Negotiating The Maze:

Some ideas on managing the DEC interview process gleaned from the collective wisdom of social media.

Version 3.1
1. Preamble

Technically, applying for a job should be a straightforward process whereby the applicant aligns their skills and experiences with those demanded by the post with the aim, assuming the two to be a perfect match, of at least gaining an interview. What almost three years on social media has taught me is that this is just not the case (actually, it’s generally put slightly less formally!). I started this small guide in part as a response to my own failures in applications, not least that there appeared to be a “secret handshake” known only to a few on the precise construction of the application and the processes surrounding it. Given the constant referrals to fairness and equity it seemed to me that the level playing field existed but in some secret suburb. I set about gathering those pearls that were shared in social media with the first “edition” being a very rough collection. Version two added many more interesting items including lists of questions that might reasonably be asked at interview. Thanks to many generous and redacted colleagues, I can offer version three complete with successful (I am assured) applications.

The generosity of DEC social media is tremendous. Without its help, examples and occasional prodding I would have taken my own (by now successful) application, stored it on my hard drive and let the rest of the world go by. However, I feel that if you are to be a good digital citizen you should give as well as receive. Whether readers agree with this depends on how they feel this small guide is a contribution!

I hope colleagues in DEC find this of use. If you have anything to add, please contact me via social media or email. Errors are my fault; corrections are always welcomed.

In this new edition, I have been able to add a number of new interview questions and a section on “Expressions of Interest” applications.

PS Ganderton

January 2013.

2. The official version!

During the construction of this document I found reference to three useful sites whose objectives were to make the application and interview process clearer:


Eligibility Criteria HTs are on the DEC website:


3. Application

A great deal has been written about the application format, and the jobs@DEC site has some basic rules about the format an application should take. Often you’ll find reference to a set of criteria you should take into account (see above). The key seems to be:

- Follow the guidelines precisely for each position;
- Project yourself into the position i.e. “if appointed I would...” etc.;
- The rule is to think outwards from your post. So, classroom teachers need to focus their application on their own teaching and learning; Head Teachers need to expand this to how they would run the faculty and contribute to school management and Deputy Principals would require a whole-school and community focus;
- Use action verbs to describe what you have done – don’t write in the passive tense (see below);
- Frame your answers around the contexts of: Beliefs, Actions and Evaluations in the context of classroom, school and community (adjusting according to position);
- When writing, go for current examples, say what you did and show how it impacted on the class, faculty, school and community levels as appropriate;
- Do seek the active counsel and advice of your referees. Discuss your application with your referees and see if they support it. Look upon it as a form of professional development. Talk to your referees to see if they want to do it and to tell them about what you are trying to do. A good move is to email your letter of application to each referee.

There are quite strict guidelines on the format of the application. It should be ONE Word document and contain:

- A page (usually) with tertiary qualifications and the names and contact details of three referees (this is often used to put in a small letter of application but either way should not exceed 1 page);
- A series of general selection criteria which should take up no more than ½ page A4 each;
- Position criteria which must be completed in 2 pages A4.

A brief research foray into jobs@DET suggests that teachers have fewer criteria to address, from a list. For HTs and above there seems to be a common list (but see the actual site for precise details).

It is not just the format that should be followed (or else, as far as I am aware, you cannot be selected) there is a set of recommended verbs (see Appendix)

4. Interviews

Interestingly, there was little said about the actual application process on social media compared to the torrent of advice on the interview. So, you’ve finally cracked the system and got an interview.

4. Before the Interview

- Do your homework prior to the interview. It’s important to know about the school. Look at their website, annual report, MySchool and any other school documents;
- Arrange a mock interview with colleagues;
• Take the selection criteria and write down a couple of dot points for likely questions. Prepare short, crisp answers. Consider writing key points on post-it notes and then putting each one next to the interview question
• Ring the school or executive. Find out what they are looking for and how they want to develop;
• Consider the skills and qualities you can offer as a Teacher/HT;
• Collate your relevant experiences and visual resources you might need to have on hand to help you demonstrate your abilities;
• Dress appropriately;

5. During the Interview

A big emphasis was given on the idea of ensuring you are seen as the right person for the job. The idea is not to say what you have done but to project it into the position. So, using experiences A, B, C I can successfully do D and E at your school and here’s my evidence of the outcomes. Again, keep to the tripartite system:

“Belief > Action > Reflection in the context of Students > Exec/School > Community depending on … the level [of] the job [for which] you are applying”.

Here are the most often-repeated comments, organised around central themes:

• The questions they will ask:
  o It is likely you will be given time to look at the questions you will be asked. Use the time to write down key words and ideas to help you answer them in interview. Make sure you have enough to say for each question;
  o When answering questions, try to add a belief statement;
  o When asked if you’d like to add anything, question interviewers about their school’s specific challenges then show how you would address them;
  o If you’re given a problem, think of possible solutions and the impact of that on students, parents, staff and outside agencies;
• Timings:
  o Use all the interview time;
  o Take time answering questions, create a narrative;
• Approach to the panel:
  o Project yourself into the position. What can you do for your new school? What strengths and experiences do you bring to the school?;
  o Be yourself/honest/confident;
  o If you’re given a problem, think of possible solutions and the impact of that on students, parents, staff and outside agencies;
  o Use the names of the panel;
  o Make eye contact across all members of the panel evenly;
  o Don’t leave the panel in any doubt that you really want the job;
• Data, ideas and metalanguage:
  o Use the language of the documents e.g. School Leadership Capability Framework;
  o Know DET policies;
  o Use SMART data/NAPLAN;
  o Know the School Plan;
  o Consider taking paperwork/evidence via iPad to show the panel if asked for/needed
6. After the Interview

- Get feedback from the convenor;
- Stay positive;
- Be gracious in defeat – you never know when you might apply again;
- Try to find out what the characteristics of the successful candidate were and what you need to do to improve.

7. Potential Questions

It’s equally clear that staff want a series of questions to see the sorts of material they will face. Several staff put forward a question or two and one contributor, Rod Leonarder, linked a series of interview questions from real cases. The set below have been culled largely from his collection. As with the interview, they have been organised into groups. This should not imply that questions are specific to certain roles. Whilst some would be more applicable to, say, classroom teachers, a number are very general and could occur in any role or school type. It’s worth looking through all of them to see how the focus changes and what sort of ideas might be chosen.

7.1 General

- Why do you want to teach?
- How do you cope with disparate backgrounds and abilities?
- What personal and professional qualities do you have that would make you an outstanding teacher?
- Outline strategies to manage a difficult class.
- Discuss the importance of Assessment for and of learning.
- Outline innovative teaching strategies that you would use to inspire student engagement in learning.

7.2 Subject Teacher, High School

- Why have you chosen a career in teaching and specifically xxx teaching?
- What attributes and talents can you bring to an experienced xxx staff and what faculty initiatives could you contribute to?
- The successful candidate will have to take up an existing year 11 and year 12 General class. Explain what strategies you would employ to effectively teach these classes.
- Why would you wish to teach at xxx High and what whole school programs would you see yourself being involved with?
- What do you know about Australian Curriculum and its implementation in NSW from 2014?
- How would you ensure that students received homework that met their individual learning needs?
- How would you build effective anti-bullying strategies into your teaching programs?
- How would you deal with an over anxious parent who was concerned with their child’s progress?
- What are the ways in which you could use technology to enhance students’ literacy skills?
• What makes a good assessment task?
• What determines a quality report home to parents at the end of the school year?
• What is feedback? How would you ensure that you are providing effective feedback to students during the school year?
• How would you support a new student to your class who had low self-esteem?

7.3 Teacher, Primary

• As a newly appointed classroom teacher what would be your goals in the first year? What would be your goals in the first three years?
• What do you consider are the key components of an effective quality teaching and learning program for primary students in Years 3 - 6?
• How would you support a student who was struggling with reading and comprehension?
• How would you support a class that lacked understanding of space & measurement?
• What are the key aspects of effective classroom management?
• How would you approach a situation where a parent was writing to you every day and wanting to discuss aspects of their child’s progress at the end of each school day?
• How would you program a set of lessons on cyber bullying for Stages 2-3?
• What kinds of data about students would you share with parents on a parent teacher afternoon? How would you organise a 10 minute interview?
• How would you support a group of students in your class who came from non-English Speaking backgrounds and who had limited literacy skills?
• What do you think successful 21st century teaching and learning involves?

