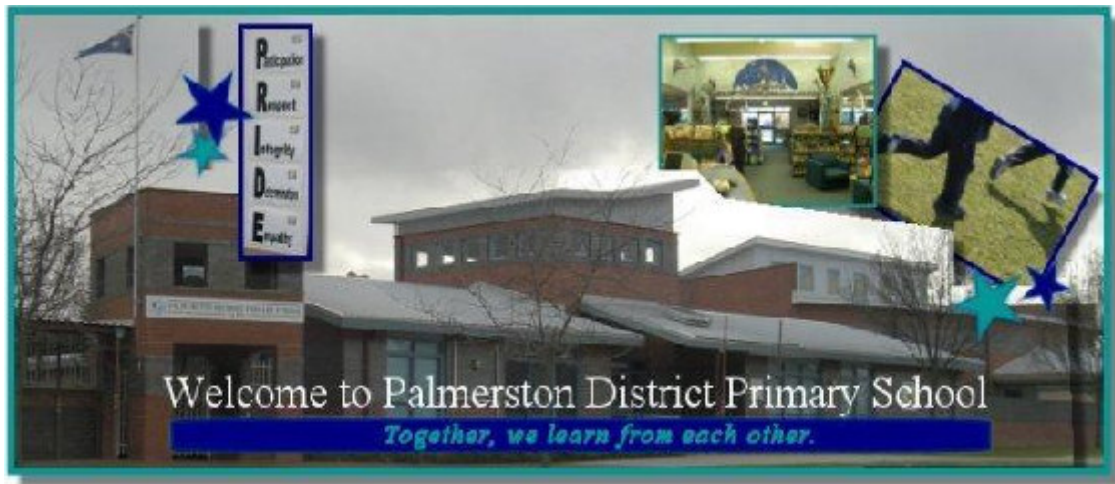




Education and Training

# PALMERSTON DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOL SCHOOL BOARD REPORT 2008



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The school website is: <http://www.palmdps.act.edu.au>

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# SCHOOL PROFILE

## INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL

Palmerston Primary was opened in 1995, and is situated in Gungahlin District, west of Mitchell. The school is a harmonious mixture of people from different backgrounds and cultures. Palmerston strives to promote a quality learning environment, which recognises the uniqueness of each child. Staff support and challenge the students to achieve to the best of their ability and foster a passion for life long learning.

## STUDENT INFORMATION

### Student enrolment

Males: 242      Females: 247      Total: 489

In 2008, the school had 24 classes comprising: four preschool classes, one Learning Support Unit (LSU), and three classes for students identified as intellectually gifted. Students identified for Palmerston's Learning Support Centre were fully integrated into classes across the school. A further eleven students identified with special learning needs were also fully integrated in mainstream classes. Three of the school's students identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and approximately 28 percent have English as their second language (ESL). Over the 2008 school year, approximately 50 students were from Australian Defence Force families.

### Student attendance

The average attendance for students this year was 92.70 percent of school days.

## STAFF INFORMATION

### Teacher qualifications

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

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

Qualifications	Teaching Staff
Certificate/Diploma/Degree	100%
Postgraduate	17 %

### Teacher retention

Teaching staff employed and promoted in ACT public schools since 1999 are subject to mobility provisions. Under these provisions, teaching staff are required to transfer to another workplace after a given period of time.

The proportion of staff retained from last year is approximately 32 percent.

### Staff attendance

In 2008, average staff attendance was 94.83 per cent of school days.

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

The estimated number of volunteer hours at Palmerston District Primary School in 2008 was 3 000 hours.

Volunteers assisted the school through the following avenues:

- School Board membership
- P&C membership
- reading with children
- library work – shelving, book covering etc
- class assistance – presentations, group activities, food preparation, clean ups etc
- sporting activities
- community information sessions
- community social events
- provision of transport
- working on revenue raising projects
- assisting with musical productions
- steering school improvement projects.

## ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

### SCHOOL REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

The *ACT Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2006-09* provides the framework and strategic direction for the school's plan. This is supported by the *School Excellence Initiative* which is the overarching framework for achieving high standards in student learning, innovation and best practice in ACT public schools. The *School Improvement Framework* supports schools in striving towards school excellence.

All ACT public schools participate in a cycle of school review and development. A key component of this process is the use of data to inform the school plan.

### 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 2008 the school undertook a system survey to gain an understanding of its satisfaction levels at that time. Results from that survey indicated that 83 per cent of parents and carers, 84 per cent of staff, and 97 per cent of students (year 5 and above) were satisfied or highly satisfied with the school.

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In alignment with school and system priorities, all teachers participated in a range of quality professional learning sessions delivered by Palmerston teaching staff and educational consultants. Topics included:

- inquiry learning
- gifted education
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- literacy
- numeracy
- music
- Indonesian
- student wellbeing
- physical education
- curriculum development
- supporting special needs students.

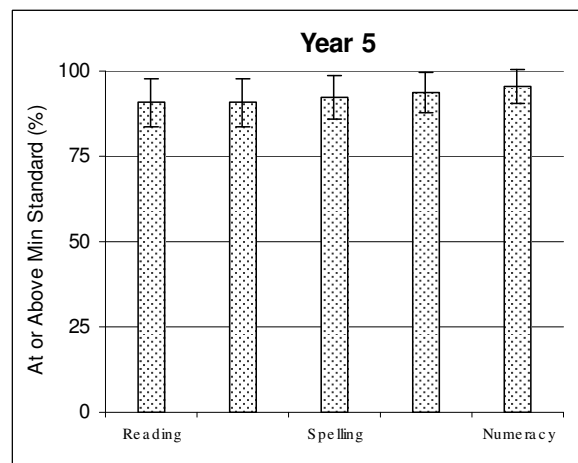
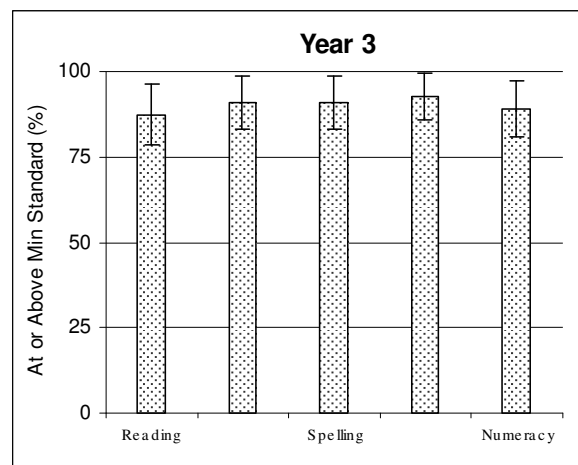
### LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

#### Performance in Literacy and Numeracy

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, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy.

The following information shows the percentage of students at this school achieving at or above the national minimum standard in the five domains across literacy and numeracy.

Note: Confidence intervals have been provided to reflect the level of uncertainty associated with the measurement of student achievement and provide a way of making improved inferences about the achievement of students.



The following information indicates the percentage of students who were exempt from NAPLAN based on nationally agreed criteria.

In 2008, 3.45 percent of students in year 3 at this school were exempt.

In 2008, 3.03 percent of students in year 5 at this school were exempt.

While year 3 NAPLAN results indicate an above territory representation of Palmerston students in the highest band for reading, overall year 3 results for literacy and numeracy are below territory average. However, no areas are considered to be significantly below. The areas of reading and numeracy are focus areas for improvement for this cohort in 2008.

The NAPLAN results of Year 5 students indicate performance slightly above territory average in writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy. Year 5 results in reading indicate this as an area for further development for this particular cohort. Data of three different year 5 cohorts indicates a slight upward trend in reading, slight downward trend in writing, and an upward trend in numeracy.

When viewing the growth results (comparison of achievement of current year 5 against their year 3 results) indicates that Palmerston year 5 students showed better than territory average growth for girls in reading, all students in writing and boys in numeracy.

