Canning College

2013

Independent Review Findings
Contents

School and Review Details .............................................................................................................. 1

1. About the Independent Review .............................................................................................. 1

2. Summary .................................................................................................................................... 3

3. School Context .......................................................................................................................... 5

4a. School Performance - Student Learning .............................................................................. 9

4b. School Performance - Quality of Learning Environment .................................................... 12

4c. School Performance - Sustainability ..................................................................................... 15

Declaration ...................................................................................................................................... 19

Disclaimer

This document has been based on the findings of the independent reviewers’ verification of the College’s self-review. The College’s self-review has been complemented by information provided by the Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The findings of the independent review are forwarded to the Minister for Education, the Director General of Education, the Principal and the Board Chair.

The Department of Education Services does not endorse any commercial organisation, product or service mentioned in this report.

The Department of Education Services can only guarantee the authenticity of original documents. This document is uncontrolled once printed.

To help people with disabilities obtain access to information, this document can be provided in alternative format on request. Please contact ips@des.wa.gov.au with specific requests or telephone 08 9441 1900.
1. About the Independent Review

The purpose of the independent review of Canning College is to provide an assurance to the Minister for Education, the Director General of Education and the college community on the extent to which the College has met its commitments as outlined in its Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA) and associated Business Plan. The focus of the review is on:

- how well the College has improved the standards of student learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students
- how well the College has created an environment that promotes student learning
- how well the College is placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The College has been required, under the DPA, to undertake regular self-assessment. The outcomes of these assessments formed the basis for the College’s self-review which was presented to the reviewers for verification at the commencement of the independent review.
Prior to the presentation of the College's self-review, reviewers were provided with information on the College's educational achievements, its processes and its student performance data from a number of sources which include, but are not limited to:

- the My School™ website
- the Department of Education School Performance Monitoring System
- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers visited the College for a half-day presentation of the College's self-review by the Principal, the Board Chair and other key stakeholders chosen by the College. Subsequently the reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the College's self-review documentation and developed lines of enquiry where further verification was required.

An agenda for a two-day review visit was then negotiated with the College to enable the gathering of further evidence to clarify or confirm the claims made in the College's self-review. During these two days the reviewers sourced information and evidence to support the College's self-review claims through observation and discussion with teaching and non-teaching staff, board members, students and the school leadership team.

The evidence provided by the College, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during their review visits, was used by the reviewers as the evidence base for their verification of how well the College has met its commitments as outlined in its DPA and Business Plan.

This document reports on the findings of the independent review.
2. **Summary**

Providing a flexible, adult learning environment focused on pathways to university entry is the driver for Canning College programs. Local students over 17 years of age re-entering education and international full-fee paying students are the core groups. Canning College is a unique school since it offers diploma-level Vocational Education and Training (VET) with negotiated advanced standing at university level, as well as a combination of school-level, VET certificate, international preparation or bridging courses and short-courses. The College has exercised significant autonomy for an extended period, with its Advisory Board playing a key role.

Canning College makes effective use of targets in priority areas to improve the learning of its students. Transfer of data to the Department of Education Student Information System (SIS) will facilitate more detailed tracking of student progress and refinement of targets. Ongoing review and development underpins an effective and flexible curriculum structure that is highly responsive to students' learning needs. Implementation of the 'literacy across the curriculum' strategy focuses staff attention on the needs of an increasing proportion of 'English second-language' learners.

A diverse, adult learning environment has been developed at the College. It promotes learning for students facing challenging transitions to Australian society and university education. Significant improvements have been achieved in the College's student support, academic support and intervention services. Improvements to financial, information and human resource management systems have facilitated targeted use of resources. A sharp focus on student needs drives decision-making. Future improvement may be achieved by using diverse survey instruments to measure student and parent perceptions of the learning environment.

