include a staff resource centre

- Increased dialogue across the school about effective communication and conflict resolution

- Continued shared vision, values and mission through key messages at meetings, coaching and in school publications

- Embedding of the Pastoral Care team and associated programs throughout the school.

Whilst the creation of a detailed PLC capacity matrix was an aspirational goal, the indicators of an effective PLC were clearly embedded throughout the school. Each team implemented

a number of responsibilities to assist in creating an effective PLC. As a result, all staff were involved in weekly collaborative responsibilities moving the school culture towards a PLC.

We exceeded our targets of increasing the proportion of staff who felt there was effective communication amongst all levels to greater than 68% and the proportion of staff who feel valued to greater than 70%. This is evident as reflected by the significant shifts in the proportion of both teachers and Learning Support Assistants from 2012 to 2013 who agreed or strongly agreed with the relevant Satisfaction Survey items. Results are as follows:

Table: Proportion of staff that agree or strongly agree with satisfaction survey items, compared to all specialist school in the ACT.

Satisfaction Survey items	2012 BMS	2013 BMS	2013 All specialist schools
There is effective communication amongst all staff.	58	**74**	72
I feel appreciated for the work that I do.	63	**83**	79
My colleagues value my opinion.	86	**92**	87

Data: System satisfaction surveys

Results from the Black Mountain School module of the 2013 Satisfaction Survey based around communication between differing groups of staff also support the above findings about effective communication. Between 92 and 94 percent of staff 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' there was adequate professional communication between classroom team members, Professional Learning Team members, and their PLT executive teacher, on a regular basis to enable staff to do their job. When effectiveness of communication was measured between staff and the broader executive team, and between staff across the school, support dropped slightly to 86 percent and 89 percent respectively. This is still in support of positive changes being made to communication across the school.

A number of other indicators also reflect staff engagement and a shifting culture towards a Professional Learning Community. These are as follows:

Table: Proportion of staff that agree or strongly agree with satisfaction survey items, compared to all specialist schools in the ACT.

Satisfaction Survey items	2012 BMS	2013 BMS	2013 All specialist schools
I am actively engaged in professional learning.	91	**94**	93
My professional achievements are celebrated at this school.	60	**83**	73
I have opportunities to practise leadership.	68	**87**	77
I have opportunities to participate in decision-making.	70	**89**	82
There is effective communication between teachers and parents and carers.	84	**94**	90
Overall I am satisfied with this school.	86	**94**	90
I am satisfied this school has high expectations in all that it does.	86	**91**	93

Source: System satisfaction surveys

The proportion of staff indicating they agree with the listed items are higher than the proportion of staff across all ACT specialist schools in almost all cases, and 100% of those items are higher than those same items in 2012.

The Pastoral Care team also played a substantial role in enhancing the social capital of the school through Mind Matters and other programs. Support for the positive contribution made by this team was indicated on the BMS Module of the 2013 Satisfaction Survey. Scoring either 'agree' or 'strongly agree', 67 percent of parents and carers and 86 percent of staff recognised the positive contributions of the pastoral care team to students and 83 percent of staff recognised the positive contributions of the pastoral care team to staff at BMS.

Restructuring the school environment to strengthen opportunities for staff collaborative practices included:

- Alignment of PLTs, with staff within each PLT working with 'like' cohorts of students and within the same work space

- Creation of a new staff resource centre, complete with upgraded electronic equipment, chairs and tables

- Creation of a new meeting room

Alignment of PLTs had a high impact on professional collaborations, with many informal professional discussions occurring during planning time after school hours between teachers. The creation of an additional meeting room allowed many interagency collaborations to occur in an engaging space. It was hoped the creation of the staff resource centre would create an inviting space for many collaborative discussions to take place. Whilst it was well utilised during set times such as staff meetings and by a limited number of staff members, further review of the utilisation of this space will take place in order to maximise its use and effectiveness.

It is imperative that this positive cultural shift is maintained in 2014, building the social capital of the school and engaging all staff in collaborative systems and structures.

Priority 3

Strengthening staff professional practices to improve quality outcomes for all students.

Targets

- Increase the proportion of staff who believe they receive effective, continuous and constructive feedback about their work from 68 percent in 2012 to 78 percent in 2013 (Staff Satisfaction Data).

- Gain baseline data of staff able to apply identified strategies in a positive behavior support (PBS) capacity matrix.

- Increase the percentage of short term ILP goals achieved by students from 66.2 percent (2012) to 70 percent (2013, BMS ILP tracking data).

School improvement domains covered with this priority
Learning and Teaching; School Environment; Student Pathways and Transitions; and
Leadership and Corporate Development

Progress

There is much research to suggest that building a Professional Learning Community (PLC)
and the social capital of staff drives student outcomes. This will support us to build
processes and practices that ensure commitment to effective, continuous and constructive
feedback to be given to all staff.

One of the many actions towards building this PLC as outlined above was implementing a
number of indicators for each PLT. This included:

- A minimum of two classroom team meetings per week (between teachers and LSAs)

- Weekly coaching sessions between teacher and executive teachers

- Increased dialogue across the school about effective communication and conflict
  resolution

Results from the 2013 Satisfaction Survey were used as a measure of the strengthening of
staff professional practices. As can be viewed below, there has been a significant shift in
perceptions between 2012 and 2013. As mentioned previously, 94 percent are actively
engaged in professional learning and 100 percent of teachers and school leaders 'agree' or
'strongly agree' that staff at BMS focus on improving the quality of the schools' teaching and
learning practices.

Table: Proportion of staff that agree or strongly agree with satisfaction survey items,
compared to all specialist schools in the ACT.