The school's Accelerating Core Education (ACE) team supports classroom teachers in targeting key aspects of literacy and numeracy. The ACE team uses school-based data, NAPLAN and Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) data to determine specific areas of need in order to implement targeted classroom programs. Pre and post testing of students demonstrates the effectiveness of this support program.

Palmerston's Challenging Academic Potential (CAP) program is specifically designed to support students identified as intellectually gifted. Teachers of the school's CAP classes have the relevant qualifications to teach gifted students. School and national testing demonstrates the success of this program for these students.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

#### Teaching Practice

In 2008, Palmerston teachers benefited from quality professional learning supported through school and departmental funding. Specialists in the area of literacy, integrated inquiry, information communication technology (particularly interactive whiteboard technology), and gifted education delivered a series of on-site sessions tailored to teachers competency levels.

Palmerston teachers have a strong commitment to whole school programs. They use a range of teaching styles to target specific outcomes and share their knowledge and expertise with their colleagues. In 2008, all Palmerston teachers benefited from knowledge and expertise gained by a group of teachers who participated in the department's ICT Peer Coaching program. As well as sharing their skills, they designed templates for use in literacy lessons.

#### Learning and Assessment

##### 1. *Balanced Literacy Program*

2008 saw the second year of whole school implementation of the balanced literacy program advocated by the ACT Department of Education and Training as best literacy practice. Students are engaged in a daily literacy block comprising designated reading and writing components. In 2008, the school introduced the Magic 100 Words program to its balanced literacy program.

##### 2. *Numeracy*

Palmerston students are engaged in a daily numeracy block. Children are grouped together according to ability levels.

##### 3. *Integrated Inquiry*

Palmerston District Primary School continues to provide a consistent whole school approach to student learning through the Kath Murdoch's Integrated Inquiry model. In learning area teams, teachers plan inquiry units of work encompassing relevant learning areas - science, social science, health, and the arts. In 2008, Kath Murdoch continued to work with Palmerston teaching teams.

##### 4. *Physical Education*

Palmerston classroom teachers deliver a daily PE program for all students. Students also have regularly scheduled lessons with a PE specialist.

In 2008, children involved in the LOOK program (Lifestyle Of Our Kids - ANU longitudinal study) had their second year of the Bluearth PE intervention program. Several Palmerston teachers are now accredited to teach the Bluearth program.

##### 5. *Gifted and Talented Program*

Palmerston continued to support the specific needs of students identified as intellectually gifted through its CAP classes. The Grampians Pod houses three self-contained classes for gifted students. In 2008, Teachers in this area were again supported by consultants specialising in gifted education.

The Welsh Choir provides an avenue for musically talented students. In 2008, they competed in the ACT Eisteddfod and performed at the opening of the National Kodaly Conference at the School of Music.

##### 6. *Use of Quantitative Data*

Palmerston provides a comprehensive approach to student assessment. The school uses quantitative data to inform literacy and numeracy programs and intervention support. In terms one, two and four, achievement data from kindergarten to year 6 is collected and analysed using whole school assessments in literacy and numeracy. Further analyses of student progress come through PIPS, NAPLAN, ESL moderation, and external competition results. Student achievement data is used for compiling and moderating students' semester reports. In 2008, all Palmerston students completed ability tests to determine placements in the school's CAP classes.

#### Curriculum

Palmerston's curriculum has alignment with the ACT curriculum framework, *Every chance to learn*. In 2008, the school's English, mathematics, and integrated inquiry scope and sequence documents were updated. The school's newly developed integrated inquiry scope and sequence incorporates Studies of Society, the arts, health, technology and science. The Academy of Science's *Primary Connections* program is utilised for curriculum implementation in science and technology. Curriculum documentation in 2009 will focus on PE, music, and Indonesian.

Curriculum implementation in English is cohesive across the school, through the adoption of the DET balanced literacy program. In 2008, development and implementation of a cohesive whole school approach to mathematics curriculum will be a focus.