7.4 HT Secondary

• How do you identify and an excellent teacher when you see one?
• Please describe how you have led a team at a school. What were the results for student learning outcomes?
• This high school recently analysed NAPLAN data and found a significant issue of underperformance. How would you respond to this problem?
• What process would you go through in dealing with a teacher experiencing difficulty with their performance?
• You are on the way to a staff meeting that you are leading and you have just been told the whiteboard you want to use is out of action. As you are walking along, a teacher walks up and instead of helping with the whiteboard, gives you a child protection notification. As this is happening, you notice two pupils fighting in a doorway. How would you handle this matter?
• What are the successful leadership experiences and skills which you bring to this position?
• What are the strategies that you would put into place to lead the implementation of Australian Curriculum at xxxx?
• How would you ensure that professional learning for staff in the school was meeting the needs of all staff including temporary and part time teachers?
• How would you lead a review of the school student welfare program and anti-bullying strategies?
• How would you ensure that the school parent community was a valued and effective school partner?
• How would you build community confidence in the school? What role could a revamped school website play?
• How would you know if the use of technology in school classrooms was supporting the learning needs of all students across the school?
• Could you please explain to the interview panel your thoughts on the role that sport should play in the life of the school.

7.5 Assistant Principal, Primary

• Could you please describe for the panel a recent quality learning experience that you have shared with a class.
• How would you provide a range of stimulating activities to support boys in a class who had little interest in reading?
• How would you ensure that parents were made to feel welcome and had a key role to play in the education of their children?
• What role would the school library play in an effective teaching program?
• Could you describe for the panel ways in which you could encourage better student socialisation skills in the playground?
• What determines a stimulating learning environment within the walls of a classroom?
• How would you ensure that you are providing effective encouragement and feedback to students during the school year who are progressing at a slower rate than their peers?
• How would you encourage students in Stages 2-3 to develop effective writing skills?
• What are the key characteristics of an effective stage team?
• What are difficult conversations and why do you need to have them on occasions with staff?

7.6 Principal, Primary

• What are the three key attributes you will bring to this position? How will these attributes be in evidence?
• How would you create a quality leadership program for aspiring executive staff who were seeking promotion in the next 2 years?
• How would you enhance the effectiveness of the student welfare program in a school?
• What do you believe are the key values that determine a quality educational environment for boys?
• What are the key components of a successful school assessment and reporting cycle?
• How would you gather and use data to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of staff professional learning in the school?
• In your planning how would you cater for the professional learning needs and welfare of your administrative staff?
• How would you support a temporary teacher who was experiencing difficulties in the classroom?
• How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s attendance policy?
• Who would you seek to have on an evaluation team?
• What are the three most important qualities that school leaders need? Why?
• How will you know that classroom literacy practices in the school are best practice?
• As the newly appointed principal what are the key pieces of school information that you will source? Why?
• What do you consider are the key components of an effective quality teaching and learning program?
• How would you carry out a review of school assessment practices?
• What are the key educational and planning challenges facing schools with the advent of the new Australian Curriculum? How will you address these challenges?
• How would you ensure that school financial planning and management is best practice?
• What successes have you had with parent participation in schools in the past and how would you enhance the community’s participation in our school?
• How would you build leadership density across the school?
• How do you know that the school’s EARS and TARS processes are working effectively?

7.7 Principal Primary/Secondary

• What are the key educational challenges facing primary/secondary schools at present?
• How would you enhance the community’s participation in the school?
• What do you believe are the key principles and values that determine a quality educational environment for a staff from a diverse range of experiences and teaching backgrounds?
• What are the key leadership and management skills you bring to this position?
• In your school planning how would you cater for the professional learning needs of your staff?
• Refer to the student growth chart. Please share the student information you are able to obtain from this chart. Based on this information, what questions would you be asking staff to further guide appropriate literacy intervention for these students?
• Please list and describe the three (3) main strategies you would employ as principal to maintain and enhance an effective home-school partnership.
• How can you tell if the school’s assessment and reporting to parents procedures are meeting the needs of students and their parents?
• How do you intend at a school level to build capacity for your leadership team and aspiring leaders?
• What are the three key qualities that you will bring to this position if appointed?

7.8 Referees

• Could you comment on xxxx’s interpersonal skills in relation to students, staff and parents.
• Can you describe for the panel a key classroom learning initiative with which xxxx has been involved. How did this initiative lead to an improvement in student learning outcomes?
• Could you comment on the ways in which xxxx has nurtured and led whole school professional learning and development?
• Planning is a key responsibility of school leaders. What strengths in planning and evaluation has xxxx demonstrated?
• Our school has a significant enrolment of students from refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds. What experiences and understandings of non-English speaking background students would xxxx bring to this position?
• What are the key areas in which xxxx needs to demonstrate development?
• If you had three words to describe xxxx what would they be?
• How has xxxx demonstrated strategic leadership and vision?
8. Expressions of Interest

This is a unique category where the rules do not seem to be as clear cut. Towards the end of 2012, a trawl was made of EoIs advertised through “SchoolBiz” on the Department’s website, finding 26 examples. A brief analysis has been carried out and the results noted here:

- **Time**: you might think that this would be at the forefront of any application but in fact in was made explicit in less than 50% of cases. Where given, a year is the most popular time followed by 1 term of variable time depending on the nature of the job;
- **Type of post**: again, quite variable. Only 1 Principal post was through Eoi. Of the remaining, 6 were AP/DP, 4 classroom teachers and 2 Head Teachers. The biggest category with about 40% was for a range of specialist positions with funding equally varied. Here, posts varied from literacy to numeracy, behaviour, IT and music. A common thread was that they had attracted Federal funding;
- **Applying for the post**: Since this is an application and interview guide, this was the area most carefully researched. There were some very strong indications of what would be acceptable and this should guide the applicant:
  - **Length of EoI** – the vast majority wanted two pages addressing a range (usually about 6) of criteria. In only 2 cases were no indications given with 1 each for 1 and 5 pages. Clearly, the skills needed in the general application are the same as those needed here. Two specified font sizes and so care should be exercised in using the smaller fonts;
  - **Referees**: all need referees, usually 2 or 3 were stated and, as usual, the Principal is the first referee. Most importantly, a majority stated that the Principal needed to give explicit permission for the applicant to apply as well as take up the post if offered. A clear message here is the need to work closely with your Principal in both starting your application and refining it later (as they will be your referee);
  - **Interviews** – only 1 stated that no interviews would be expected, others tended to leave it as an assumption.

It is to be hoped that by the next version, a redacted example could be included.
9. References

The original Yammer threads are no longer available. The list here is taken from Maang Permalinks and relates to the ideas and resources surrounding the issue of interviews:

- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/8c5d41a63694223abf1b431c679ccf9a?r=5f862dbfacc1a46ab35fa60986e276c](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/8c5d41a63694223abf1b431c679ccf9a?r=5f862dbfacc1a46ab35fa60986e276c)
- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/a45203d197802cb5cf7dc92a94ee1e0b?r=29c87321be1f2c1eb8b013b526f8f2b](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/a45203d197802cb5cf7dc92a94ee1e0b?r=29c87321be1f2c1eb8b013b526f8f2b)
- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/c383e04155eeb5db1e8e5135f58326f6](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/c383e04155eeb5db1e8e5135f58326f6)
- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/ead2c53e373586a5bddd8dd8b37a03eb9](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/ead2c53e373586a5bddd8dd8b37a03eb9)
- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/c5786dda47a3b2e6bb6e14135caf30a9](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/c5786dda47a3b2e6bb6e14135caf30a9)
- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/4ae6b70df02a337cb62fb0fb45bb5af?r=8731e91397a7ea8141364c39912ad4d](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/4ae6b70df02a337cb62fb0fb45bb5af?r=8731e91397a7ea8141364c39912ad4d)
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- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/62226c2f17bb75b2cbe1994803543ccf?r=3b62f196bc0f26d7f9fa8410b3e612d0](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/62226c2f17bb75b2cbe1994803543ccf?r=3b62f196bc0f26d7f9fa8410b3e612d0)
- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/87a7f908e0901a90e0d22c8aed4fcd0?r=21e0a538ea005a7eff7f818aa99a9ca9](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/87a7f908e0901a90e0d22c8aed4fcd0?r=21e0a538ea005a7eff7f818aa99a9ca9)
- [https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/8fccf35d594f14d553897c7aac620bd4?r=2ac3c427061a620af84](https://www.maang.nsw.edu.au/st/signals/8fccf35d594f14d553897c7aac620bd4?r=2ac3c427061a620af84)
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Appendices

1. Powerful Verbs – taken from a DEC spreadsheet
2. Casual CV
3. Primary Teacher
4. Secondary HT
5. Secondary DP
## Appendix 1 - Powerful Verbs

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My name is Nathan MacGregor and I am seeking employment of any kind to further develop myself as a Primary school teacher.