Leaders at the College have involved staff in implementing evidence-based processes for planning, monitoring, reviewing and reporting. This has resulted in a culture of continuous improvement focused on student learning. Innovative practices have also been developed to advance the College's international programs. The Advisory Board plays a key role in setting strategic directions and reviewing College performance. This role may be strengthened in the future through implementing innovative strategies to enhance engagement of the unique Canning College community.
The following commendations support the College’s claims of significant strengths and areas of improvement:

- The College’s use of targets to monitor performance, to embed a culture of improvement based on data analysis and to drive curriculum change.
- Improvements in student learning achieved by the College.
- Implementation of a ‘literacy across the curriculum’ strategy to prioritise this critical learning success factor and embed collaborative practice.
- Creation of a vibrant, multicultural learning environment focused on adult learning, high expectations and continuous improvement.
- Refinement of student support and academic support services to achieve differentiation of teaching, learning and pastoral care strategies.
- Improvements in financial, information and human resource strategies that enhance targeted use of resources.
- The focus on adult students as the core of the College community.
- Leaders at the College have fostered robust self-review resulting in evidence-based review practices in all programs.
- Development of strategies and strong links with international communities, particularly with partnership schools in China.

The following affirmations support continued implementation of strategies and initiatives or areas for improvement identified by the College:

- Transfer of data to the SIS database will facilitate more sophisticated tracking of student learning at the individual and sub-group level.
- Plans for reviewing, refining and elaborating student learning targets.
- Plans to embed the performance development system for all staff (based on agreed criteria) within the College’s self-review practices.
- Plans for ensuring sustainability of an expert teaching and support staff.

The following recommendations are made to add value to the College’s improvement and review processes:

- That the College explores alternatives for including more retention and attendance targets and ‘value added’ targets related to cultural understanding and English language literacy in the next Business Plan.
- That the College explores the use of a range of available instruments for measuring student and parent perception of its learning environment.
- That the Advisory Board consider the most feasible strategies for strengthening and sustaining its role in the College through reviewing the current rules of operation and increasing the engagement of community, parents and students.
3. School Context

The vision of Canning College is to be a leader in the provision of high quality education programs for tertiary-bound students. Based on the vision, purpose and values identified in its Business Plan, the College has two core functions:

- To provide continuing education and re-entry to education options for local students who are in their 17th year and older. (Students must meet agreed criteria.)
- To provide university entrance programs to international students.

The College was established in 1983 on the site formerly occupied by Bentley Senior High School. It is adjacent to Curtin University, six kilometres from the Perth CBD. Major public transport routes are located nearby.

The College enrols a diverse range of students from over 40 countries with approximately 50% local and 50% international (based on full-time equivalents). Consequently, an unusually high proportion of students are ‘English second language’ learners. Since the international program commenced in 1986, Canning College has been recognised as Western Australia’s leading provider of university entrance programs for international students. Due to the nature of the range of courses and flexible entry, student numbers vary significantly throughout the year. The College total enrolment at 21 March 2013 was 1043 students.

In order to achieve its core functions the College offers a wide range of programs. These are delivered through a combination of day and evening classes for up to 50 weeks of the year.

The following programs are designed for local students drawn from the Perth metropolitan area:

- Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) - currently providing 143 local students with the opportunity to complete tertiary entrance requirements in a single year
- Flying Start – currently 283 students are studying secondary upgrading programs (Year 10/11 equivalent) designed to improve their learning to a level necessary for the commencement of Year 12. Increasing numbers of refugee students are enrolling in this program
- Enabling - offering alternative preparation for entry into selected Curtin University courses (currently 229 students)
Canning College

- **Short Courses** – evening and day programs targeting specific skills (currently 67 students, including 16 completing Certificate I in Digital Media, with up to 200 students enrolling per term)
- **Special Tertiary Admissions Test Preparation** - currently 12 students, with up to 100 enrolling each term.

The College offers the following self-funded programs designed exclusively for full fee-paying overseas students:

- **Western Australian Universities' Preparation Program** (WAUPP) and related **International Pathway** courses – Year 12 and Year 11 equivalent respectively (currently 134 students)
- **International Bridging** (34 students) and **Bridging Preparation** (14 students).