# DOMAINS OF SCHOOLING

## STUDENT ENVIRONMENT

### Student Focus

Palmerston's main priority is meeting the needs of students. We strive to provide opportunities for our students to succeed and to foster positive and productive relations between staff and students. In 2008 our student focus included:

- children's week celebrations included a community breakfast, special class activities, street tennis lessons for all children, and the unveiling of a garden sculpture made by the students of Namadji PoD
- the SRC Talent Quest highlighted a depth of confident and talented children who performed in front of the whole school
- hall banners made by the children in each PoD adorn the school hall
- senior graduation was a polished event attended by previous principals and community members to celebrate and acknowledge graduates' achievements
- the Learn to Swim program enabled K-2 children to advance their water safety skills
- excursions and incursions enhanced children's class programs
- Musica Viva was enjoyed by children from kinder to year 6
- Musicorp was successfully introduced. The program provides strings tuition for K-3 students and instrumental band for years 5 and 6
- school choirs and recorder bands delighted audiences at the school, local shopping centres, and aged people's facilities on several occasions during the year
- students raised a staggering \$11 000 from the Walkathon and have targeted their fundraising towards developing an environment centre
- lunch time sport was hotly contested, culminating with a teachers versus students competition on the last day of each term
- after school sports were introduced through the Active After School Communities program. The sport sessions were eagerly attended by students throughout the year.

### Student Empowerment

Several pathways are provided for Palmerston students to develop as responsible citizens. In 2008:

- the school's Student Representative Council (SRC) represents students' views and has input to student targeted initiatives during the year
- rostrum begins at classroom level, allowing students to compete in school and district finals
- the Chief Ministers' Reading Challenge was taken up by students in several classes
- school sporting carnivals provide students with the opportunity to challenge themselves physically
- school houses engender community spirit and provide leadership opportunities for senior students
- mediators and canteen monitors are valued helpers.

### Student Support

Palmerston provides education environments that are safe, supportive, welcoming and culturally inclusive. Students have access to diverse and challenging programs to meet specific needs. The school sets high expectations of student performance and behaviour. Avenues for achieving these aspirations, in 2008, include:

- Palmerston values: Participation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Empathy (PRIDE) underpin all aspects of school life. These are embedded into school cultures through: school assembly and classroom awards; classroom displays; and student management procedures
- the Second Step social skill program, taught in classrooms and as a specialist program aligns with the Palmerston PRIDE values
- buddy classes help children to develop friends of other ages
- preschool transition programs meant a very smooth start for this year's kindergarten students
- assemblies provide an opportunity to celebrate class learning and student achievement; and to celebrate cultural diversity, for example Harmony Day and

National Aborigines and Islanders Day  
Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.  
Parents are encouraged to attend assemblies.

- Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) were compiled for the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILP) were developed for special needs students. Special Teachers' Assistants (STA) provided extra support for these students.

# DOMAINS OF SCHOOLING

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### Strategic Vision

In 2008, the school developed its 2008-2010 School Plan through the School Review process. The following priorities have been documented to guide school directions:

#### *Strategic Priority 1: Communication*

- to improve communication between all members of school staff
- to provide school staff and parents/carers with avenues to participate in decision making and voicing an opinion

#### *Strategic Priority 2: Leadership*

- to encourage staff to assess areas of need and to implement leadership initiatives to address those needs at class, team and whole school level

#### *Strategic Priority 3: Student Support*

- to improve student management practices to ensure a safe environment with all members of the school community understanding policy and procedures

#### *Strategic Priority 4: Student Empowerment*

- to improve student involvement in the negotiation of their learning

#### *Strategic Priority 5: Numeracy*

- to develop a whole school approach to the teaching of numeracy.

### Leadership Behaviour

Palmerston has structures that support sustained school improvement, promote a culture of professional learning, develop respectful relationships assure accountability for student learning and foster shared decision-making.

