Messages

Principal's message
This report provides our whole school community with a range of information and data on school achievement, initiatives and evaluations for the 2008 school year. It also reports on student achievement in a range of areas.

Our achievements have been supported by various organisations within our local community. During 2008 we have received financial support from Cronulla Sutherland Leagues Club, Cronulla, Sutherland Rotary Club and Como Jannali Rotary Club. On behalf of our entire school community I would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge these organisations for their support.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge our school's Parents and Citizens Association. They work tirelessly to support our school and students. Many of our students’ achievements are underpinned by the time and energy they each put into supporting student learning and achievement at Minerva. One example of this is the time and energy members of our P&C put into supporting our students’ participation in the 2008 Schools Spectacular.

Again on behalf of the entire school community I would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge their outstanding support.

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

Mr M Vella

P&C message
The 2008 school year was another big year for our P&C. All funds raised went directly to support our students’ learning and welfare at Minerva. Our P&C Committee works in partnership with the principal and school to contribute to the decision making process on school policy, school and P&C initiatives, and fund raising activities.

On behalf of our committee I would, once again, like to welcome our school community to attend our meetings. We meet the first Monday of each month at 7:30 pm. Your views and ideas will always be valued and welcomed.

Jay Hernandez, President, Minerva School P&C Committee

School context

Student information
It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile
From 2006 Minerva School's maximum student enrolment became 63. A table of our school's enrolment profile over the last five years is displayed immediately below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes
The highly successful formation of our two high support needs classes in 2007 has continued in 2008. These two classes have directly supported the learning of high support needs students with one assistant principal, two teachers and three School Learning Support Officers (SLSO).

This classroom structure provided students with much greater one to one learning support from teaching staff. The outcome of this has been to substantially increase the academic engagement of students while simultaneously reducing their inappropriate behaviour. This high support needs classroom structure will continue to operate in 2009. Additionally we have operated five classrooms each supported by one teacher and one SLSO.

Post-school destinations
All senior students and their families at Minerva School are actively engaged in discussions about post school options. During Year 12 planning supports each student’s transition to a post-school environment. Of our three Year 12 students who left school at the end of 2008, each began either a Transition to Work program or a Community Participation program coordinated by the NSW
Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC).

Staff information
It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Staff establishment
The following table indicates the total number of teaching staff appointed to our school. However, in addition to this we have nine permanent SLSOs, one School Administration Manager and 0.344 School Administrative Officer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher RFF</td>
<td>0.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff retention
During 2008 our school retained 100% of our permanent teaching staff.

Staff attendance
Staff have access to leave entitlements such as Sick Leave, Family and Community Leave and Long Service Leave. In 2008 the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the NSW Department of Education and Training, was 95.6% in 2008. This is similar to the rate of staff attendance in previous years.

Teacher qualifications
All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. As the table below indicates, all teaching staff at Minerva School hold formal university teaching qualifications from Australian universities. Approximately fifty percent of the teaching staff hold additional post graduate degrees and diplomas from Australian universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>158 554.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>100 798.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>59 743.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>50 298.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>9 893.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>8 129.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>387 416.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure
Teaching & learning
- Key learning areas 30 261.08
- Excursions 1 237.09
- Extracurricular dissections 4 737.74

Library 407.54
Training & development 1 822.76
Tied funds 64 138.44
Casual relief teachers 60 504.00
Administration & office 30 062.46
School-operated canteen 0.00
Utilities 19 863.97
Maintenance 12 209.18
Trust accounts 10 890.21
Capital programs 38 193.51
Total expenditure 274 327.98
Balance carried forward 113 088.96

A full copy of the school's 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2008
Our school’s performance in the Arts and Sport during 2008 has been consistent with the very high levels of performance demonstrated by students in previous years. The activities provided was carefully chosen to meet individual needs and to ensure that students accessed and participated in a broad range of artistic and sporting activities which would be immediately comparable to any mainstream school environment.
Achievements

Arts
The first perception any visitor to our school has is of a vibrant, positive and creatively functioning environment. Our entrance and administration areas have been transformed by a collection of permanent and rotating quality artworks produced by our students.

This year our school successfully participated in the cultural life of the wider community. Having Creative Arts experiences and goals beyond the school gates visibly raised the bar and potentialities of every student and serves to achieve our mission statement “to make students with special needs a successful part of the community”.

Performances and exhibitions at Westfield's Miranda, The Sydney Entertainment Centre, The St George Regional Art Gallery and towards the end of 2008 the writing and preparation for a Minerva School band performance at the Sydney City Recital Hall on 26 February 2009. All this demonstrates our passionate commitment to providing inclusive experiences for our students, and the students' ability to express creativity and bring a sense of joy, wonder and meaning to the community in which they are a part of.

Of the last band performance for the 2008 school year, a parent wrote regarding her child's performance with the band, “he amazed me at presentation day and brought tears to my eyes”. Our students far exceeded the expectations of parents, teachers and visitors in 2008.

Every student in our school has individual needs and as a staff we make every effort to meet their educational needs with an Individual Learning Plan designed in consultation with the student and parents. In similar ways, the same principle applies to the Arts. To achieve the best outcomes one must start with the students own perceptions of the world and their own personal and developing abilities. We recognise that the language of Art is infinitely broad and that Art itself is a level playing field where words like able and disable should not and do not apply. It simply is a matter of finding which creative mode works for each individual.

Sport
2008 has been a successful year for the school with respect to the engagement of its students in both school and interschool sport. I want to acknowledge and thank Ms Diane Slater and Mr Geoff Tunks for their hard work, enthusiasm and innovative ideas in coordinating the 2008 weekly school sport program and sports carnivals. Minerva students were involved in a total of ten carnivals throughout 2008.

The annual SSP area Swimming Carnival was held at Sutherland Aquatic Centre in March. Carinya, Engadine and Endeavour were the other three schools involved. Minerva finished 2nd in both the girls and boys Championship and gained 2nd place overall. Minerva also sent a team to the Sydney Sports Committee Swimming Carnival at Auburn Pool in March. The program included an extensive range of events that catered for both the confident and less confident swimmer and large numbers of students were given an opportunity to participate.

With respect to representative events which involved our students competing in the Swimmers with a Disability (SWD) events at mainstream carnivals, Minerva had five students participate at the Sydney East Swimming Carnival at the
Homebush Aquatic Centre. Following this event and based on her results one student gained entry and competed at the NSW CHSSA Swim held in April.

At the end of Term 3 Minerva again took part in the DET Special Swim school program at Sutherland Aquatic Centre. We were allocated three time slots and 18 students benefited from the intense week long program with specialised instructors.

Minerva students were represented at athletic competitions which combined Athletes with a Disability (AWD) at mainstream carnivals. Participants included one of our students in long jump and shot put, and another in long jump. Both gained entry to the Sydney East Region team which competed at the PSSA (Primary School Sports Association) Athletics Carnival at Homebush in October.

A team of 16 high school students competed at the Sydney East Regional Athletic Carnival, and two students, one competing in javelin throwing and the other in long jump, qualified to compete at the NSW CHS (Combined High Schools) carnival.

Minerva sent a team of 12 students to compete in the Combined Metropolitan Athletic Carnival at the Sydney Athletic Centre in May. Entry is for both primary and high school students and involves more than a dozen special schools in and around the Sydney area.

In September our whole school took part in the annual SSP Athletics Carnival at Carinya SSP, in Mortdale. This traditional event has been a feature on the school’s calendar for many years and is always enjoyed by students. The feed back from the day was extremely positive and I believe this was in part due to the competitive sports program that was successfully introduced this year.

Minerva entered a soccer team and played against Carinya, Engadine and Endeavour in a weekly “Seven – a – Side” soccer competition at Sutherland Oval during Terms 2 and 3. This was supported by the Area Special Olympic Association and a special mention and thanks goes to Mr. Tony Moore for all his hard work. Besides the benefits of increased skill and fitness levels that regular exercise brings, this competition gave the students and staff between the four schools the opportunity to compete, socialize and develop a camaraderie that has and will have a flow on effect in many areas.

In 2008 the school received more than $10,000 in Active After School Communities (AASC) funding. This is an Australian Sports Commission initiative to encourage students to develop a healthy lifestyle through participation in health and fitness activities. Yoga and sailing were added to the 2008 sporting program of Surf Awareness, swimming, dance, fitness and athletics.

Every student was given an opportunity to participate in at least two of the programs throughout the year and the benefits are ongoing. In particular, sailing through the “Sailability NSW” program which was coordinated by Mr. Geoff Tunks provided an extremely enjoyable and quite unique opportunity for the students involved.
Academic

**School Certificate**
Students engage in programs of study based on Life Skills outcomes and content from Years 7–10 syllabuses. Students who successfully engage in this program are awarded the School Certificate from the Board of Studies.

