Snapshot report

Under the Agreement for 2014, McDowall State School received $257,924

Our full 2014 agreement can be found here: [www.mcdownwallss.eq.edu.au](http://www.mcdownwallss.eq.edu.au). The above increased amount is the 2014 actual GRG funding ($257,924) rather than the 2014 Estimated GRG funding ($247,924).

Our school strategies are on track to meet or exceed our targets.

The Great Results Guarantee (GRG) funding was used to complement existing staffing and funding sources directed at addressing students’ specific learning needs, the longer term goal being to increase the percentage of students in the upper two bands in each area of NAPLAN. After reviewing our agreement, it is clear that we are on track to meet or exceed our targeted student outcomes. We continue to implement the following strategies:

2014 Strategies:

- **Multi-disciplinary Approach**: Using a multi-disciplined approach, we employed a Speech Language Pathologist (3 days per week) and three, additional, full-time Teacher Aides (30 hrs per week) to work with P-2 teachers in delivering the following programs:
  - *Read It Again – Foundation Q!* program designed to develop and strengthen students’ early foundations in language and literacy was used with our Preparatory Year students. It is based on current research regarding how teachers and adults can support children’s language and literacy development using systematic and explicit instruction presented in highly meaningful literacy events, such as story book reading. The program was written to support the Australian Curriculum, and targets students in their foundation year of formal schooling. It is designed to develop and strengthen students’ early foundations in four key areas of language and literacy – vocabulary, narrative, phonological awareness and print knowledge. Research has shown that skills in these areas are among the most important in preparing young children for later success in reading.
  - *Read It Again – Foundation Q!* can be used in a whole class format or in a targeted group format. It enhances teachers’ and teacher aides’ skills in shared book reading and in applying strategies for differentiating instruction to increase engagement and participation for all students. All selected books are written by well known award winning Australasian authors and were chosen primarily on the basis of their narrative structure and print features; and,
  - *S.T.R.I.V.E.* (Structured Tier 2 Robust Instruction of Vocabulary Experiences), a program which focuses on the explicit teaching of Tier 2 vocabulary in the classroom, was used with our Years 1 & 2 students. “Of the many compelling reasons for providing students within instruction to build vocabulary, none is more important than the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension. Indeed, one of the most enduring findings in reading research is the extent to which students’ vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension.” (Lehr, Osborn, Hiebert, 2004)
  - S.T. R. I. V. E. can also be used in a whole class format or a targeted group format. This approach involves direct instruction. Students are taught both individual words and word learning strategies. The focus is on robust or explicit vocabulary instruction, targeting Tier 2 words. (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013)
Tier 2 includes high frequency words that are found across a variety of content domains. They are words common to mature language users and are found in literature and adult conversations. They often have multiple meanings and can be generalized across a variety of environments. Tier 2 words strongly influence speaking and reading, and therefore are important words to teach. For example: devour, ferocious, industrious, guidance and loyalty.

- Read It Again – Foundation Q! program ties in well with the Early Start diagnostic tool as both use standard measures and pre & post-tests. The Early Start data will be invaluable in 2015 with measuring ‘distance travelled’ (i.e. gains made) by students.

- Maximising Impact of Learning for Teachers: The multi-disciplinary approach was directed towards capacity building of our P-2 teachers and teacher aides by training them in specific programs as well as ensuring their understanding of the research underpinning the programs. By the end of the training, teachers and teacher aides were able to generalise their learning and adjust their teaching accordingly.

- Executive Functioning: We continue to inform teachers and parents regarding delays or deficits in the development of age-expectd Executive Functions skills, and how to enhance development of these skills.

- Other Human Resources Support: We continue to employ a part time Administration Officer to support the multi-disciplined teams within the school.

- Program Resources: We continue to purchase multi-disciplined program resources that support the GRG initiative.

- Evidence-based Plan for Students: As committed in our Great Results Guarantee Agreement, we developed and implemented an evidence based plan to address students’ specific learning needs.

Results 2014:

The overall results for Read It Again – Foundation Q! and S.T. R. I. V. E. from the Preparatory Year to Year 2 are extremely encouraging. Measurements indicate that following targeted and explicit vocabulary instruction, there is a higher incidence of students presenting with the ability to comprehend and use new words at an age appropriate level and who, with explicit instruction, are developing the skills necessary to access word meanings. Similarly, as a result of the Read It Again – Foundation Q! program, a substantial number of lower performing students in the Preparatory Year cohort have improved in their acquisition of emergent literacy skills. One of the functions of Read It Again – Foundation Q! and S.T. R. I. V. E. is to assist school teams to gather and analyse a range of data measures to inform continued intervention strategies. The gathered data allowed for the identification of a small group of students who require more intensive levels of intervention to increase participation within the curriculum.

Collaboration between the Speech Language Pathologist and Year level teaching teams, allowed for the successful implementation of both programs. An enhanced capacity in utilizing oral language strategies to support all students’ communication skills in the classroom resulted.

S. T. R. I. V. E. encouraged children to develop an interest in learning new words while they were engaged in thought-provoking, playful and interactive teaching sessions. Read It Again – Foundation Q! exposed children to high quality literature while building their vocabulary, narrative skills, phonological awareness and print knowledge as well as participation in enjoyable group story book reading.

References:


**Read It Again – *FoundationQ!***

The proximal measures refer to the specific objectives in each of the four domains of vocabulary, phonological awareness, print knowledge and narrative. These can be measured using the Student Progress Checklist included in the resource and administered at three separate points during the program period. Preparatory Year data is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prep Year Targeted Intervention – Vocabulary</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prep Year</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 21</strong></td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read It Again – *FoundationQ!* Prep Year Targeted Intervention – Phonological Awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prep Year Targeted Intervention – Phonological Awareness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competent</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
These results indicate a pattern of improvement and achievement on measures of emergent literacy.

**Early Start**

Early Start is a suite of materials which teachers use to generate student literacy and numeracy data in schools. As medialis measures of Phonological Awareness and Narrative, the information for the Read It Again – FoundationQ! students from the administration of the Early Start On-Entry to Prep literacy materials and also End-of-Prep literacy materials shows that they achieved the following results:
The graphs indicate that the majority of these students made good progress in the development of these skills during the school year.
S.T.R.I.V.E.

Data for the proximal measure for S.T.R.I.V.E. for the students in small groups were obtained through testing at the beginning of August and November, for Year 1 and in March and August, for Year 2. Ten words were chosen for each test and prior to the presentation of the test words, two words were used as examples to ensure the students understood the task requirements. For Year 1, the children were asked to provide a sentence for the selected words, while the Year 2 students were required to give both a definition and a sentence for each word. This was an oral test with the Speech-Language Pathologist recording the students’ responses. The scoring guidelines specified in the S.T.R.I.V.E. framework were used. The graphs below represent the results for these students.
These results are encouraging. All the children in both Year 1 and Year 2 groups made gains. No negative outcomes noted.

The proximal measures for the S.T.R.I.V.E. groups entailed the use of vocabulary descriptors that were determined based on the expected performance for the individual’s chronological age. These were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td>Comprehension and usage of vocabulary is appropriate for chronological age. Able to capture aspects of word meanings in natural, incidental and structured learning environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Has the ability to comprehend and use new words at an age appropriate level but may lack experience and understanding of skills necessary to access word meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>May need some explicit instruction to comprehend and use low frequency words, including words referring to more abstract concepts and subject-specific words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Common words, words that are known to most students and usually require little or no instruction, are broadly at an age appropriate level. Needs more explicit instruction and exposure to comprehend and use more sophisticated vocabulary including the vocabulary of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Can comprehend and use simple and familiar vocabulary but may need more frequent exposure and explicit instruction to access this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Severe difficulty comprehending and using vocabulary even after explicit instruction.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A significant positive trend was evident with 50% of the Year 1 students and 56% of Year 2 students in the groups performing at Level 0 or 1.
Reading Comprehension:

Reading Comprehension was considered to be an effective distal measure for all the children in Year 1 and Year 2 cohorts.

**Year 1 Reading Comprehension**

**June 2014**
- Median 73%
- Lower Quartile 60.5%
- Upper Quartile 87.5%

**November 2014**
- Median 81%
- Lower Quartile 67%
- Upper Quartile 91%

**Year 2 Reading Comprehension**

**May 2014**
- Median 55%
- Lower Quartile 42.5%
- Upper Quartile 81.5%

**November 2014**
- Median 86%
- Lower Quartile 73.5%
- Upper Quartile 93%