These elements of leadership behaviour were evident in 2008 in the following ways:

- Palmerston reporting guidelines provide a rigorous approach to ongoing whole school assessment on a regular basis. Kindergarten to year 6 literacy and numeracy achievement data is collected and analysed three times a year
- teachers are able to participate in quality professional learning provided by nationally respected specialists, departmental experts, and school colleagues

- team leaders (executive teachers) work alongside class teachers, to promote best practice, professional sharing, and providing support structures for children of all ability levels
- teachers' Documents and Policies (DAP) folders provide a wealth of policy and procedural information. DAP information is organised under the Domains of Schooling and includes information in areas such as assessment, reporting, curriculum, staff responsibilities, code of professional practice, decision making, organisational procedures, mandatory reporting, special needs, and communication with parents
- school meetings are structured to include administration, professional learning, and committee work
- staff input into decision making is invited and leads to quality outcomes such as adopting the Bluearth PE program across the school; revision of the writing marking guide; and curriculum reviews.

Through the leadership involvement of Palmerston teachers, participation in the following has been made possible:

- school carnivals
- eisteddfod
- external competitions
- targeted professional learning sessions
- parent information sessions
- NAPLAN, PIPS and the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)
- Children's Week
- School Board and P&C
- lunchtime and after school sports
- community carols evening, talent quest, senior graduation and class excursions.

### School Management

At Palmerston, priorities in this area are to ensure quality resource management, effective school policies and procedures and effective communication with all stakeholders. In 2008 school management priorities included:

- the review of voluntary contributions, which led to the establishment of a Library Trust Fund and increase in contribution request to \$60 per student
- the smooth amalgamation of the preschool with the primary school. Preschool teachers planned units of work with members of the junior school team

- two policies which were ratified by the School Board, after refinement by school staff and consultation with the school community - gifted and talented education; and countering bullying, harassment and violence at Palmerston District Primary School.
- the school developed its emergency management plan and conducted several drills.

Major funding priorities included:

- quality teacher professional learning
- upgrading student ICT facilities - all classrooms now have interactive whiteboards. Student computers in the lab and the Grampians Pod were replaced
- significant upgrade to mathematics teaching resources
- repainting and refurbishing the front foyer; and painting the school hall.

## DOMAINS OF SCHOOLING

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### Partnerships with Parents and Carers

Palmerston values the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning. We believe that relationships between the home, school and the community enhance student learning. The school works to ensure effective communication between the school and home.

The school's P&C is to be commended for its contribution to the school. This dedicated band of parents regularly give up their personal time to help their school and actively support the school's executive and teaching teams. Their 2008 achievements include:

- more than \$1200 in fundraising
- contributions to the school of listening posts, Indonesian supplies, house banners, furniture for the front foyer, collapsible tables, notice boards, and school uniform shop cupboards
- upgrade of the school car park to include crossings, signage, and removal of confusing road markings
- organisation of student discos
- teacher nomination for NEITA Inspirational Teacher Award
- establishment of the 'Boomerang Box' to streamline communication
- presentation / hosting of information sessions on ACT Government's Women Return to Work Grant, 'Growing Up On Line', Gold Creek School, and Blueearth
- construction of an informative P&C website <http://groups.google.com/group/palmdps-pandc>
- community trivia night - hotly contested and greatly enjoyed evening
- joint social functions for school and defence families
- operating a book club for children
- operating a regular school banking program
- providing families with avenues for purchasing school uniforms either through the second hand uniform shop or commercial suppliers
- runner up award in the Women's Weekly Paradise Foods Award.

Palmerston Preschool Parents Association was actively engaged in fundraising to support the preschool's play-based program and hosted a

'Hail and Farewell' party for incoming and graduating preschool children.

The school appreciates the ongoing help provided by parents and carers in reading and other classroom activities; assisting at sports carnivals; organising the school's library collection; and providing musical accompaniment for the school choirs.

The school has structured communication avenues to keep families informed. The Palmerston Post goes home fortnightly; the reporting schedule includes written reports, interview opportunities, learning journey invitations and on-going opportunities for parents to meet with teachers through mutual arrangement.

School families joined together to support the student walkathon, raising over \$11000 for the environment centre.