In addition, the following alternative university entrance programs are offered for both local and international students:

- **Diploma of Commerce** (VET qualification with first year university equivalence recognised by Curtin University and The University of Western Australia (UWA) – currently 96 students)
- **Certificate IV in Higher Education Preparation Studies** (Commerce) – currently 31 students.

During the College’s first DPA period (2010-2012) it has faced significant challenges. The key factors affecting enrolments included:

- Federal Legislation for the introduction of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority (TEQSA) prevented the College from continuing to offer a first year university course, necessitating the development of a Diploma of Commerce program through VET accreditation. The loss of higher education status impacted College enrolments and international income.
- International visa issues and the value of the Australian dollar also affected international student numbers.
- Changes to university alternative entry also affected local demand.

The international student enrolment numbers reached a peak in 2009 with approximately 640 students; however, in recent years numbers have declined significantly. Data from 2013 enrolments indicate that international numbers have stabilised at approximately 450 and current indicators suggest gradual growth in coming years.
Canning College

The management team comprises the Principal, Vice Principal, three Deputy Principals and the Director of the International Office. Many members of the teaching and non-teaching staff have been at the College for an extended period. A significant proportion of staff members are approaching retirement age and this features in workforce planning. Staff members are supported by an effective professional development program that is linked to the performance management process.

The College’s annual core income is approximately $11 million. Approximately 50% of this is received from the Department of Education for local student programs. The other 50% is derived through the international program and other specialised programs (such as Curtin Enabling and short courses).

The facilities of Canning College suit the needs of adult learners through the provision of a university-type environment. Infrastructure development has been funded through income gained from the international program. In recent years a large Library/Learning Centre, Computing Centre (seven laboratories) and Lecture Theatre have been built. The Gymnasium has also been recently expanded to provide a greater range of recreational activities for students.

Canning College has developed very close partnerships with the four public universities. Close working relationships with UWA and Curtin University are critical to the success of the Diploma program. Partnerships with international education agents and providers are also crucial for the successful operation of the College, particularly in the provision of intensive English programs. The offices of Perth Education City and the Council for International Students of Western Australia are located on the College site.

The decision to become an Independent Public School (IPS) was a reflection of the high degree of autonomy and self-management already operating in the College. The College Advisory Council (now Board) traditionally played a key role.

The Canning College Advisory Board consists of: three elected teaching staff and one non-teaching staff representative; the Principal and Deputy Principal (Executive Officer); a student representative; a Chairperson, and five community representatives – two members of State Parliament, two tertiary representatives (one each from UWA and Curtin) and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Due to the nature of the College’s adult learning environment, there is not a parent/guardian representative on
the Board. Most board members have had a long association with the College.

Members have a clear understanding of their role and function, as defined by the *Rules of the Canning College Advisory Board*. There is clear delineation between the Board’s strategic role and the management of the College. At the end of 2012, members completed a survey of the Board’s performance. Responses indicate a high level of satisfaction with the quality and quantity of information provided. This information, which includes financial, curriculum planning, marketing and performance data, enables members to make informed decisions. Community representatives attend many of the graduation events and support the College by giving the occasional address to students and parents.

Providing a flexible, adult learning environment focused on pathways to university entry is the driver for Canning College programs. Local students over 17 years of age re-entering education and international full-fee paying students are the core groups. Canning College is a unique school since it offers diploma-level VET with negotiated advanced standing at university level, as well as a combination of school-level, VET certificate, international preparation or bridging courses and short-courses. Income from the international programs is managed on site and has been used to fund significant infrastructure development. Well-developed partnerships, particularly with UWA and Curtin University, are crucial to the College’s operations. The College has exercised significant autonomy for an extended period, with its Advisory Board playing a key role.
4a. School Performance - Student Learning

During the last decade, Canning College has used targets to monitor the effectiveness of its academic programs. The 2010–2012 Business Plan includes 20 targets grouped by program. Generally, the targets are aspirational and relate to measures of overall academic achievement, literacy and commitment to lifelong learning. Comparative data for performance against the targets each year feature in the Annual Report.