My skills involve ICT, the visual arts, Mathematics and English. I am also very patient, have a knack of 'thinking outside the box' and can put a humorous and unique spin on a bland topic.

I enjoy teaching to see the academic and social growth in children from day-to-day. I believe teaching is a wonderful art to be a participant in.

### Personal Details

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### Education

2007 – 2010 **Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Teaching (Primary)**

University of [redacted]

Teaching method: K-6, All KLAs.

### Professional Work Experiences

2012 **One Day / Week, ICT Teacher and Coordinator**

[redacted] School

2012 **Six Week Block, Computer RFF**

[redacted] School

2011 **One Day / Week, Term 4, Early Stage 1**

[redacted] School

2011 **Four Week Block, Stage 3**

[redacted] School

2010 – 2012 **Various [redacted] Primary Schools**

Casual Classroom Teacher, K-6

### Professional Development Courses

2012 Staff Development Day.

*Work Health Safety, Child Protection and Sentral.*

2012 Co-presenter of *Introduction to Wikis, iPads & IWBs.*

2011 Staff Development Day.

*K-6 Maths and English Continuum. Anti-Racism and ARCO Role*

2011 *Explicitly Teaching Grammar in Context, 2011*

2010 *Connected Learning Day: Moodle 101*

### Referees

- **Principal**
  - Congewai Public School
  - New Lambton South PS
  - Eleebana Public School

- **Principal**
  - [redacted]
  - [redacted]
  - [redacted]
Please accept my application for the position of Teacher (Advert No. 9/*****) at *****. I believe that I have the necessary skills to meet the requirements and challenges of carrying out the duties of a teacher in your school. I also believe that I am able, through an open door and collaborative approach, to work effectively with all stakeholders to further raise the educational outcomes of the students, and the profile of the school in the wider community.

Over the past ** years I have been entrusted with the role of classroom teacher at ****, where I have been able to guide my students through a number of important educational programs and processes with the support of, and consultation with, staff and parents. I have been given the opportunity to work with students across the K-6 spectrum, allowing for comprehensive development of my teaching skills.

With my open and friendly personality I have been able to develop valued and lasting relationships with my past and present students, staff and in particular parents and community members.

As a dedicated and motivated teacher, I aim to develop open and welcoming relationships with students and their families. I feel that this is important to ensure that the needs and requirements of my students are met both socially and academically.

I trust that you will find my application worthy of consideration for the position at your school.

Curriculum Vitae

Personal Details:
Name:
Serial Number:
Address:
Mobile:
Email:

Teaching Experience:
NSW Department of Education and Training
Classroom Teacher – *****
Full-time (temporary) teacher on stages two and three (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)

NSW Department of Education and Training
Classroom Teacher – *****
Early Stage One to Stage Three - Blocks, RFF and Casual

Teaching Qualifications:
Bachelor of Teaching (with Distinction)
University of Wollongong
“Outstanding Pre-Service Teacher of the Year” award recipient.
– Nominated for “National Excellence in Teaching Award” (Inspirational Teaching)

Referee Information:
As a K-6 teacher, I have been able to:

- Effectively program for and implement individualised education programs for students including those with learning difficulties and gifted and talented students. During collaboration with STLA, school counsellor, LST and support staff, I have differentiated the curriculum to ensure all students are given the best opportunities to achieve desired outcomes. I have been able to support students and cater to their individual needs while maintaining an open and caring relationship with them and their families. This in turn has resulted in higher levels of student engagement and learning.

- Co-direct the development and implementation of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) as a member of the school welfare committee. This program will be rolled out school wide in semester [ ] This involvement has included the development of resources to enhance both consistent teacher judgement (CTJ) in behaviour modification and in rewarding and acknowledging student achievement. Due to whole staff collaboration, this new program is being introduced with the support of students, staff and the wider school community. PBL will greatly enhance the learning environment at **** for all staff and students and is directly addressing the 2011**** ASR target to “ensure that the education and welfare of all students have the highest priority in the operation of the school”.

- Enhance school programs and my professional development through involvement in; coordinating primary sport programs, coaching PSSA teams, coordinating the school newspaper, public speaking adjudication, initiating and coordinating the school movie making and website design teams, coordinating student council, leading and mentoring beginning teachers, conducting state wide video conferencing to peers, initiating fund raising events for the cancer council with school partners, actively supporting P&C fundraising events and developing quality teaching programs for all KLA’s, K-6. These experiences have developed my skills as a successful classroom practitioner and resulted in engaging and valuable learning opportunities which have improved student outcomes. These experiences have also allowed me to become a valued staff member at EWPS who is able to showcase the school and its students to the wider community in a variety of ways.

As a teacher with **** I will be dedicated to the provision of quality teaching in an exciting, engaging and inspiring classroom environment. I would also be a dedicated and motivated staff and community member, while being an asset to any teaching team.

PROVEN ABILITY TO DEVELOP THE LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS OF STUDENTS

Quality literacy and numeracy programs foster the development of essential knowledge and skills to give students the opportunity to grow into lifelong learners. I have demonstrated my ability to develop literacy and numeracy skills through:

- Analysing BST and NAPLAN results to monitor performance and growth rates in literacy and numeracy in my classroom. I have provided professional development to teachers in relation to analysis of our NAPLAN data (mathematics) to collaboratively construct highly engaging activities and lessons to support the outcomes based teaching of Mathematics (all strands) at ****. The success of these strategies is outlined in the 2010 **** ASR which indicates that 96% of year 3 students and 99% of Year 5 students achieved at and above the minimum standards in numeracy [ ].

- Advanced my classroom teaching practice by utilising the guidance and support of experienced teaching staff to develop both Reciprocal Reading and Accelerated Literacy programs. These programs have empowered students to guide and direct their own inquiry based learning tasks and develop comprehensive literacy skills. This ongoing improvement in literacy, directly addresses the 2010 **** ASR target to “improve our students’ literacy learning outcomes”.

- Initiating and implementing community based multimedia projects such as Website Design and MovieMaking. Along with Webquest development, students now have the opportunity to explore their creative writing and interview/research skills in a digital media. This ‘e-literacy’ has allowed for meaningful extension of both gifted and reluctant writers. The excitement associated with these forms of “hidden literacy” mean that the students are self-motivated, engaged, interested learners who are intrinsically motivated.

- Collaboratively implementing stage based mathematics groups, based on pre-assessment data and collaboration with peers. As a result there was an increase in professional dialogue regarding assessment best practice, including CTJ. Continued collaboration with staff and parents enabled the students to work to the best of their ability in an environment that encouraged explicit and high expectations of the students, relative to their abilities, while supporting all mathematical skill development. Students were able to more readily engage in ability based groups and greatly improved their confidence in risk-taking which consequently improved their effort and achievement.

As a teacher at **** I will continue to work with my colleagues to develop quality literacy and numeracy programs for all students. I will continue in my professional development to ensure that my skills and knowledge are current, to enhance the educational outcomes of Public School.

CAPACITY TO INTEGRATE TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY IN THE CLASSROOM

As a classroom teacher, I am responsible for providing students with the knowledge, experience and skills needed to operate successfully as a part of the digital revolution. Technology is now the medium with which students communicate and interact with the world around them. As a teacher, I have:

- Presented via video conference and Bridgit, a “Brecki with a Tekki” training session to colleagues K-12, across the state. This presentation focused on the use of Web 2.0 tools in a concise presentation on how to effectively integrate technology into the curriculum. This presentation was highly reviewed by the Principal, executive staff, my peers and colleagues across NSW.

- Created and am leading a support group for New Scheme Teachers to gain accreditation across NSW via regular video conferences. This excellent use of technology has been acknowledged by the DET and an article on my program is being published in the next edition of ‘Side by Side’ magazine.

- Programmed in accordance with the **** ICT Scope and Sequence, including integrating the use of a range of multimedia programs to support and extend Literacy and Creative Arts programming, providing a rich learning environment that focuses on teaching 21st Century skills to the students in my classroom.
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE IN THE USE OF QUALITY TEACHING PRACTICES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

As a teacher with **** I would eagerly accept the opportunity to become involved with or responsible for further developing a drama program to showcase the skills and abilities of students, to the wider community.

I have been involved in a number of different programs within the school and community environment integrating all facets of the Creative Arts. My involvement includes:

- Directing and coordinating stage 2/3 dance rehearsals for Open Day performances, initiating and coordinating the inaugural **** Talent Quest and extra curricular programs which develop fully, the talents and capacities of all students, in the pursuit of attaining the highest educational standards.
- Employing a variety of drama methodology in my teaching and learning including; moviemaking, impromptu performance and staged performance to allow students the opportunity to engage in a variety of dramatic forms through devising, rehearsing and acting. This allows the students to interpret and convey dramatic meaning using the elements of drama and a range of movement and voice skills in a variety of drama forms.
- Maintaining community connections through writing and directing children’s workshop and pantomime performances for a local theatre group. This involvement has drawn children from the local schools into extracurricular activities in their strength areas, allowing them to enhance in-school opportunities. As a result of this participation, parents have remarked at the difference in the confidence of their children and the positive effect this has had on all facets of their lives. I also am an active member of a number of theatre groups within the local area. This indicates my position as a life long learner to the students I teach, leading by example.

As a teacher at **** it will be my aim to continue to integrate technology as a seamless and regular component of my classroom teaching to enhance teaching. The systematic teaching of these ICT skills directly addresses the 2010/11 **** ASR target to “strongly increase the use of technology as a learning tool throughout the school”.

SKILLS AND/OR EXPERIENCE TO DEVELOP DRAMA PROGRAMS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

I have been involved in a number of different programs within the school and community environment integrating all facets of the Creative Arts Syllabus K-6. I have a passion for creative arts, particularly performance, and see this as a motivator for students to improve self-confidence. My involvement includes:

- Coordinating 3-6 drama program at ****. This has involved; writing and directing performances for school assembly presentations, directing stage 2/3 dance rehearsals for Open Day performances, initiating and coordinating the inaugural **** Talent Quest and programming and coordinating (K-2) assembly performances for over 300 students. These initiatives have provided opportunities for students to showcase their performance skills to the wider school community, enhancing their learning outcomes over a number of key learning areas along with raising the profile of Creative Arts and performance within the school.
- Employing a variety of drama methodology in my teaching and learning including; moviemaking, impromptu performance and staged performance to allow students the opportunity to engage in a variety of dramatic forms through devising, rehearsing and acting. This allows the students to interpret and convey dramatic meaning using the elements of drama and a range of movement and voice skills in a variety of drama forms.
- Maintaining community connections through writing and directing children’s workshop and pantomime performances for a local theatre group. This involvement has drawn children from the local schools into extracurricular activities in their strength areas, allowing them to enhance in-school opportunities. As a result of this participation, parents have remarked at the difference in the confidence of their children and the positive effect this has had on all facets of their lives. I also am an active member of a number of theatre groups within the local area. This indicates my position as a life long learner to the students I teach, leading by example.

As a teacher with **** I would eagerly accept the opportunity to become involved with or responsible for further developing a drama program to showcase the skills and abilities of students, to the wider community.
Ms
Deputy Principal, High School

Dear [Name],

Please accept my application for the position of Head Teacher at High School. With fifteen years teaching and leadership experience in schools, nine of those as Head of faculties, I possess the knowledge, skills, attributes and expertise required to be successful in the position.

I have been fortunate that my career has not only included leadership opportunities in schools but also in the wider educational environment. I have earned a reputation for my ability to plan strategically and implement strategies to achieve desired outcomes. My highly developed interpersonal skills enable me to create and sustain positive working relationships with students, teachers and parents alike. As an educational leader I develop a shared vision and bring the school community along with me to achieve its goals. I promote Quality Teaching in all classrooms, understanding that expertise in teaching and learning resides in the knowledge and skills of a continually learning staff. I employ innovative approaches to change and support others to embrace the positive aspects of state and federal initiatives.

My expertise in the application of and recent hands-on experience with the Board of Studies complement my years of leadership in large comprehensive public schools similar to High. My working relationships with Highly Accomplished Teachers and schools participating in the Teacher Quality and Low SES National Partnerships, together with my knowledge of the curriculum and professional development needs of teachers for the foreseeable future, would add much value to the High community, particularly as the school enters the Low SES NP itself in 2012.

Education in NSW is in the midst of significant change. The Digital Education Revolution, Australian Curriculum and Board of Studies syllabuses, a higher mandatory leaving age, an exam-free School Certificate and the ongoing assessment of literacy and numeracy growth through NAPLAN are some of the key issues impacting on schools. As Head Teacher of High I will provide effective leadership for the continued development of the school, allowing the school community to meet the challenges of change with confidence.

As Head Teacher High I will have an opportunity to use my extensive leadership experience both in schools and the wider educational context in NSW by:

- leading the faculty as a highly experienced Head Teacher with expertise in HSC and integrating technology into teaching and learning
- assisting the school to achieve the strategic directions outlined in the school plan by leading improvements in literacy, numeracy and student engagement through innovative curriculum planning, focused and sustained teacher professional learning and the immersion of technology in classrooms
- supporting staff to offer high quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students and to build their leadership capacity within and across the community of schools
- leading and sustaining ongoing positive relationships with parents and the community to foster the continued development of High as a learning community.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my application further with you and the panel at interview.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
Approval to teach

- I have a combined Bachelor of Science degree and Diploma of Education from University. I am accredited to teach and have been doing so in public schools for fifteen years, nine of those as the Head Teacher of three large faculties. I have successfully taught on numerous occasions. I have successfully taught in coeducational, single sex and vertically unitised schools in three Regions. I have worked as a School Certificate and HSC marker, HSC Examination Assessor and on the Advice Line.

- Due to my curriculum expertise and experience, I am consistently invited to lead and participate in initiatives on curriculum implementation by the DET and BOS. These include attendance at syllabus review symposiums, producing the responses to draft syllabuses, joining a project reference group for online teaching units for the Centre for Learning Innovation, organising and leading HSC assessments, running networks, and leading professional development sessions on technology, outcomes, standards-referencing and the UAI. These activities have enhanced teaching practices at faculty, school, Regional and State level.

- For six months at the beginning of , I was seconded to the Board of Studies to assist in project-managing the development of a new syllabus that would incorporate the Australian Curriculum – this syllabus is now in its final stages of development. This was a direct result of my experience as a Head Teacher and expertise in mathematics curriculum implementation. I also led the development of support materials for teachers to engage with changes to the HSC examinations and assessment specifications in – the last of these has just been published to the Board’s website.

Demonstrated capacity to be an effective member of the executive team and undertake whole school initiatives

- I have been a member of four executive teams, one as , the other three as Head Teacher . I have consistently shown myself to be a team player, using my interpersonal skills to be an advocate for my faculty but also to keep whole-school goals to the fore.

- I led the timetabling committee for years as , and assisted in the successful development of two timetables as – my experience and problem-solving skills allowed me to break a number of impasses that the timetabling team had reached. This necessitates negotiation with the school Executive and an ability to see the “big picture”, despite competing priorities from individuals and faculties. As , my interpersonal skills allow me to reach appropriate and successful resolutions to conflicts.

- At High I assisted in the development of a cross-curriculum ICT course in Year 7, designing, evaluating and improving units of work. Our successes with students led directly to the introduction of a further, more advanced course in Year 8 and also an increase in teacher proficiency with technology.

- At I supported a cross-faculty team initiative, leading a group discussing the implementation of the Quality Teaching Framework. I supported and participated in a school-wide initiative to reduce the number of students arriving late to school. I led the introduction of RISC to track welfare-related student contact, training staff in its use and linking N-notifications to the system, leading to strategies being put in place for specific students to address behaviour. As I took on management of fractional truancy in Year 12 and completed work on the Annual School Report.

- At I coordinated the program, participated in the Boys Education committee, and was working with the Deputy Principal on implementing the Team Leadership program when I transferred to the Institute of Teachers.

Understanding of and sensitivity to the needs of from a language background other than English

- I have been successfully running programs to meet the needs of students from a multitude of cultures with varying cultural, educational, religious and socio-economic backgrounds, and I would continue to do so as . Having taught for seven years in two schools of high academic standing, I have a great deal of experience not only in successfully teaching in the classroom, but also in meeting their needs in the wider field of student welfare. As a Head Teacher, I ensure a variety of learning strategies are provided, and assessment opportunities are given to suit the needs and interest of girls, including the flexibility to both allow for creativity and manage stress. I see my role as a teacher is to not only aim in their learning, but in their growth as productive members of the school and community, building resilience and general problem-solving skills along the way. I see my role as Head Teacher is not only to support teachers in their teaching, but in helping achieve the goals set by themselves, their parents, the school and community. My collaborative approach to leadership, skills in troubleshooting, patience, tolerance and sense of humour serve me well in achieving these goals.

- I create environments where girls are encouraged to take risks with their learning in safety, feeling valued in their contributions to the class. I encourage girls to discuss and debate their ideas, and have found alternative assessment strategies such as research assignments and investigations to be extremely successful in allowing girls to demonstrate their capabilities. I employ a firm but fair manner in conflict resolution situations, providing a positive role model via my own behaviour.

- Both at , I engaged a specialist teacher with a linguistics background from an Intensive English Centre to inservice my staff and I on ways to adapt our teaching methods to incorporate language

Specific Selection Criteria
perspectives for international students. I increased the use of technology in mathematics classes, and encouraged students to talk about mathematics with other students, both in their own language and in English. At the same time, I increased my own knowledge about other cultures and ways of learning.

**Evidence of strong educational leadership of the mathematics faculty to support innovative and differentiated teaching and learning programs, including integration of emerging technologies**

- I have successfully led three large faculties through new syllabuses, necessitating large-scale change to pedagogical and assessment practices over a number of years. I have also worked on a number of projects both within school (assessment and reporting, curriculum committees) and on a larger scale that have given me the ability to see the bigger picture of curriculum, not just centred on my own faculty.

- Throughout my career I have demonstrated innovation through breaking down rigid curriculum structures. At [redacted] and [redacted], I restructured the traditional three-pathway model for mathematics classes into two. The reasons and outcomes were twofold: to reduce off-task behaviour by breaking the nexus of disruptive students, and to take students as far along the learning continuum as possible through a renewed focus on teaching and learning. With appropriate support from myself, students settled and became more engaged in lessons, teachers spent less time on behaviour management and more time on improving learning outcomes.

- I employ various strategies for extending and enriching the curriculum for gifted and talented students. At [redacted], I organised the acceleration of a particularly gifted student by teaching [redacted] course whilst [redacted] was in my year 9 class, mentoring [redacted] through the HSC course (in which [redacted] achieved a Band 6). At [redacted], the unised curriculum allowed for groups of accelerants (smaller classes who move through the curriculum at a faster rate), and as Head Teacher I ensured that these groups were able to satisfy requirements for their SC or HSC. I developed a Stage 6 Mathematics unit of work for the DET’s Gifted and Talented Unit, giving me opportunities to further explore models of curriculum differentiation and develop specific activities for mainstream classes that contain gifted students.

- I again used the unised curriculum as [redacted] to lead the creation and delivery of a numeracy support class for students who were performing below average in the test. This small class allowed for targeted interventions for students, providing instruction and reinforcement of areas of difficulty. At [redacted], I wrote and implemented a [redacted] course in Year 12 for students disengaging from mathematics.

- I am a keen advocate of graphics calculators, and campaigned for their acquisition in my last three schools. I lead the professional development of staff, model their use, and have achieved substantial improvements in student results. I have also introduced computer-based graphing, statistics and dynamic geometry packages to staff as schools find ways to increase the availability of computers to classes in all faculties.

- At [redacted], I secured funding to set up my room with a digital projector and whiteboard. This led to a school-wide program of fitting out classrooms with laptops and digital projectors. This provided flexibility for teachers in lesson delivery, increased student engagement in lessons and provided a focus for professional learning on technology in teaching and learning. This was in 2007, before the Digital Education Revolution became Federal Government policy.

- My high level of computer literacy gives me the ability to provide technical assistance as well as support teachers in learning new skills. I am always happy to fully realise the potential of a lesson incorporating the use of technology to teach curriculum concepts as well as a lesson about technology. Having taught alongside very experienced teachers throughout my career, I have developed methods of encouraging those with long-held antipathy to technology, enabling them to see the huge benefits in integrating computers into their classrooms for their students.

**Ability to use data and lead the implementation of a whole school numeracy program**

- I have participated in the evaluation and improvement of school policies, documents, faculties and procedures, giving me experience in analysing data to determine areas of need, developing the most appropriate program to implement and communicating information to the school community to ensure they have all opportunities afforded to them.

- I have planned and led the implementation of two whole-school numeracy strategies. At [redacted] I instituted [redacted], where the entire school community was given the opportunity to be involved in activities designed to increase engagement. This galvanised the school and raised the profile of mathematics, eventually linking to regional Literacy and Numeracy Week activities. At [redacted] I collated test items by subject and teachers used these items in the term leading up to the inaugural NAPLAN tests to familiarise students with question types and make explicit the numeracy requirements for their subject. This was the first time that numeracy was addressed in the school outside the mathematics faculty.

- I have experience in analysing both internal and external data to inform and evaluate learning programs. Results include all Year [redacted] students achieving national benchmarks in [redacted] through the introduction of strategies for the explicit teaching of literacy and problem solving; outstanding results in SC and HSC courses in the three schools I have served as Head Teacher, including measurable improvements in courses in which students typically performed below desirable levels.
1. Successful teaching experience with capacity to initiate improvement in teaching, learning and classroom practice

I have been a successful teacher, head teacher and teacher educator throughout my 19 years in education. I am recognised for my ability to initiate improvements in classroom practice to continually improve student learning. This has been demonstrated by:

- **Being a highly experienced teacher, passionate about my subject.** My students have achieved success at the highest level (Band 6 in three schools) and also at the most modest (Year 8 students in Band 1 of the test). I was merit selected to my first Head Teacher position at [position], and have since led faculties in three large comprehensive high schools. I was targeted by [target] to provide pedagogy instruction to prospective mathematics teachers, and am routinely sought by the DEC and the Board of Studies for curriculum initiatives, such as my recent secondment to the Board to lead the development of the new syllabus incorporating the Australian Curriculum. My experience in developing an accreditation system for highly accomplished teachers with the [accreditation] led to my current position at [position].

- **Leading data analysis** via the Results Analysis Package and SMART software for NAPLAN, SC and HSC results to determine strengths and areas for improvement. I identified that students were performing poorly in the measurement strand in the test, and led my staff in focusing on enriching teaching practices in that area using the Quality Teaching framework, turning measurement into a strength the following year. At [school], I identified a pattern of falling numbers in the higher bands of the School Certificate examination that I linked with the low instance of homework completion in Years 9–10. I led the faculty in implementing a regular assignment program to familiarise students with the exam and act as the minimum work required to satisfactorily complete the course. This program worked so well (Band 6 numbers stabilised in 2008 then increased 400% in 2009) that it was modified and extended to all Years.

- **Implementing an improved assessment feedback strategy** to classes at [class]. All tasks, whether formative or summative, contained feedback in the form of comments only – students could focus on what they needed to do to improve rather than link a mark with their own self worth. Improvements were evident, such as a reduction in routine errors in subsequent tasks, and students took responsibility for their learning by gathering together to discuss different methods of solution. Student morale also increased, and I have made this style of feedback a feature of classes in subsequent schools.

As Head Teacher Mathematics at [school], I will draw on my expertise to lead improvements in classroom practice. I will do this by focusing on improvements in student learning outcomes through the achievement of school targets and priorities.

2. Knowledge of curriculum, assessment and student welfare with the ability to lead and design quality, inclusive teaching and learning programs

My expertise in both the effective design and implementation of curriculum, together with experience in SC/HSC marking and creating rich assessment tasks, complements my career-long involvement in student welfare. My leadership in this area has been demonstrated by:

- **Working closely with the Department of Education and the Board of Studies – I am a recognised curriculum expert.** I have been instrumental in successful initiatives for both organisations, such as: leading the development of the [syllabus] incorporating the Australian Curriculum; aligning work samples to grades for the Board’s Assessment Resource Centre; supporting teachers to validly assess student work; co-writing the [syllabus] through a DEC consultancy contract; and developing a unit of work for gifted and talented students in mainstream classes. My experience allows me to lead teachers in delivering engaging, challenging learning experiences through programs that cater for the diverse needs of their students and influence learning outcomes of students across the state.

- **Proactive involvement in student welfare** in my schools, linked to raising achievement levels in the classroom. At [school], I combined numerous faculty-based systems into a whole school approach that raised student participation by 10%. I led the welfare team in instituting motivational programs, increasing funding for students with special needs and leading senior subject advisory sessions. I have continued this focus on the welfare of students to improve classroom engagement in my subsequent Head Teacher and relieving Deputy Principal positions through developing inclusive faculty policies, restorative justice practices and in my everyday dealings with students and parents.

- **Planning and implementing two whole-school numeracy strategies.** At [school], I instituted [strategy], where the entire school community was given the opportunity to be involved in activities designed to increase engagement. This galvanised the school and raised the profile of mathematics, eventually linking [link]. At [school], I collated [test] items by subject and teachers used these items in the term leading up to the inaugural NAPLAN tests to familiarise students with question types and make explicit the numeracy requirements for their subject. This was the first time that numeracy was addressed in the school outside the mathematics faculty.

As Head Teacher Mathematics at [school], I will lead the implementation of the mathematics curriculum. I will use the Quality Teaching model to enhance staff capacity to design high quality teaching and learning programs. I will lead student welfare initiatives including programs designed to enhance the quality and inclusivity of teaching and learning programs in the school.
3. Educational leadership skills to build the capacity and manage the performance of individuals and teams

The core educational leadership skills are about developing a clear vision, together with strategic planning and innovation to move the school towards this vision. Articulating the vision and empowering others to deliver on school strategic plans are critical. I have demonstrated this by:

- **Educational leadership skills.** As an educational leader I possess a range of skills to build teacher capacity: knowledge of educational research trends; the ability to develop plans for the school; the ability to ask the right questions to clarify issues and make decisions; empowering others to develop leadership capacity for the good of the school; and interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. As an educational leader I possess the ability to provide clear direction to 'bring others along' for a common purpose. The educational leadership skills I bring to the role of Head Teacher will provide leadership for staff and executive and be important to the cohesion of the senior executive team.

I take every opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and leadership capacity of colleagues as well as my own. I support teachers to individualise their professional learning through developing a culture of Individual Professional Learning Plans (IPLPS) in schools. I believe that IPLPs, based on the professional teaching standards, provide a clear focus for teacher development over time. IPLPs link to the TARS and EARS processes, enabling teachers to renew their IPPL for the following year. I believe that developing a culture of individualised professional learning provides a process that enables clear goal setting and the identification of individual professional learning needs which can then be addressed.

- I have built extensive networks within professional associations, the Department, the Board. These networks serve to increase staff knowledge, creating opportunities for improvement. For example: my relationship with the DEC brought funding for teachers to implement thenoon; and my activities with the Board of Studies brought improved knowledge of grading work samples to high.

- My role includes supporting teachers, in the implementation of professional teaching standards. I was instrumental in developing the process for high, as well as providing advice and assistance to high.

I would be an exceptional support for teachers in high.

As Head Teacher at High I will use my educational leadership skills to assist in achieving the school’s strategic priorities and plans. In doing this I will build the capacity of others to improve teaching performance and nurture the leadership potential of colleagues for the betterment of the school, students and community.

4. Well developed communication and interpersonal skills with the capacity to build relationships and engage students, staff and parents

Effective communication and positive relationships with students, staff and parents are central to my daily practice. My skills in communicating both personally and in a variety of media and negotiating with individuals and groups have been consistently demonstrated throughout my career. Examples are:

- **Students consistently identify my teaching as explicit and clear,** and in particular that I have a variety of methods of teaching even the most challenging concepts. I provide opportunities for students to constantly clarify meaning and understanding. I also build supportive relationships with parents and carers – my open communication with parents and carers about the learning and welfare needs of their child is a highly successful and positive approach. I am a highly visible educational leader, both in schools and the broader education community.

- In my last two schools I renewed and redirected the school newsletters, turning them into professional, informative publications that engaged the respective school communities. As a leader of professional learning I am well regarded for my ability to engage teachers in ways that are relevant and clear. My non-school-based roles require me to present to large groups, run successful workshops and training sessions, and lead effective group evaluations of policies and curriculum documents. I also provide considered advice and assistance to individual teachers about their practice every day.

- Forging relationships and building rapport with students by leading and contributing to extra-curricular activities. Building relationships is my key strength – I provide the conditions for students, teachers and parents to work positively with each other. I seek to build trust and loyalty amongst those with whom I come in contact.

- Positive relationships with staff, students and parents, together with patience and tolerance, assist me in quickly resolving conflict. Experiences have seen me deal with a variety of conflict situations: disagreements over assessment task submissions, squabbles in friendship groups, and cyber-bullying over Facebook. My empathy enables me to quickly de-escalate situations to prevent further conflict, my listening skills quickly lead me to the heart of matters, and my collegial nature ensures parents and relevant staff are informed of the outcomes.

As Head Teacher at High I will demonstrate leadership in connecting students, staff, parents and the broader community. My outstanding communication and interpersonal skills will allow me to build and foster relationships so that the school community works together for the betterment of all.
5. Ability to plan and manage resources effectively and equitably to support teaching and learning

Effective planning requires the management of resources, whether financial, material or human, aligned to the goals of the School Plan to ensure that the greatest improvements in teaching and learning. I have demonstrated this by:

- **Careful strategic planning** to align faculty needs with the school plan and allow for long-term resource replacement meant that my faculties were extremely well resourced and remained within budget. Students received hard and soft copies of texts for school and home use, the stock of teaching resources was broadened to include technology, and class sets of graphics calculators were made available. At [school name], I implemented a buy-back scheme for students to purchase graphics calculators cheaply. I operated a mathematics computer room at [school name], and gained funding to outfit mathematics classrooms at [school name] with projectors and laptops. These activities created the conditions for improved teaching and learning, and provided a focus for teacher professional learning.

- **My membership of the finance committee**, completing professional development on financial management and cash flow budgeting in my first year at [school name], I put this learning to use by streamlining the school budget and management plan submission process and introducing cash flow budgeting across the school to better monitor expenditure. This enabled the redirection of unused funds to successful programs. The next year I took on leadership of the committee, instituting a program of improvements to the classroom environment and directing funds towards technology resources. A [teacher name] developed the technology component of the school plan, implementing strategic directions for the integration of ICT within teaching and learning programs across the school.

- **Managing human resources**. At [school name], I restructured Stage 5 [class level] classes to take advantage of the pathways in the syllabus and push students as far along the learning continuum as they were capable of going. I removed the lowest level and ensured teachers participated in professional development on differentiating the curriculum to meet the diversity of student needs. When I moved to [school name], I noted that teachers of [class level] following the lowest pathway were spending an inordinate amount of time on behaviour management and student learning experiences were poor. Again I restructured classes, removing the lowest pathway and also breaking up a number of groups of disruptive students. I made it clear to students and parents that teaching and learning was the priority. The changes reduced the incidence of unsettled behaviour, allowing teachers to concentrate on delivering higher quality learning experiences to improve learning outcomes.

I have a proven record of planning and managing resources for improvements in teaching and learning at school, regional and state level. As Head Teacher [school name], I will apply my skills to support teaching and learning to achieve improved learning outcomes for all students of the school.

6. Knowledge of and commitment to the Department’s Aboriginal education policies

I am committed to improving the educational outcomes and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students so that they equal or better the outcomes of the broader population. I have demonstrated this by:

- **Bridging the achievement gap**. All in public education are striving to provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to maximise their learning. Aboriginal students are over represented in the lower performance bands of NAPLAN assessments. NAPLAN data is an excellent resource for analysing the performance of Aboriginal students and diagnosing strengths along with areas for further learning development. This provides clear direction for modifications to teaching and learning programs to support Aboriginal students. Analysis of school data such as attendance, distribution of merit awards and suspension rates provides a more complete picture on which to base decisions on modifications to school processes to meet the needs of Aboriginal students. I am committed to reducing the achievement gap for Aboriginal students and will provide leadership to make evidence-based decisions to make this a reality at [school name] High.

- **Developing personalised learning plans (PLPs)**. I have previously supported students and their families through the process of developing such plans, including transition and integration plans. This is a positive way of exploring goals and aspirations along with providing tools for support. I know that PLPs are not intended to be a diagnostic tool to map student learning. Developing PLPs is a positive way of strengthening connections between Aboriginal students their families and the school. I am committed to supporting Aboriginal students and their families through this process.

- **Building equal partnerships with parents and the local Aboriginal community**, supporting them to be an important link in the home-school relationship, recognised as vital to the educational success of Aboriginal students, and indeed students of all backgrounds. I actively promote respectful, non-racist attitudes amongst staff and students and will ensure that school processes are consistent with this stance.

As Head Teacher [school name] High I commit to the implementation of the Department’s Aboriginal education policy and its aims of promoting the educational achievements of Aboriginal students and educating all students about Aboriginal Australia. I commit to the achievement of these aims and their place in all aspects of school life through my leadership of policy and program implementation to support Aboriginal students at the school.
Application for the position of Deputy Principal

High School

Career History

Deputy Principal – Relieving Principal

High School - present

Relieving Deputy Principal

High School

Relieving Principal

High School

Head Teacher

High School

Relieving Head Teacher

High School

Teacher:

High School

HSC Marker:

NSW Board of Studies

Academic Qualifications:

Master of Education

University

Bachelor of Economics:

University

Graduate Diploma of Education:

University

Referees

Principal:


Principal


Deputy Principal


GENERAL SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Successful teaching experience with capacity to initiate improvement in teaching, learning and classroom practice.

In High Schools I have led, I have ensured the provision of staff and programs to provide quality education in a supportive environment that promotes student engagement, belonging, challenge and recognition.

I have a proven commitment to the creation of collaborative learning communities as demonstrated by:

- **leading** experienced teachers in exemplary and engaging teaching practice – they have been able to see innovative teaching practices work effectively to improve learning. I have developed and taught units of work using Moodle, Blooms' Taxonomy and Quality Teaching (QT) thinking skills. I have **initiated** and led the implementation of Moodle as a Learning Management System – we now have nearly 50% of teachers trained to work with Moodle. As a result of these measures we have greater student engagement in learning as reflected by **above state average growth** in writing and grammar in the 2010 NAPLAN tests.

- **surveying** staff, who identified a lack of awareness of the Quality Teaching Model as an issue. In collaboration with the Principal we created the **Positive Learning Team**. This team had 3 smaller teams – quality teaching strategies, data analysis and the gifted and talented team. Together they created resources and strategies for implementing the QT model. We actively pursued intellectual quality to increase student engagement. This led to an increased percentage of bands 5 and 6 in the school certificate and HSC in **and**.

- **creating** the **Positive Behaviour For Success (PBS) team** in response to increased levels of student disobedience and defiance. I guided this team in their progress into stage two of the program. In stage one we inculcated students with our shared values and encouraged staff to positively reward student cooperation. PBS implementation has helped reduce suspensions by 40% between **and**.

- **leading** HTs through the **EARS program** with regular meetings and lesson observations. Through collaborative planning, action, observation and reflection each faculty has improved their School Certificate, HSC and NAPLAN results significantly.

*As Deputy Principal of High School I will continue to pursue and develop in teachers innovative teaching practices that will engage and inspire all students to enjoy and value learning.*

2. Knowledge of curriculum, assessment and student welfare with the ability to lead and design quality inclusive teaching and learning programs.

As a school leader, I have used my educational expertise to generate a curriculum at **that is relevant, dynamic and flexible. Realising the challenge of providing flexibility and choice in the curriculum is essential to meet the needs of all students. A relevant curriculum must engage students and maximize their learning. I have achieved this through:**

- **collaboratively created** an engaging and flexible curriculum plan. This has led to an increased number of students in Year 12 who accessed further education, training or employment. In **27%** of Year 12 students were accepted into university.

- **implemented support programs** such as Peer Mediation and Rock & Water. I led the training of students in mediation training. Our mediators are now taking on mentoring roles with Year 7 students. As a result students are better able to manage their own conflict and are self-referring to Peer Mediation

- **initiated** the implementation of a range of middle school initiatives such as **“success for boys”**. I successfully managed the **budget for this program. This involved using staff and students from** to mentor and learn with Primary school staff and students. This led to improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for boys as measured by NAPLAN.

- **leading Action Learning Teams**. I identified the need for teachers to have time to reflect on their teaching practice. I successfully applied for a **grant from the Commonwealth Quality Teaching Program. This facilitated the professional development of early career teachers, developed leadership skills in the more experienced teachers, and promoted improved student engagement. **

*As a member of the Senior Executive at High School I will develop effective student welfare programs that will assist all students to engage in meaningful and relevant curriculum. If we get the curriculum right, the need for welfare intervention should be reduced.*
3. Educational leadership skills to build the capacity and manage the performance of individuals and teams

Ongoing professional learning is central to teacher’s work. By valuing staff as individuals, seeing them succeed and grow, they will in turn provide the best possible learning opportunities for their students. As a school leader, it is also pivotal to support staff and ensure that their welfare needs are addressed. I do this by:

- **valuing people**, giving direct assistance, providing continual feedback and ensuring all staff have the opportunity to work collaboratively with their colleagues.
- **collaboratively developing** the school vision statement, core beliefs and strategic management plan. Executive and management team leaders have clearly defined leadership roles and have developed the skills to initiate change focussing on improving student outcomes. Whole school decision making structure and planning processes are based on a teams approach. This has led to greater ownership of targets by staff.
- **coaching** two PBS teams – [insert names] HS and [insert names] HS – both have progressed to stage two of the program after achieving 80% values recognition in their SET scores. [insert names] HS is now implementing PBS in the classroom. This has led to a reduction in the school suspension rate by 40% between 2008 and 2009. **Led a review of PBS team in [insert names] - this revealed a substantial reduction in Stage 2 and 3 referrals**
- **created** an attendance team that has led to improved student attendance from 87% in 2007 to 89% 2009 by identifying students at risk at attendance team meetings, liaising with HSLO and attendance blitzes.
- **leading** the school through the process of developing and articulating its core values via a series of forums involving staff, students and parents. **This has led to improved communication and trust within the school community evidenced in the high degree of consultation and collaboration across a range of initiatives. Effective teambuilding is a key skill that I will bring to the role of [insert names] High School Deputy Principal.**

4. Well developed communication and interpersonal skills with the capacity to build relationships and engage students, staff and parents

I have used my well developed communication and interpersonal skills to foster positive relationships across the whole school community in order to ensure that [insert names] achieves its goals. Examples of my leadership in this area include:

- **restructuring** the timetable to include regular times for faculty meetings, committee meetings, executive meetings and staff meetings to ensure a focus on our school goals and provide constant feedback. **This has led to effective school planning and stronger staff and community support as a result of our regular meetings, transparent and consultative decision making processes.**
- **initiated** the implementation of regular meetings with the student body through weekly year meetings, assemblies, formal events and major merit assemblies each term.
- **liaised with DOCS** and other agencies to develop positive outcomes for students’ physical, emotional, psychological, social and learning needs. This has led to an increasing number of students accessing care from outside agencies such as Headspace.
- outstanding **conflict resolution skills** that I use to mediate or conciliate student and staff disputes. This has led to reduced staff conflict and reduced student suspensions as a result of conflict. I have always followed **procedural fairness guidelines** when dealing with student and staff indiscretions. As a result we have created a safer and more pleasant learning environment for students and staff. This is confirmed by student and staff survey responses.
- **constant communication with:**
  - **students**, by ensuring access to the Deputy Principal and encouraging students to discuss with me at SRC meetings, year meetings, whole school assemblies and surveys.
  - **staff**, by collaboratively writing role statements, developing school calendars and contributing in newsletters. Additionally, I have coordinated daily staff notices, staff meetings, morning teas and **Professional Learning Days**.
  - **the community**, by regularly attending orientation evenings, P&C meetings, information sessions, EXPO evenings and meeting with - parents, police and DOCS caseworkers.

*I will bring my vast experience as a Deputy Principal to [insert names] High School in order to explain and communicate change that will dominate the educational landscape in the coming decade. This educational change will include the National Curriculum, Teacher Professional Learning and Digital Literacy.*
5. Ability to plan and manage resources effectively and equitably to support teaching and learning.

Highly developed planning and organisational skills that cater for input from all stakeholders in the school community are essential for efficient and equitable allocation of resources directed toward educational programs and strategic management and leadership of schools. I am an outstanding and effective leader who has consistently demonstrated excellent management of people, resources and time to achieve collaboratively determined goals. I have demonstrated this by:

- **successfully managing** the $professional learning budget. This has increased staff skills and hence their ability of staff to achieve school goals and targets
- **developing** a highly effective and innovative relationship between the primary schools and . This has enabled us to obtain over $ in program grants to run the “lighthouse program for boys” and the “success for boys” initiatives. It has also allowed us to develop a range of excellent transition programs for years 4 to 8
- **successfully managing** the $budget for professional learning in Laptop use. Improved teaching and learning, as resources are directly targeted to develop teachers abilities in creating ICT learning programs. As a result we have increased use of ICT in classrooms. **Our students in 2009 reached state average in ICT skills.**
- **ensuring** the school’s resources are aligned to the school’s management plan. By linking professional learning, personnel (eg STLA’s and teachers aides) and budgets to specific programs in the school we have been much more effective in achieving our goals.

6. Knowledge of and commitment to the Department’s Aboriginal education policies

High School has a significant Aboriginal population of students. Despite this high number, we do not have an AEA to support their learning. To better cater for the needs of our Aboriginal students, I have:

- **identified the needs** of Aboriginal students as a key issue in the School Plan and established targets to improve learning and social outcomes
- **mandated** the election of an Aboriginal student to the SRC to be a voice and role model for our students
- **ensured** that all formal events commence with a welcome to country and recognition of local elders
- **liaised** with local elders and SACYA to involve students in local “mens” and “womens” groups.
- **promoted** the celebration of important events for Aboriginal students such as NAIDOC week and Sorry Day.
- undertaken an assessment of the performance of Aboriginal students in SC and NAPLAN as a key school evaluation in 2007 Annual Report. As a result of this we have successfully obtained funding to address literacy and numeracy improvement in 2008.
- **employed** an Aboriginal worker for days per week to assist Aboriginal students in their learning.
- **completed** the development of Personal Learning Plans for all Aboriginal students.
- **liaised** with the school executive via the EARS process to ensure Aboriginal perspectives are embedded in the curriculum.
- **ensured** staff are well aware of Aboriginal Education policies and review documents at staff meetings and on School Development days
- **liaised** with Aboriginal DET staff and local Koori community groups to access better social and family support for Aboriginal students
- **ensured** that there is an Aboriginal representative on the selection panel for staff at OFHS.

**Significant outcomes of these initiatives have been:**
- improved retention of Aboriginal students in the senior school
- increased awareness of Aboriginal events throughout the school
- the embedding of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum
- improved support for Aboriginal students in their learning via program funding
- improved performance in NAPLAN for Aboriginal students highlighted by state average writing in 2010.
- the establishment of positive relationships with the local elders and Koori community

I have lead the community in the adoption of the region’s Aboriginal Education Mantra:

‘Know the Students, Know the Targets, Know the Community’
SPECIFIC SELECTION CRITERIA

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL [High School]

As Deputy Principal of [High School] I will lead the growth of the learning community so that it is characterised by a willingness for all to learn collaboratively and cooperatively. [High School] is a highly competitive educational sector. Experienced leadership will allow [High School] to continue to be the educational lighthouse of. My educational philosophy is that schools should be places of enjoyable learning for all; students and teachers. A Deputy Principal is someone with outstanding relationship building skills who has a clear focus on the direction the school wants to move. I have demonstrated my ability to work collaboratively with a range of principals and loyally support them in moving the school forward. I believe it is essential that a Deputy Principal has excellent communication, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. These skills are necessary to create, implement and evaluate engaging curriculum for all students. A vision collaboratively created by staff, parents and students will not only provide direction and focus, but should maintain commitment from all participants. Throughout my career I have demonstrated the skills needed to implement such a vision. As a result, staff have responded to my leadership with greater commitment to, and passion for, the learning needs of our students.

Demonstrated capacity to develop, implement and evaluate curriculum to meet the learning needs of students. Whole school curriculum change is not dependant on one person. Teams of people make the school operate successfully on a daily basis. The senior executive need to be a highly functioning and collaborative team. Decisions about whole school curriculum need to be thoughtful and planned. A one of my main roles is to create in consultation with the Principal and Deputy the whole school curriculum plan. Each area of the plan needs decisions about predicted student numbers, staffing and curriculum. Negotiations need to take place with head teachers about subject selection processes and curriculum in each faculty that meets student needs. These decisions are all best made collectively. Some can be made by executive, some are needed to be made by senior executive who have no faculty interest. I am trusted to direct this process because of my higher order organisational skills and ability to negotiate win-win outcomes for students, staff and parents.

One of the most effective ways to evaluate curriculum and determine if it is meeting student needs is to complete a faculty review. Our Principal has encouraged both deputys to complete faculty reviews in the school. The reviews are requested by the Head Teacher. We began in [Year] and by [Year] we hope to have had a review in each faculty. After this we want the faculties to use skills learnt to create their own reviews. My review team in [Year] looked at [Year] with a focus on subject selection from Year [Year] into Year [Year]. This allowed the team to evaluate the curriculum that was on offer in [Year]. We surveyed all Year [Year] students using online software. We created focus groups of students to test if curriculum on offer was meeting their needs. We interviewed teachers and then we presented the information back to the faculty so they could implement the recommendations. This process was valued because it was inclusive of all stakeholders and empowered teachers and students to initiate the change that was necessary. As a result of the review the [Faculty] faculty streamlined the subjects offered and student learning needs were incorporated into faculty programs and teachers had honest feedback from the students perspective.

I am passionate about the value of innovative Student Welfare programs as a means of refocusing student behaviour and improving learning in the classroom.

The Positive Behaviour for Success (P.B.S.) program is an effective whole school approach to managing students in our schools. It is also a great vehicle for providing professional learning opportunities for staff. PBS explicitly teaches students the values needed to be productive members of the school community. It is a whole school framework that support programs can work within. Unfortunately, some children find it difficult to operate effectively in the classroom and need additional support. Often consistent clear consequences applied with certainty will derive the required cooperation.
However, for a small minority of students additional support is necessary. At [school name] I initiated a number of support programs - these include **Student Mentoring, Rock and Water, Peer Mediation and Individual Learning Plans**. These programs help create an environment of mutual respect and shared trust.

**Professional learning programs to meet staff needs and support the strategic needs of the school.**

It is my view that the best way to build a school's capacity to deliver quality education to our students is to support teachers in improving their knowledge and teaching skills. In a school there are many opportunities to provide this support.

As Deputy Principal I will use my outstanding communication skills to determine what staff professional learning needs should be met. At [school name] this was done with the use of electronic surveys, faculty reviews and faculty meetings. We established that most teachers wanted to improve their skills in Student Management, Use of Technology and Quality Teaching. The senior executive team responded by introducing PBS into the school, exposing staff to diverse opportunities provided by the DET in upskilling ICT skills - TaLe, CLAS, SMARTDATA, MOODLE, YAMMER - and creating the Thinking Skills team to teach staff how to implement QT in the classroom. The Thinking Skills team has a very high profile in the school and many staff development days have been focussed on teaching teachers how to teach these skills. Even though teachers want effective strategies in student management it has been my experience that when they apply interesting and engaging lesson material with a clear behaviour management plan then interruptions to their lessons are reduced.

If teachers are a part of the process that creates the strategic goals of the school then they will be more willing to develop the skills needed in order to implement the plan.

**Demonstrated whole school organisational ability with high level interpersonal skills working with students, staff, parents and the community.**

Education is a people-centred profession. It is my view that quality leadership is essential to the organisation of schools and a successful leader understands that following is a voluntary action. This means that the role of leader is more of persuading rather than directing. This is particularly true when you are new to a school. In time relationships built on trust and respect will allow people to more easily follow your lead. In all schools where I have held leadership roles I have managed major whole school changes in organisation in order to make the school a more effective place of learning.

At [school name] High School after consultation with the Principal I changed the structure of the day to incorporate time for planning teams to meet and to streamline the school day. We had a Tuesday that was unacceptable and incompatible with positive student learning. This meant negotiating with head teachers to change their number of indicative hours. I flagged this change six months before it was eventually adopted. The executive were initially divided on the benefits of the change. After much discussion and negotiation it was accepted unanimously by the executive. I presented the proposed model to students via the SRC and had discussions with the Parents & Citizens Association. After a few minor changes the parents and students accepted the proposal.

At [school name] I have responsibility for whole school administrative tasks such as managing our student data base, RISC; creating, implementing and evaluating our Teacher Professional Learning plan; developing a whole school curriculum plan and determining staffing needs and curriculum based on projected student numbers. Equally important, on a daily basis, it is my view that a Deputy Principal’s role is to make sure the school is running as efficiently and effectively as possible. This could mean making sure the toilets are open to minimising the myriad of distractions that stop teachers from teaching and students from learning.

**It is the classroom teacher who makes the difference to a students’ learning, it is our job to provide maximum support for this process to be effective.**

I am passionate about my role as a Deputy Principal and believe that this position is one of the most important and invigorating roles in the school.

I look forward to further discussing my suitability for this position and qualifications at interview.