Satisfaction Survey items	2012 BMS	2013 BMS	2013 All specialist schools
I get constructive feedback about my practice.	68	**85**	76
There are processes in place that support my practice.	79	**91**	86

Source: System satisfaction surveys

We have exceeded our target to increase the proportion of staff who agree that they get
constructive feedback about their practice to 78%, with 85% now agreeing or strongly
agreeing with this statement in 2013.

Due to the nature of students attending BMS, system testing cannot be used and
comparisons between students cannot be made across cohorts or between students. The
best indicator of student outcomes is against students' own Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
goals. This year, the number of ILP goals achieved was maintained at a steady 66.2 percent.
This rate of achievement was constant for goals irrespective as to whether they were year-
long goals or goals implemented and achieved only in semester 2. There was a continued
focus on writing SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound) ILP goals,
with moderation of goals occurring through coaching. Ninety-two percent of teachers
'agree' or 'strongly agree' they use data collection to inform their teaching and
programming practices. The BMS functional curriculum and the implementation of specific

ILP goals is supported by 93 percent of parents and carers who are satisfied with the ILP goals for their young person (as indicated in the BMS module of the Satisfaction Survey). Given the high number of beginning teachers at BMS in 2013 (66 percent), the above results are indicative of the effectiveness of all of the processes put in place to improve staff professional practices and build a Professional Learning Community, resulting in continued student achievement.

In 2013, a review of the BMS curriculum began, highlighting the need for a more 'user friendly' electronic resource, including hyperlinks to examples and video footage. The BMS beginning teacher induction modules were also reviewed and implemented in a more collaborative, interactive manner. Also in 2013, a critical gap in the community was identified, this being the need to cater for students with a mild intellectual impairment in a north-side specialist school. Innovative solutions saw BMS planning for a pioneering 'Compass' class to start in 2014. Ongoing work in 2014 is needed to align the BMS curriculum with the Australian Curriculum, before this can be reflected upon reporting documents.

The proposed work in creating a Positive Behaviour Support capacity matrix was not completed. A visual Socio-Emotional Toolbox, aimed at providing students with tools to assist in developing self-regulatory emotional skills, was implemented across the school. Eight out of sixteen classes implemented it on a regular basis, with a further two classes using it with specific individuals within the class. Many students had an ILP goal relating to improving self-control over their emotional state. This work will be reviewed and continued in 2014.

Financial Summary

The school has provided the Directorate with an end of year financial statement that was approved by the school board. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

The following summary covers use of funds for operating costs and does not include expenditure in areas such as permanent salaries, buildings and major maintenance.

Professional learning

The average expenditure at the school level fulltime equivalent teacher on professional learning was $1515.

Voluntary contributions

This school received $nil in voluntary contributions in 2013. These funds were used to support the general operations of the school. The spending of voluntary contributions is in line with the approved budget for 2013.

Self management funds	408791
Voluntary contributions	0
Contributions & donations	8241
Subject contributions	0
External income (including community use)	46728
Proceeds from sale of assets	0
Bank Interest	8660
TOTAL INCOME	472420
EXPENDITURE	
Utilities and general overheads	88418
Cleaning	97661
Security	0
Maintenance	144611
Mandatory Maintenance	0
Administration	73254
Staffing	0
Communication	12490
Assets	116025
Leases	717
General office expenditure	46091
Educational	20476
Subject consumables	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	599743
OPERATING RESULT	-127323
Actual Accumulated Funds	201686
Outstanding commitments (min	7855
BALANCE	66509

Reserves

Name and purpose	Amount	Expected Completion
Grounds/Playground Development The school aims to promote healthy lifestyle choices around fitness, exercise, and engagement in appropriate leisure activity.	$23,963	12/2014
Staffing The school is continually exploring the use of paraprofessionals to maximise student success.	$25,000	12/2014
Therapy Equipment The school aims to provide all students with the necessary equipment to maximise participation and independence.	$2,647	12/2014
Information Technology The school continues to implement creative and cutting-edge ICT solutions, especially alternative and augmentative communication.	$40,000	12/2014

Endorsement Page

I declare that the Black Mountain School Board has operated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 2004 including the following sections.

39 (4)   The school board must give effect to the chief executive's directions.

44 (2)   The chief executive must end the appointment of a member of the school board of a public school, other than the principal of the school if-
   a)   The member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the board without reasonable excuse or leave given by the board or
   b)   Contravenes section 49 (disclosure of interests by members of school boards) without reasonable excuse.

46   The members of the school board of a public school must, whenever is necessary, nominate a member of the board as a member of any selection panel established by the chief executive to make recommendations to the chief executive about the appointment of the principal to the school.

47 (2)   However, the school board must meet at least four times a year.

48 (10) The school board must keep minutes of its meeting.

49   Disclosure of interests by members of school boards.

49 (3)   The disclosure must be reported in the school board's minutes and, unless the board otherwise decides, the member (The first member) must not-
   a)   be present when the board considers the issue or
   b)   take part in any decision of the board on the issue.

49 (5)   Within 14 days after the end of each financial year, the chairperson of the school board must give the chief executive a statement of any disclosure of interest under this section in relation to the school board during the financial year.

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Parent Representative: Peter Brown, Gavin Richardson, Greg Mahony
Community Representative Sam Salvaneschi
Teacher Representative   Michelle Fischer, Mellissa Jackson
Board Chair: Peter Brown
Principal: Frank Fogliati

 I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the data and information reported in this Annual School Board Report represents an accurate record of the school's operations this year.

Principal Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

I approve the report, prepared in accordance with the provision of the *Education Act*, section 52.

Board Chair Signature: _____   **Date:** _____