Each year the group of students completing a particular program changes significantly. Therefore, assessment of achievement of a target is based on averaging over the three-year period of the DPA. The following general observations were made:

- **WACE Students** (nearly all local): four of the six targets were achieved. The retention target was not achieved overall; however, performance improved over the three-year period. The literacy target was not achieved.
- **International Students** (mainly WAUPP): three of the five targets were achieved. The ‘C’ grade average target for students in the alternative (‘Stage 1’ or ‘Bridging’) program and the ‘lifelong learning’ target were not achieved. The College has reviewed the reasons for this. It is most probable that English language difficulties explain both.
- **Flying Start Students**: One of the two targets (‘lifelong learning’) was achieved. Although the literacy/numeracy target was not achieved this led to curriculum review and change over the DPA period.
- **Uni Direct (Diploma and Certificate IV) Students**: All three targets were achieved. Two of the targets related to the percentage of Certificate IV students transferring into the Diploma of Commerce and the percentage of Diploma students transferring to university programs.
- **Curtin Enabling Students**: Two of the three targets were achieved. Although the retention rate target was not achieved overall, there was a significant improvement in 2012. This improvement reflected a curriculum strategy developed during the DPA period.
- **Short Course Students**: The ‘lifelong learning’ target was achieved.

The College’s use of targets to monitor its performance, to embed a culture of improvement based on data discussion and analysis and to drive curriculum change is commended.
There are many indicators that the College provides opportunities for students facing significant learning challenges to achieve at the highest standard. For example, 372 graduates gained a place at university in 2012. The improvements in student learning achieved by the College (including international students and local students aspiring to re-enter secondary education on a university entry pathway) are commended.

Currently, the College is reviewing its targets for the next DPA period. Most priority areas will be retained, which will facilitate longitudinal comparisons. The College is considering raising target levels (in several cases), refining target definitions and developing a support document that specifies the data source. The complex nature of the College student population, adult learning environment and programs are significant considerations. Literacy level on entry (for local as well as international students) and attendance are critical success factors. Developing a meaningful measure for retention of Flying Start students is problematic. Similarly, increasing levels of cultural understanding is a College priority; however, meaningful measurement is problematic. Notwithstanding these difficulties, it is recommended that the College explore alternatives for including more retention and attendance targets and ‘value added’ targets related to cultural understanding and English language literacy in the next Business Plan.

Monitoring the learning of cohorts of students based on the discrete programs offered, is a feature of the College’s performance monitoring. Within programs, there is some analysis of sub-group performance (for example, analysis by nationality in the international student group and analysis by starting date). The transfer of data to the Student Information System database during the DPA period will facilitate more sophisticated tracking of student learning at the individual and sub-group level. This College priority is affirmed.

Canning College implements a curriculum that engages, challenges and improves learning for adult learners. Discrete courses with flexible entry points provide a number of interconnected pathways to university entry for adult learners. Careful design, ongoing review and development of this course hierarchy enable students to find the pathway that meets their learning needs.

Curriculum development during the DPA period has resulted in commendable refinements. For example, the College:
redesigned the Diploma of Commerce, in response to changes in the higher education regulatory environment. In effect, the College’s new VET Diploma provides the opportunity for students to complete the equivalent of first year university in an environment that supports transition to UWA and Curtin University courses

- enhanced the Curtin Enabling course, offering alternative entry to undergraduate courses at that university
- redeveloped the Flying Start course at Stage 2 level to provide an effective pathway for local students returning to study, and a ‘fall back’ option for those struggling in the Stage 3 WACE course
- integrated Alternative Pathway to university entrance courses for international students with the Flying Start course
- collaborated with schools in the local area to expand programs for local students struggling in the mainstream environment.

Curriculum development priorities for the next DPA period include development of a Diploma of Science and Engineering and implementation of the Australian Curriculum and a mid-year Foundation program. The latter is designed for local and international students, providing an August to June university entrance pathway.

Also commended is the College’s implementation of ‘literacy across the curriculum’ during the DPA period. This priority responds to the needs of an increasing proportion of local ‘re-entry’ students with Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) as well as international students. A Literacy Coordinator leads implementation of a range of whole-school strategies and related professional development. The Literacy Committee includes representatives from all learning areas. The Committee oversees the annual planning, implementation, monitoring, review and reporting cycle. This literacy strategy has revitalised staff focus on this critical learning success factor and serves as the touchstone for embedding collaborative practice.

Only limited comparisons with other schools are possible due to the nature of the College’s student population. National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing is not relevant. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority does not include the College in its comparative tables. However, the College does use School Curriculum and Standards Authority statistical moderation data for WACE subjects and Tertiary Institutions Services Centre (TISC) data for WAUPP subjects to review its performance. (The College currently enrolls 68% of all WAUPP students, which limits the usefulness of comparative data.)
The Advisory Board receives formal annual reviews of performance using these data. The College’s Annual Report also includes these reviews.

Positive anecdotal feedback from universities is used by the Uni Direct Department for informal review of College performance in the Diploma and Enabling courses. There are advantages for the College in formalising this review process.

Canning College makes effective use of targets in priority areas to improve the learning of its students. Transfer of data to the Department of Education Student Information System (SIS) will facilitate more detailed tracking of student progress and refinement of targets. Ongoing review and development underpins an effective and flexible curriculum structure that is highly responsive to students’ learning needs. Implementation of the ‘literacy across the curriculum’ strategy focuses staff attention on the needs of an increasing proportion of ‘English second-language’ learners.

4b. School Performance - Quality of Learning Environment

Integration of local and international students, aged from 16 to 78 years, aspiring to university entrance and lifelong learning is a significant factor influencing the College’s culture. Among other things, it promotes high expectations of learning for all students. The College ethos is to cater for adult learning styles whilst supporting re-entry and international students in making a successful transition to university studies. The priority given to individuals taking responsibility for their own learning is appreciated by students and their parents/guardians. Staff members foster independent learning skills and cultural understanding. The creation of a vibrant, multicultural learning environment focused on adult learning, high expectations and continuous improvement is commended.

Student services focusing on pastoral care, course counselling, transition, orientation, accommodation and participation are all given high priority. These are coordinated through the Student Services section (for local students) and the International Students’ Office. Particular attention is paid to building positive relationships between students through recreational and other social activities.

During the last DPA period, the College gave priority to improving its Academic Support and intervention strategies. Between 40% and 50% of
students are involved. This contributes to an inclusive environment in which all students are valued and supported. These strategies include:

- using *Progress Check* – software that analyses student academic progress and attendance data to identify those at educational risk
- counselling for students identified as ‘at-risk’ – recommending participation in the academic support services and, in some cases, course change
- developing and enhancing the Learning Centre – staff are rostered to provide individual tuition and advice
- offering seminars on revision, research, essay and report writing skills
- providing orientation activities at the beginning of each term for newly enrolled students
- providing workshops and courses that focus on specific learning needs, such as the English Second Language Science course.

The College is commended for achieving significant improvements in its student support and academic support services. These services have been refined to achieve differentiation of teaching, learning and pastoral care strategies that meet a wide range of learning needs in an adult learning environment.

Improvements in financial, information and human resource management and reporting strategies during the DPA period are also commended. These improvements have facilitated the targeted use of resources to improve student learning. For example, improved application of information technology to facilitate teaching and learning has been achieved. The use of Smartboards has significantly expanded across the College. The use of tablets in classrooms is being trialled. Development of portals using *Sharepoint* has enhanced learning flexibility. This platform facilitates customisation and useability. Portals have been developed for students, staff, reporting, agents and the Board. The Student Portal is particularly significant.

Several strategies are used to build shared understanding about standards of student achievement and refinement of curriculum provision. During the DPA period, teachers have implemented strategies to reduce the differential between school and examination assessments. Sophisticated analysis of student performance in different subjects is developing. The literacy across the curriculum strategy is also used to build common understandings about pedagogy and expected achievement standards. Interaction between College and university staff also contributes.
Canning College

Relationships between the College, parents and community are different from those in mainstream schools. The adult learning ethos is given primacy. Parents only have access to achievement reports if student approval is given. All overseas parents are able to obtain, via the internet/College web site, up-to-the-minute information about academic achievement and attendance of their student. However, the language barrier restricts interaction with these parents. Many students are happy for their parents to be kept informed of progress. In the case of overseas parents being informed of difficulties, education agents are significant intermediaries.

Similarly, the community is not defined by a geographic area. Universities, overseas partner schools, international education agents and providers are key members of the College’s community.

The College focus on adult students as the core of its community is commendable. It is evident through the priority given to annual student surveys. Responses are used to inform and adapt practice and facilities. Students feel valued. For example, they appreciate the way in which College staff counsel them to find a different pathway to their goal when they are struggling.

The significant sub-group of students under 18 years of age is a complicating factor. At 21 March 2013, 243 (or 23.3%) students were 16 or 17 years old. (There were also two 15-year-old students.) A significant proportion of these students do not wish their parents to be kept informed of progress.

These students are enrolled at the College for a range of reasons. For example, one sub-group of approximately 30 students is enrolled in the Flying Start program because they were bullied in their mainstream school. Another sub-group is enrolled because they are recently arrived 17 year-olds who are permanent residents or refugees. The College has recently refined its criteria to ensure that under 18 year-old student enrolments are tightly controlled. These students are treated as ‘responsible minors’. Nevertheless, the College’s relationships with parents of this student sub-group are potentially problematic.

Notwithstanding the College’s achievements in building a respectful and diverse adult learning environment, it faces many complexities. Not all students make a successful re-entry to education or transition to a new socio-cultural and language environment. Attendance may become problematic, particularly for adult students juggling a range of commitments.
That is why the continued focus on the relationship between the learning environment and retention rates is particularly important. Instruments used for the analysis of classroom learning environments may prove invaluable for the College in its next DPA period. For example, the Constructivist Oriented Learning Environment Survey (COLES) based on student perceptions may have particular relevance to the College context. Similarly, finding new ways of building relationships with parents, including international ‘clients’, may help to address retention issues. It is recommended that the College explore the use of a range of available instruments for measuring student and parent perception of its learning environment.

A diverse, adult learning environment has been developed at the College. It promotes learning for students facing challenging transitions to Australian society and university education. Significant improvements have been achieved in the College’s student support, academic support and intervention services. Improvements to financial, information and human resource management systems have facilitated targeted use of resources. A sharp focus on student needs drives decision-making. Relationships with key community groups and organisations benefit student learning. However, relationships with parents are complicated by the College’s adult education ethos. Future improvement may be achieved by using survey instruments to measure student and parent perceptions of the learning environment.

4c. School Performance - Sustainability

In order to support its self-review Canning College presented a wide range of documentation, analysis and evidence. Of particular significance is the comprehensive 2012 Annual Report that includes the analysis of performance data and priorities set for the following year, across all areas of the College.

The production of the Business Plan is a collaborative exercise involving the management team, teaching and support staff. The effect has been that staff members are directly involved with the production of the Business Plan and the setting of targets. Having that ownership, they are more likely to be committed to achieving the targets that will lead to an improvement in student learning and teaching.

Leaders at the College have fostered robust self-review resulting in evidence-based review practices in all programs. The strong focus on analysing the College’s performance drives the business and operational
plans with explicit targets used for assessing progress and strategies for sustaining and improving student, school and teacher performance. These achievements are commended.

The direction the College is taking in reviewing, refining and elaborating its targets is affirmed. Additional background information is being added to the targets in the form of a rationale and target: outcome source. This will enable clearer communication about the targets within the College community and continuity of approach should key staff members leave the College.

Plans to embed the performance development system for all staff (based on agreed criteria) within the College's self-review practices are also affirmed. Currently, teacher performance development is aligned with College, departmental and personal targets. Leadership surveys are also integral to the College's culture of improvement.

Issues identified in the Workforce Plan present a number of challenges during the life of the next Business Plan. A particular issue is the large number of senior staff members who are considering retirement. The College’s strategy in addressing this challenge is affirmed by the reviewers so that the quality of the teaching and learning may be ensured into the future. An option the College is considering is to employ teachers nearing retirement as part-time staff members and mentors for younger teachers.

There is a positive and proactive culture in the College to create appropriate courses and pedagogy for an adult learning environment. As the College relies heavily on international students, there is a significant budget and focus on marketing of the College in overseas countries. During recent years, the College has been actively recruiting students from Africa, Korea and China. The College is commended on developing strategies and strong links with international communities, particularly with a number of partnership schools in China. The China Schools program has resulted in approximately 40 students entering the College each year. Canning College staff regularly visit partner schools in China to provide tuition and background information supporting student enrolment and transition into the Western Australian education system. Tuition is also provided through video-conferencing from Canning College. The benefit of these programs is becoming evident, not only in the increased enrolment from China, but also in the improved academic performance of the students entering Canning College. These strategies enhance the future sustainability of the international programs in the College.
The Canning College Advisory Board provides critical oversight and reflection on strategic direction and review of College performance. The Board is supported in its role through the timely provision of comprehensive documentation. The Principal reports regularly on progress against the Business Plan. Records of Board meetings are also clearly documented. The Board is involved in all stages of the planning and review cycle.

During the independent review process, the following possibilities for strengthening the Board’s role in the College were identified and discussed:

- The broader community served by the College is engaged in board processes through the inclusion of two members of State Parliament, two tertiary representatives (one each from UWA and Curtin) and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Given the nature of the College community, however, it has not been possible to conduct an annual board meeting that is open to the community. Alternative strategies, such as involving board members in College meetings with education agents, and developing a board section on the College website, could be explored.

- Parents are not represented on the Board. Nor are they included in processes to determine satisfaction levels. Given the complexities affecting the College’s relationships with parents, this is understandable. However, consideration should be given to including the parent voice through strategies other than Board representation.

- The board rules make provision for students to be represented on the Board by the President of the Student Council ‘from time to time’. However, the list of board members in the annual reports for 2010, 2011 and 2012 does not include a student representative. There are barriers to student participation on the Board, such as language difficulties and time commitments of adult students re-entering school education. Development of a student alumni has been considered by the College; however, it is not feasible. More promising is the College’s current experimental use of electronic social media to further engage students. Annual surveys and occasional forums are mainly used to include the student voice in College decision-making.
Canning College

- In reviewing the current Rules of the Advisory Board consideration should be given to: replacing the terms 'Rules' and 'Advisory' to reflect contemporary practice; including the specific roles listed in the Governance section of the DPA; clarifying the length of tenure, and succession planning to balance continuity and change.

It is recommended that the Advisory Board consider the most feasible strategies for strengthening and sustaining its role in the College through reviewing the current rules of operation and increasing the engagement of community, parents and students.

Leaders at the College have involved staff in implementing evidence-based processes for planning, monitoring, reviewing and reporting. This has resulted in a culture of continuous improvement focused on student learning. Innovative practices have also been developed to advance the College’s international programs. The Advisory Board plays a key role in setting strategic directions and reviewing College performance. This role may be strengthened in the future through implementing innovative strategies to enhance engagement of the unique Canning College community.
Canning College

Declaration

We the undersigned hereby confirm that the information provided in this findings document is to the best of our knowledge true and correct and is based on our assessment of the evidence provided by Canning College as part of the Department of Education Services' independent review process. The Principal and Board Chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.

22 May 2013
(Date)

(Signature of Rees Barrett, Lead Reviewer)

21 May 2013
(Date)

(Signature of Graham Rixon, Reviewer)

29/5/13
(Date)

(Signature of Richard Strickland, CEO, Department of Education Services)