In recognition of the contributions parents and carers make to our school, we host an annual thank you morning tea.

#### Engaging the Community

Through a variety of avenues, Palmerston seeks to engage the wider community:

- in partnership with the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University, Palmerston teachers mentor their preservice teachers
- the school now enjoys the regular services of a School as Community worker from the Gungahlin Community Centre.
- once each term, local church groups host Christian education sessions at the school.
- to enhance school programs, the school frequently invites organisations such as the ACT Police's Kenny Koala, or the Fire Brigade to attend school events.
- The school has a positive connection with staff at Gungahlin shopping centres, resulting in invitations for the school to showcase students' musical talents at public performances and creative talents with decoration of the centre's Christmas trees.

## Promoting Education

In 2008, Palmerston sought to positively promote the school to the outside community and to celebrate its achievements:

- Palmerston hosted teachers from across the ACT for a professional learning session on the Magic 100 Words program that was conducted by the program author, Marcella Richter
- choirs and recorder groups performed for residents at aged care facilities, and delighted shoppers at Gungahlin shopping centres
- in droves, families attended special school occasions: Children's Week Breakfast, Fathers' Day Breakfast, December's Carols Evening, term three learning journeys, student talent quest, kindergarten welcome barbeque
- families took advantage of the host of information sessions provided by Palmerston teachers. These included sessions on gifted and talented education, home reading programs, national testing, and class programs
- school assemblies provide families with a window into class programs and special features of the school such as the Defence Transition Aide who welcomes and farewells defence children at whole school assemblies.

Palmerston continues to develop a range of avenues for parents to be well informed about all aspects of school life:

- the school's website is regularly updated
- parent handbooks for preschool, kindergarten and primary school contain current information
- the school's newly produced pamphlet provides a quick snapshot of key school features.

## SCHOOL FINANCE

### FINANCE REPORT

The school has provided the Department 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 per full time equivalent teacher on professional learning was approximately \$2 000

#### Voluntary contributions

This school received \$5 410 in voluntary contributions in 2008. These funds were used in 2008 to support the general operations of the school. The spending of voluntary contributions is in line with the approved budget for 2008.

<b>Financial Summary</b>	
<b>31 December 2008</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>	
Self management funds	\$251 354.02
Voluntary contributions	\$5 410.00
Contributions & donations	\$7 757.73
Subject contributions	Nil
External income (including community use)	\$17 887.21
Proceeds from sale of assets	Nil
Bank interest	\$9 695.66
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$292 104.62</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Utilities and general overheads	\$58 532.33
Cleaning	\$57 563.79
Security	\$ 420.18
Maintenance	\$39 115.21
Mandatory maintenance	\$4 509.41
Administration	\$1 225.47
Staffing	\$ 990.00
Communication	\$13 652.05
Assets	Nil
Leases	\$15 289.20
General office expenditure	\$6 543.85
Educational	\$43 292.11
Subject consumables	Nil
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$241 133.60</b>
<b>OPERATING RESULT</b>	<b>\$50 971.02</b>
Actual Accumulated funds	\$136 681.46
Outstanding commitments	\$27 031.34
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>\$160 621.14</b>

#### Reserves

Name and purpose	Amount	Expected Completion
Palmerston had no dedicated reserves in 2008	Nil	Nil

## ENDORSEMENT

I declare that the Palmerston District Primary 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 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 for the school.
- 47 (2)** However, the school board must meet at least 4 times a year.
- 48 (10)** The school board must keep minutes of its meetings.
- 49** Disclosure of interests by members of school boards
- 49 (3)** The disclosure must be recorded 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.

**Board Chair: Andrew Warner**                      **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Catriona Meere  
 Chloe Sidman

Brent Juratowitch  
 Deb Lewis

BOARD CHAIR	PRINCIPAL
Name: Andrew Warner	Name: Vivienne Blundell
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:
I have sighted this Annual School Board Report and verified the data contained in the report.	
School Director: Wayne Chandler	
Signature:	Date: