



Annual Report 2003

TORONTO PUBLIC SCHOOL

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Principal's message

Toronto Public School has a proud tradition of building positive, constructive relationships with students and caregivers. Our mission statement: *"working together to make a good school better"*, is strongly supported by the school community.

This school is renowned for its nurturing of all students, who have a wide variety of skills, talents and abilities. We promote excellence, tolerance of differences and respect for each other. Our teachers strive to maintain this as a school where all students are happy and safe.

The purpose of this report is to publish the outcomes of this school's self-evaluation process and to outline directions towards further school improvement.

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

Noel Harrison

Our achievements

The arts

We encourage students to further develop skills and talents by expressing themselves in the creative and performing arts.

All students were provided with the opportunity to take part in regular music, art and dance. Every class attended weekly music lessons with our specialist music teacher. Structured lessons involved acquisition of skills, music appreciation and music for enjoyment and relaxation.

The school choir trained regularly and performed at school assemblies, Toronto Yacht Club, the Westlakes Festival of Performing Arts, Education Day, Presentation Day and Carols by Candlelight.

Junior and senior dance groups were given instruction from a professional dance teacher. They performed at the Hunter Schools Dance Festival, Westlakes Festival of Performing Arts, Toronto Town Square, Education Day and Presentation Day.

Art works were displayed in classrooms and at weekly assemblies. Students' work was also on display at the Toronto library in Book Week and was used for P&C fund-raising calendars.

Sport

Our students participated in a variety of sporting experiences throughout the year.



- Our teams were very competitive in Zone Gala Days. The girls' softball team were successful in winning the trophy for the first time.
- All students participated in a routine of daily P.E. and fitness assessments, using a \$1,200 grant from the School Sport Foundation.

- Expert coaches offered clinics in soccer, rugby league, cricket and basketball for all primary students.
- An intensive learn-to-swim program for Years 1-4 was conducted in Term 4.
- Fun days included SMASH, basketball, cricket, soccer, rugby league and Oztag.
- Many students achieved representation at zone level. The Hunter Region was represented at state level by Maddy Johnstone (swimming), Shane Adams (Australian Rules) and Adam Birch (cross-country).
- Connor Lance and Bronte Short won regional SMASH championship trophies.

Technology

In 2003 technology was a major focus. We ensured that our students and teachers continued to have access to the most recent and appropriate technology.

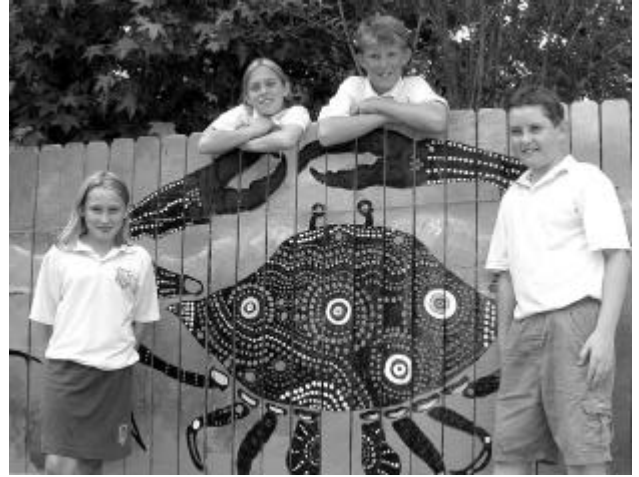
- All students enjoy weekly computer lessons with our specialist teacher who teaches and monitors students' skills as they progress through our Computer Skills Scope and Sequence program.
- Network cabling was completed to the library and all classrooms with a broadband function which allows the fastest high-speed Internet connection, now available to all students.
- All students and staff have access to the school intranet, which features internal email, which provides outstanding communication within the school;
- We have two well-equipped computer laboratories and every classroom has at least one computer.
- In 2003 we launched our school website which features the school newsletter, information for parents and students and links to educational sites (<http://www.toronto-p.schools.nsw.edu.au>).

Aboriginal education

In all classrooms students completed units of work with an Aboriginal perspective, with the aim of broadening appreciation and knowledge of Aboriginal culture and issues. Students' awareness and tolerance were further developed by:

- observance of Reconciliation Day, featuring a free sausage sizzle for all students;
- workshops presented by Girrawaa Yarruudanginya in Dreamtime, dance, artefacts and corroboree;

- Indigenous Fathers as Mentors program, in which selected students and mentors worked together at school; and
- the completion of a mural with Aboriginal designs by a community volunteer, with student support.



Key evaluations

Educational and management practice

Teaching

Background

For learning to be effective, students must be supported by proficient, well-resourced teaching. Parents, students and teachers were surveyed about teaching practices at Toronto Public School, using SchoolMap surveys.

Findings and conclusions

Students expressed very high levels of satisfaction, but displayed that they had little appreciation of planned outcomes.

Approximately 20% of families responded to the parent survey, revealing:

- 100% of respondents believe class activities are interesting and appropriate to children's needs and abilities
- 30% were uncertain about how much interaction there is between students and teachers concerning learning programs

The teachers' survey revealed that:

- there is a need for more suitable resources for reading and writing for Years 3-6; and
- students often do not recognise the connection between learning activities and planned outcomes.

Future directions

- We will make significant purchases of reading and writing resources for Years 3-6, for implementation in 2004.
- Teacher training and development will be focused towards the “quality teaching in NSW public schools” program in 2004.
- Greater emphasis will be placed on students’ knowledge of their own performance and their achievement of key outcomes. Refer to target 1 for 2004.

Curriculum

Science and technology

Background

Students and teachers were surveyed to determine this school’s satisfaction with teaching and learning in the key learning area of science and technology. An inventory of science and technology resources was also undertaken.

Findings and conclusions

Students displayed a love of science and technology and reported they particularly enjoyed the hands-on activities.

Teachers reported that:

- appropriate resources are often not available, or readily accessible; and
- significant time constraints often prevented the completion of required science and technology units of work.

The inventory of science and technology resources demonstrated that there is a need for more practical and literature-based science resources.

Future directions

- Throughout 2004 our English team and library will purchase additional literature resources, based on science and technology themes and concepts.
- Our science and technology resources will be rationalised, supplemented and organised into modular kits to better support units of work. Refer to target 2 for 2004.
- In 2004 science and technology units of work will be restructured to support greater integration with other key learning areas.

Other programs

Reporting to parents

Background

The reporting format was modified in first semester, 2003 to trial an indication of students’ performance relative to curriculum stages. Parents were surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the new structure. Over 70% of families responded.

Findings and conclusions

- 97% of parents indicated satisfaction with the modified report format
- 99% of respondents believe that it is important to discuss the report with the class teacher.

Future directions

- The “stage placement” section of the report will be incorporated in all school reports in 2004.
- Parent/teacher interviews will be timetabled to allow discussion about students’ progress at the end of first semester.

Year 6 Transition to high school

Background

In 2003 all Toronto High School “feeder” primary schools participated in an innovative program to better prepare Year 6 students for high school. Additional funding was provided by Lake Macquarie District Office to assist with this program. Our students met and worked with other Year 6 students in a collaborative program based on science and computer studies. Year 6 students and teachers were surveyed to determine the success of the program.

Findings and conclusions

- 90% of students are looking forward to Toronto High School in 2004.
- 96% of students loved the science activities.
- All teachers expressed enthusiasm for the program, which resulted in important advancement in collegiality and professional development.

Future directions

We have agreed to continue our active participation in this program in 2004. We will incorporate an environmental education and science focus, as part of the *Lake Macquarie Schools for Sustainability* project.

Student Performance

Literacy

School-based performance

Students (Yrs 1-5) with identified reading difficulties worked with the Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA). Literacy skills increased significantly; the greatest percentage increases being in the lower years, reinforcing the need to intervene early in the development of literacy skills.

Year1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
22%	18%	13%	10.5%	11%

In class-based testing:

- 65% of Kindergarten students scored a reading age of six months or more above their chronological age (Waddingtons test).
- 67% of Year 1 students had a reading age above their chronological age.
- 45% of Year 4 students have a reading age above their chronological age, which is an improvement over 2002 results.

Basic Skills Test – Year 3

Results indicated that there are areas for improvement, in particular

- spelling of high frequency words
- drawing inferences from narratives
- identifying word meanings from their context

Refer to target 3 for 2004.

Basic Skills Test – Year 5

Areas of strength include formal grammar and identifying meanings of metaphors.

Areas for development include making inferences from text and identifying meaning from context.

Progress over time

From 2001 to 2003 significant improvement in the results of matched students has included:

- a growth of one skill band or more for 93.3% of Year 5 students; and
- average growth of 10.4 BST points, compared with 7.0 for the state.

Over the past six years average growth for Year 5 students has been 9 points, compared with 7 for the state.

Numeracy

School-based performance

A coordinated approach to numeracy teaching K-6 was adopted, to ensure the coverage of all outcomes. To aid in the understanding of mathematical concepts, students K-3 were introduced to the program Count Me In Too (CMIT).

Our achievements include:

- positive initial stages of students' understandings of mathematical concepts in CMIT; and
- Year 4-6 students achieved an average growth of 9.9% in a series of "mentals" tests, in the four maths operations, administered in January and November, 2003.

Basic Skills Test – Year 3

Areas for development include concepts associated with 2D and 3D shapes and mathematical computations

Basic Skills Test – Year 5

Areas of strength include subtraction computations and geometrical concepts.

Areas for development include units of measurement and measurement of area.

Progress over time

From 2001 to 2003 significant improvement in the results of matched students has included:

- a growth of one skill band or more for 80% of Year 5 students;
- average growth of 11.9 BST points, compared with 7.8 for the state.

Over the past six years average growth for Year 5 students has been 10.8 points, compared with 7.8 for the state.

Primary Writing Assessment

Year 3

Areas of strength include good, cohesive use of pronouns.

Areas for development include paragraph structure and use of conjunctions and prepositions

Year 5

Areas of strength include good paragraph organisation and good sentence structure.

Areas for development include theme consistency, factual descriptions and text structure. Refer to target 3 for 2004.

Progress over time

From 2001 to 2003, 73% of matched students achieved improvement of more than 6 BST points, displaying better than “consistent” or expected progress.

Year 6 Computer skills assessment

In 2003 Year 6 students participated in a state-wide “pen and paper” test of computer skills. In addition, we agreed to be a pilot school for a Year 6 practical test of computer skills.

Findings and conclusions

In the “pen and paper” test our students performed better than the rest of the state in all five areas of computer studies, achieving an overall average of 70.2 compared with the state average of 68.6.

In the practical test our students performed slightly better than the rest of the state achieving an average score of 69.0 compared with the state average of 68.7.

Future directions

In 2004 computer education for classes K-6 will continue as weekly formal lessons in the computer laboratories, with follow-up activities using classroom computers

We intend to purchase a media projector and screen to enhance students’ presentations, computer lessons and staff professional development.

Our targets

Progress on 2003 targets

Target 1. To improve students’ numeracy

Our achievements include:

- successful implementation of the program “Count Me In Too” (CMIT) for grades K-3;
- CMIT results displayed substantial beginnings of growth of students’ understandings of mathematical concepts (see target 4 for 2004);
- significant improvements in Basic Skills Test (numeracy) results of matched students, over the period 2001 to 2003; and
- Year 4-6 students achieved an average growth of 9.9% in a series of “mentals” tests, in the four maths operations, administered in January and November, 2003

Target 2. To improve students’ spelling

Our achievements include:

- the development of a coordinated approach to the teaching and programming of spelling K-6;
- 88% of Year 1 students and 76% of Year 2 students achieved a spelling age above their chronological age in November 2003;
- 58% of Year 3 students achieved a spelling age above their chronological age in November 2003, with an average growth of 15 months over a 9-month period;
- The average spelling age of Year 4 students increased by 12 months over a 9-month period; and
- targeted students in Years 5 and 6 (with a spelling age below their chronological age) achieved an average growth of 12 months over a 7-month period.

Target 3. To increase levels of personal fitness and physical skills

Our achievements include:

- a whole-school coordinated program of fitness and skills acquisition;
- Over 95% of all students improved in the “beep” test of fitness and 30% of students achieved improvement of more than one level in the “beep” test; and
- outstanding performances in interschool gala days, competitions and sports carnivals

Target 4. To integrate technology use into classrooms



Our achievements include:

- completion of backbone and network cabling throughout whole school, with placement of computers into all classrooms;

- above state average performances by Year 6 students in Computer Skills Assessment;
- installation of high-speed, managed curriculum server, which delivers curriculum software to all classrooms; and
- Over 90% of all students achieved their proposed outcomes for computer studies in 2003.

Target 5. To improve school environmental management practices

Our achievements include:

- the production and implementation of a School Environmental Management Plan;
- a 12% reduction in electricity use, over the period October 2002 to October 2003;
- a 26% reduction in water use over 2003, resulting in savings of \$1750;
- a program of paper re-use and weekly paper recycling; and
- significant improvements to the appearance of school gardens and grounds.



Targets for 2004

Target 1. To improve teaching practices by ensuring that students appreciate the relevance of teaching and learning activities

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- a commitment by all teachers to make clear and explicit their expectations of students’ learning, in terms of outcomes, quality and participation;
- encouraging all students to take greater interest in monitoring and celebrating their own successes; and
- the demonstration of student progress through a collection of work samples, related to the key outcome indicators in school reports.

Our success will be measured by:

- a survey of students to determine if they believe they have greater participation in, and awareness of, their learning agenda;
- a survey of parents to measure increased knowledge of their child’s achievement of major learning outcomes; and
- students’ support of, and contributions to, a work sample collection.

Target 2. To advance and support the teaching and learning of science and technology

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- significant acquisitions of reading and writing resources that will support and enrich our science and technology program;
- science and technology resources will be rationalised, supplemented and organised into modular kits to better support units of work; and
- the development of a structured scope and sequence of science and technology units K-6, to support greater integration with other key learning areas.

Our success will be measured by:

- more frequent integration of science and technology in reading and writing lessons;
- the collection of structured, well-organised sets of effective, practical resources to support science and technology teaching K-6;
- the production and implementation of an effective school-based science and technology curriculum; and
- students will demonstrate increased ability to investigate, design and make effective use of technology in the classroom.

Target 3. To improve students’ performance in writing

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Students from K-6 will be given daily intensive instruction in writing and literacy during four uninterrupted “literacy sessions” per week.
- A collection of Stage 2 and 3 work samples will be maintained to demonstrate performance in the writing of all text types.
- Students will be encouraged to display their writing accomplishments through the newsletter, intranet, notice boards and assemblies.

Our success will be measured by:

- significant improvements in Primary Writing Assessment results;
- students displaying clearly positive attitudes about writing; and
- an evident display of good quality writing over a wide range of writing formats and text types.

Target 4. To improve students' numeracy

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- full implementation of Count Me In Too for students K-3 and introduction to "Counting On" for Year 4; and
- intensive, small-group instruction and practice, working in both class and withdrawal groups.

Our success will be measured by:

- an assessment of performances in the areas of space and numeration;
- students' display of increased confidence and understanding of basic maths concepts, as assessed following CMIT program; and
- improved performance in BST results.

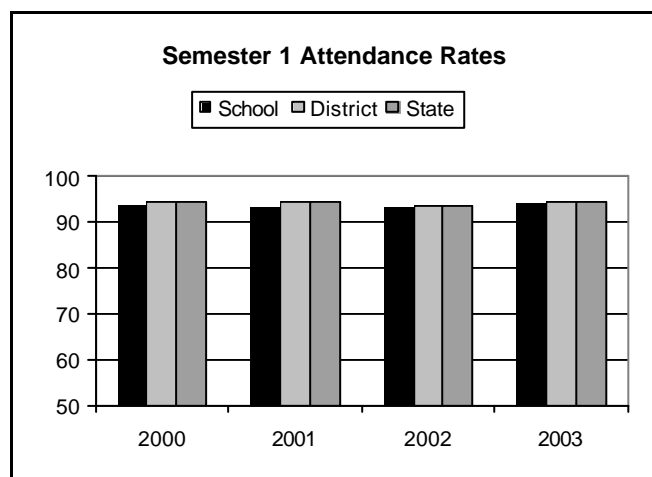
Our context

Enrolment profile

School enrolment in 2003 was approximately 205, with numbers fluctuating throughout the year.

Attendance profile

Our attendance rate has been slightly below state and district levels over the past six years. Attendance for boys has been consistently lower than girls' rates over the past five years.



Class sizes

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

This school will continue to be a pilot school for smaller class sizes in 2004.

The following table shows our class sizes, as reported at the 2003 class-size audit that was conducted on Friday 1 August 2003.

Roll Class	Year	Total per Year	Total in Class
Early Intervention	Pre-K	15	7
K-6/E	K-6	6	6
3-6/H	3-6	13	13
K/J	K	20	20
1/U	1	19	19
2/C	2	31	31
3/M	3	26	26
4/T	4	24	24
5/H	5	19	19
6/A	6	26	26

Structure of classes

In 2003 there were seven mainstream grade-based classes (K-6). In addition, there was an I.M. class and an I.O. class (both catering for students with special learning needs) and an Early Intervention unit catering for preschool children with specific social and/or learning needs.

Staffing

In 2003 our students were supported by:

Staff	Full-time	Part-time (days per week)
Principal	1	
Assistant Principals	3	
Classroom teachers	7	
Computer and music		4
Teacher librarian		2
STLA		1.5
School Counsellor		1.5
Teacher's aides	1	2.5
Clerical staff	1	2
Cleaner	1	

Parent and Caregiver Involvement and Participation

Parent and community involvement in this school are actively encouraged and gratefully appreciated.

Our Parents and Citizens Association (P & C) have been actively engaged in many facets of this school's organisation, including:

- operation of school canteen and clothing pool;
- lobbying Lake Macquarie City Council for road and entrance improvements;
- grounds improvements and working bees;
- membership on committees and interview panel; and
- extensive fundraising, resulting in the donating of approximately \$12,000 this year for reading programs, shade sail, library books, subsidy for learn-to-swim program, children's liquid soap dispensers and Presentation Day awards.

We are grateful to the many parents who have assisted throughout the year with canteen duties, transport of children, sports coaching, concreting, working on stalls, selling tickets, cooking sausages and assisting teachers with reading groups and the home reading program. Your contributions have enriched the education and welfare of our students.

Financial statement summary

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

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2003
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	50 783.36
Global funds	90 438.14
Tied funds	41 069.74
School & community sources	52 550.16
Interest	2 841.41
Trust receipts	5 440.57
Canteen	0.00
Total income	243 123.38
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	14 829.16
Excursions	12 097.38
Extracurricular dissections	9 844.86
Library	3 349.18
Training & development	4 631.07
Tied funds	55 585.79
Casual relief teachers	17 173.15
Administration & office	25 298.50
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	17 926.58
Maintenance	9 816.71
Trust accounts	5 841.45
Capital programs	1 181.82
Total expenditure	177 575.65
Balance carried forward	65 547.73

A full copy of the school's 2003 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the P & C Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Note that as the canteen is operated by P & C, not by the school, details of income from this source are not included.

A large portion of the "balance carried forward" is comprised of tied grants, which are set-aside for specific purposes.

About this report

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

Members of the school self-evaluation committee included:

- Bronwyn Strange, P & C Treasurer
- Julie Levy, P & C Member
- Sandra McIlveen, Senior School Assistant
- E. McLintock, Assistant Principal
- Neville Cole, Assistant Principal
- Noel Harrison, Principal

The district chief education officer has provided guidance to the school during the self-evaluation process and validated the analysis of student performance data contained in this report.

Ms Janina Sulikowski
Chief Education Officer
Lake Macquarie

The district superintendent has endorsed the targets contained in this report, which will be used to facilitate district planning and allocation of district resources.

Mrs Liz Rushton
District Superintendent
Lake Macquarie