Life Skills outcomes are selected to meet the particular needs, goals and priorities of each student. In order to provide a relevant and meaningful program of study, many Life Skills outcomes and their content are taught and assessed across a variety of school and community contexts and settings.

**Higher School Certificate**
For students to successfully qualify for the Higher School Certificate students must engage in a program of Life Skills courses that meet the Board of Studies requirements for a “Special Program of Study”. Course objectives, outcomes and content are selected to provide an individualised transition planning process for the student. Three students successfully completed their year 12 studies and were awarded a Higher School Certificate.

**Significant Programs and Initiatives**
During 2008 we continued the implementation of a number of particularly successful programs and initiatives which were introduced in 2007.

These included the Protective Behaviours and Sexuality for People with an Intellectual Disability Program, our Sensory Program, our Intensive Literacy Support Program, and the continuation of two high support needs classrooms supported by six staff. In each instance these programs have produced excellent learning outcomes.

**Aboriginal Education**
Our school formally pays respect to the traditional custodians and owners of the land, both past and present at the beginning of all formal school occasions. We adopt an inclusive approach to all teaching and learning activities and actively value and teach respect towards Aboriginal people and culture.

During 2008 funding was accessed from the Sydney Region Aboriginal Education Unit under the Supplementary Recurrent Assistance Program to support three school initiatives. The first initiative sought to provide a dedicated literacy learning program for Aboriginal students attending Minerva School. This was in addition to the intensive literacy program indicated above. The outcome of the SRA funded program was improved literacy learning by all Aboriginal students.

The second initiative was to engage Mr Les Saxby, a freelance Aboriginal Educator, to provide students with a day of Aboriginal cultural activities designed to raise their cultural awareness of Aboriginal music, dance, painting, story telling and boomerang throwing. Outcomes students gained included a greater awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and history.

The third initiative was to engage the Taronga Park Zoo “Animals of the Dreaming” program coordinator to provide Aboriginal based activities designed to once again, raise the cultural awareness of students in Aboriginal music, dance, story telling and native Australian animals. The presenters of the program strongly engaged with students generating high levels of interest and enthusiasm in students.
Multicultural Education
Minerva School is an absolutely inclusive environment where individual student differences are respected and valued. Whether that difference is a special need or the individual's belief system, or country of origin, staff consciously strive to ensure all students receive an education which caters to their individual cultural and learning needs. Cultural knowledge is recognised and valued throughout all learning programs at Minerva School.

Respect and Responsibility
There are three policies which when taken together provide a robust platform for the concepts of Respect and Responsibility. These are the DET’s Code of Conduct for all DET staff, our school’s Anti Bullying Policy, and our Student Discipline Policy. These policies together seek to promote and develop highly professional relationships with students that demonstrate and model interestedness, empathy, and a genuine and positive concern for each other and an unconditional acceptance of diversity. It provides strategies for teachers to encourage students to recognise and respect the feelings, dignity, welfare, property and rights of others, and to consistently enhance students’ self esteem, self discipline and self control. It seeks to foster co-operative and independent learning skills in students and to have students develop conflict-resolution skills.

Other programs
Workplace Learning Programs

Background
Workplace learning is an ongoing area of strength at Minerva due to its comprehensive, carefully structured workplace learning program that commences with in-school work experience. Students may then progress to community based teacher-supervised work crew groups and then to individual placements with a range of supportive local employers. Student participation is guided by the student’s individual transition plan and usually commences in the year a student turns fourteen. Early intervention in this key area helps to maximise the student’s skills giving them the best chance of post-school success. Ongoing interaction from student, parent and teachers guides the planning process to support the career goals of the student. Students are supported according to their needs and available resources to maximise the outcomes achieved. The post-school employment destinations of students, provides sound data that the program optimises employment outcomes for students with an intellectual disability.

Findings and conclusions
In 2008 26 students participated successfully in the workplace learning program. Students participated for up to 20 weeks, often progressing from one stage of the program to another at the commencement of a new semester of the program.

Seven students commenced the in-school work experience program in semester one undertaking activities to develop independent travel skills and sound generic work skills performing tasks such as cleaning, collating and small item assembly. These students moved to supported work crew groups in semester two having met the standards of behaviour, attitude and skill development needed to progress to a community setting placement.

Another outstanding achievement for the year was the number of students who progressed from the work crew groups to an independent workplace learning placement. In semester one, three students excitedly commenced their first independent work experience in the areas of hospitality and retail. In semester two an additional two students joined the independent group with two students in retail and three in hospitality. One of these students was in Year 12 having consistently improved during his five years in the workplace learning program. Their placements were a resounding success with great reports from employers reflecting on the skills they had learned and enthusiasm and interest shown. For the year 10 students in this group, this provided the experience needed to secure a placement in a TVET course for 2009 including three students in a regular hospitality cookery course.

In the supported work crew groups, 20 students further developed their work skills at Coles, Parkside Plaza Miranda, Woolworths Menai, Miranda Westfield Food Court and at Civic Industries, a Business Service in Caringbah. Five students were involved in a district work crew program at Big W Westfield Miranda and Target Westfield Miranda.

Six students working at retail sites, both independently and in a more intensively supported
work crew, were undertaking work placement linked to their school and/or TAFE delivered Retail vocational education and training (VET) course. This gave the students experiences designed to contextualise and practice the skills they learned during their course and provided opportunities to develop and assess their achievement of competency in an authentic retail setting.

Future directions
The structure of the workplace learning program must be flexible enough to meet the ever changing needs of our students. A continued focus on individualising the workplace learning experiences of students will ensure that student’s workplace learning skills are maximised. During 2009 we also intend to enhance the classroom based component of developing work skills.

Vocational Education and Training courses

Background
Participation in appropriate VET courses is an important way for students with disabilities to gain the industry-specific skills needed for employment. With careful selection, preparation, support and extended time to learn many Minerva students can benefit from participating in VET courses.

Findings and conclusions
During 2008 the Retail framework vocational education and training (VET) course was delivered to six Year 11 and 12 students. Four students also undertook Retail TVET courses at a local TAFE college. Both the school and TAFE delivered VET courses are part of their studies leading to the award of the Higher School Certificate.

Students also participated in Retail work placements to further develop their skills. It was pleasing to see the effort and enthusiasm of students and the support provided by their employers and families.

In 2009, current Year 11 students will be continuing their VET studies and five successful applications have been made for TVET courses in 2008 for current Year 10 students. Students in Years 9 and 10 were encouraged to sample vocational areas of interest to ensure that future selection of a VET course area is an informed decision

Future directions
A continued focus on individualising the vocational learning and workplace learning experiences of students will ensure the participation of those students capable of success in school and TAFE delivered VET courses. The continuation of school delivered retail is essential to ensure successful participation in VET courses by maximising the achievement of units of competency by students and providing a VET course option for those students who are unable to access a TVET course. In 2009 the course will also be accessed by some Year 10 students.

Community Access
A broad range of community-access learning experiences was provided for all students to facilitate authentic learning of many important life skills. Students accessed genuine community settings to improve their development of functional life skills and social and interpersonal skills in highly supported but nevertheless real community-based settings. The outcome of this in 2008 was to improve some students’ capacity to generalise acquired skills to new and different settings and to maintain them over periods of time.

Progress on 2008 targets

Indicated below is the progress we have made on the targets identified in Minerva School’s 2007 Annual School Report and detailed in our School Plan 2006 – 2008.

Target 1
Improved social skills and behaviour of students.

Our achievements include:
- The full and consistent implementation of our revised School Discipline policy which includes a strong focus on the explicit teaching of social skills and appropriate behaviour.
- The full implementation of our Sexuality and Protective Behaviour Program for students with an intellectual disability.
The provision of Teacher professional learning in the area of social and behavioural skill development for students with an intellectual disability and autism.

A highly developed focus on OH&S including the creation of Minerva School's OH&S brochures for staff and visiting maintenance personnel.

The full implementation of a casual staff information booklet which provides details on a range of information including appropriate behaviour management strategies and crisis management information.

Approximately 30% decrease in the number of suspensions as compared with the 2007 suspension figure.

**Target 2**

**Develop the environmental awareness and learning of students and reduce ‘greenhouse’ gas emissions.**

Our achievements include:

- Staff participated in professional learning on global consequences of continued and excessive ‘greenhouse’ gas emissions.
- Greenhouse gas reduction strategies determined and implemented to dramatically reduce emissions.
- Staff from The Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre assisted staff to prepare teaching and learning programs for students.
- Students developed an understanding of the need to reduce emissions and actively engaged in other environmental teaching and learning activities
- Staff developed a repertoire of teaching and learning ideas for program development and enhancement

**Target 3**

**Improved curriculum access with a focus on functional community-referenced skills.**

Our achievements include:

- An assistant principal, was released from face to face teaching to, in consultation with the principal, lead and ensure the full implementation of appropriate outcomes and content from BOS syllabuses, and develop a range of other curriculum improvements such as the full implementation of a ‘tracking tool’ to track student skill acquisition, identify needs and thus better inform the teaching and learning process.
- The development and implementation of two dedicated individual student learning spaces which were accessed by identified students for intensive literacy and numeracy support.
- Targeted students were provided with more individualised literacy instruction as compared to 2007 through the provision of an intensive reading program.
- The creation and full utilisation of a learning resource library.
- Data on the individual tracking system reflected improved student achievement of outcomes in literacy, numeracy and other living skills.

**Target 4**

**Improved sensory integration of students.**

Our achievements include:

- Appropriate sensory programs were provided for identified students
- Teachers participated in professional learning related to best practice sensory support delivery.
- Improved student learning outcomes for most identified students with sensory integration needs.
- Reduced levels of anxiety and inappropriate behaviour for most students with sensory support needs.
- Improved access to the curriculum for most students with sensory needs.

**Key evaluations**

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations each year. One related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2008 our school carried out evaluations in the areas of School Culture and quality teaching for students with sensory needs.
Educational and management practice

School Culture

Background
The quality of a school’s culture inevitably correlates very strongly with staff morale, student behaviour and the quality of educational programs. Indeed school culture figured strongly in the Program Review undertaken at our school during term two 2006 and on this basis it was exceedingly appropriate to evaluate the school’s culture in 2008 from both the staff and parents’ points of view.

Findings and conclusions
The School Map survey tools employed to evaluate Minerva School’s Culture during 2008 strongly indicated that both from the staff and particularly from the parent point of view our school culture is extremely strong and healthy. There was a very high correlation between staff and parents with respect to the pride they have for our school. Also highly correlated was the recognition that meeting the needs of students is the school’s main priority. Very high approval was again registered for the school’s efforts to encourage all students to achieve their best and to be continuing learners. However, the staff findings indicated that the school’s curriculum does not always cater for the learning needs of all students.

Future directions
• We will continue to review student learning and revise our delivery of curriculum. In addition to the strategies utilised during 2008 to improve student learning, for example, our sensory program, protective behaviours program, our intensive literacy support program and our high support needs class structure, the new School Plan 2009-2011 presents clearly defined strategies to further differentiate students’ curriculum and make appropriate curriculum delivery and program adjustments a very high priority.

Curriculum
Quality teaching for students with sensory needs.

Background
Minerva School has a high number of students with a diagnosis of autism enrolled in our school. This fact precipitated the expenditure of $22 000 to create and resource a fully functioning Sensory Room and design and implement a range of dedicated Sensory Programs over the past two years. On this basis it was considered to be exceedingly appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs at the end of the 2008 school year.

Findings and conclusions
There was a very high correlation between teachers that they each model and promote tolerance, sensitivity to, and appreciation of the needs of students with autism. Also strongly indicated was an acknowledgement that most staff are well prepared to review, reflect and evaluate their teaching practice and learning theories, with a view to improving their teaching strategies for students with sensory needs. However, also strongly indicated was the view that there is a need for all teaching and support staff to rotate on to classes which have predominately students with autistic learning needs with a view to further developing their skill and experience base equitably across the school.

Future directions
• All staff, including executive staff, will be required to rotate onto different stage/grade classes and onto classes of students with high support needs every three years or as otherwise directed by the principal, to improve their skill acquisition and experience base across all class settings within the school. Additionally a high priority will be placed on teacher professional learning in this area.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
During the course of 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers with respect to their satisfaction levels in terms of student welfare, quality teaching and the school’s processes and procedures generally.

Generally parents, students and teachers indicated a very high degree of satisfaction with Minerva School. Parents have consistently expressed very positive satisfaction levels with the school. As in 2007, parents unanimously expressed a very strong view that staff at Minerva School are extremely dedicated and committed to students’ learning and well being.

Minerva School students’ attendance, retention and participation rates are all very high when compared to mainstream schools which indicated high levels of satisfaction among our student body.

During 2008 staff morale was high and staff retention rates at Minerva School are exceptionally high. Again this further indicated a high level of staff satisfaction with respect to working at Minerva School.
Professional learning
In 2008 all teachers were involved in professional learning activities. Teachers’ professional learning needs were identified and prioritised against those in the Minerva School Plan 2006 – 2008. The total allocation of funds to support the professional learning of teachers during 2008 was $7532.00. The professional learning areas accessed by teachers included Quality Teaching, Teaching Literacy and Numeracy, Welfare and Equity and Leadership and Career Development.

School development 2009 – 2011
Our new school plan was developed to initiate strategies and programs to support quality teaching and improved learning outcomes for students over the course of the next three year period 2009 – 2011.

Briefly stated the school plan assists the school to appropriately and strategically plan to ensure we achieve the targets detailed in the school plan and in this report. The school plan is updated annually to reflect progress and current priorities. A detailed copy of the school plan can be viewed and or discussed with the principal at any time by contacting the school or principal directly.

Targets for 2009
Target 1
Improved literacy, numeracy and Aboriginal Education learning outcomes for students

A core focus for the NSW Dept of Education and Training and for the Sydney Region is to have schools develop strong and robust strategies to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of all students. This is clearly consistent with the students’ needs and the teaching and learning priorities of Minerva School.

Strategies to achieve this target in 2008 include:

• A formal literacy and numeracy testing schedule to be determined to further support the collection of student assessment data.

• The analysis of individual student’s literacy and numeracy assessment data to determine learning needs and the timely provision of appropriate learning support programs.

• The development of a robust partnership between the home and school through the provision of information and training programs to assist parents to ‘teach’ reading at home.

• Differentiated professional teaching and learning programs, based on good pedagogical practices to be developed to deliver a balanced approach to the teaching of literacy. This will include, for example, the following features: Emphasis on meaning, Contextual interaction between reading and writing. Prioritisation given to functional skills. eg survival reading and writing. Emphasis placed on the development of semantic, grammatical, phonological-graphological and visual/pictorial knowledge through explicit and systematic teaching. Both paper-based and digital texts will be utilised.

• Development and implementation of literacy based and focussed programs throughout the school including, a home reading program, and extra reading support programs for particular groups of students organised through parent and community volunteers.

• The implementation of specific Aboriginal cultural and historical teaching and learning programs.

• Aboriginal cultural and historical themes will be appropriately embedded in these programs.

• Numeracy homework program for students

Our success will be measured by:

• Dramatically improved literacy learning outcomes when compared to baseline testing data.

• Dramatically improved numeracy learning outcomes when compared to baseline testing data.

• Greatly improved student understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture and history.

Target 2
Improve Teacher Quality by Building School Capacity.

Improved teacher quality can be achieved, in part, by systematically building the individual skill and experience base of school staff members by planned and systematic sharing of expertise and knowledge.
Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Professional learning policy revised and fully implemented.
- In school Professional Learning Programs to be developed and implemented for teaching staff and interested SLSO.
- ICT professional learning program developed and implemented through an in school program to enhance staff ICT skill.
- In school program to enhance identified teachers' learning of TVET, VET, and School to Work programs.
- External professional learning programs and courses accessed as required.
- In school DET Tale website tutorial program designed and implemented for all teaching staff.

Our success will be measured by:

- All teaching staff will demonstrate greatly enhanced professional learning outcomes in ICT.
- Targeted staff will demonstrate greatly enhanced professional learning outcomes in TVET and VET, as well as School to Work Programs.
- Revised professional learning policy to be fully implemented.
- Teachers access appropriate external professional learning programs as indicated.
- Improved teaching and learning outcomes for students.

Target 3
Improved environmental education of students and reduced ‘greenhouse’ gas emissions

A strong focus at Minerva School is improved student learning and understanding in environmental education and in reducing our own school’s ‘carbon footprint’.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Staff from the Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre to assist Minerva School staff to develop a comprehensive School Environmental Education Plan.
- School’s Environmental Education Plan to be fully implemented.
- Programmed Environmental Education themes and lessons to form part of Class Teaching and Learning Programs.
- Combined Minerva School, Sutherland PS and SSC project to extensively plant native trees, shrubs and plants both internally and externally along Minerva SSP and Sutherland PS boundaries.

Our success will be measured by:

- The comprehensive development and full implementation of an Environmental Education Plan.
- Teachers programming and teaching Environmental Education lessons.
- Students gain an improved understanding of Environmental issues.
- Successful completion of combined school and SSC tree and shrub planting project.

About this report

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

Mr M Vella, Principal
Mrs N Ashcroft, Assistant Principal
Mr R Hely, Assistant Principal
Mrs F Young, Assistant Principal
Ms J Hernandez, P&C President

School contact information

Minerva School
Eton Street SUTHERLAND 2232
Ph: 02 9521 3439
Fax: 02 9545 3316
Email: Minerva-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 5616

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr