

Melbourne High School

Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

Background

In March 2022, the Department of Education led a review of the Melbourne High School's performance against its 2018-2022 Strategic Plan and associated goals and targets.

The Review Panel comprised senior Education Department staff, an external consultant (ex-Principal), current school principal, and senior staff from Monash University and the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

The Review Panel examined various qualitative and quantitative data sets including VCE and NAPLAN results; teacher judgement data; and student, staff, and parent attitude to school data. The panel also observed lessons, conducted focus groups, and interviewed individuals from all sectors of the school community.

In 2021, a team of staff were engaged in several planning activities including a two-day retreat to examine future directions and aspirations. The retreat was facilitated by external consultants. The School Council President also attended. These activities have also informed the development of the 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan and articulated the guiding metaphor, strategic intent, strategic drivers and design principles that will underpin the work that will be undertaken over the next four years.

Guiding metaphor – the Agora

In the development of the strategy, the planning team referred to the Agora. In ancient times agoras were meeting places where people gathered and engaged in a variety of social, educational, cultural, commercial and sporting activities. Importantly, they were places of learning where people discussed and debated a range of topics including matters related to philosophy, politics and spirituality.

The Agora embraces the idea of a community that is engaged in deep learning that extends beyond the formal classroom. This is what makes the Melbourne High School experience so unique. It is enriched by many co-curricular activities and alumni associations. They provide an adjunct to formal classroom activities, and they contribute to students' acquisition of knowledge and understanding. Against this metaphor, we seek to ensure that our students continue to be exposed to and enriched by a wide range of ideas and viewpoints from alumni and community thought leaders who have made significant contributions in their respective fields of endeavour.

Strategic intent

Strengthened by the legacy of those who have gone before, Melbourne High School is an aspirational learning community, where the exploration of new frontiers and the sharing of wisdom will continue to be forged by adaptation and evolution as we seek to be courageous in our learning endeavours and audacious in our contributions to the world.

Strategic drivers

- Stakeholder relations
- Global consciousness and connections

- Operational efficiency and effectiveness
- Capacity building and cultural evolution
- World class infrastructure and facilities
- Wellbeing and personal development
- Pedagogy and learning innovation

Design principles

- Trust
- Co-creation
- Social consciousness
- Personal agency
- Curiosity
- Equity
- Personalization
- Agility
- Learning commons¹
- Courage
- Wisdom

Previous goals and targets

The School Review Panel found that most of the 2018 – 2022 targets were met or partially met.

2018 – 2022 SSP Goal 1:

To develop all students as 21st century learners. The panel found the goal was met with both targets met.

2018 – 2022 SSP Goal 2:

Strengthen wellbeing for all students. The panel found the goal was partially met with two targets met and one partially met.

2018 – 2022 SSP Goal 3:

Strengthen student engagement for all students. The panel found the goal was partially met with two targets met and one partially met.

¹ A Learning Commons is a common or shared space that is both physical and virtual. It is designed to move students beyond mere research, practice and group work to a greater level of engagement through exploration, experimentation, and collaboration. A Learning Commons is more than a room or a website. A Learning Commons allows users to create their own environments to improve learning. A Learning Commons is about changing school culture and transforming the way teaching and learning occur.

(Loertscher, Koechlin and Rosenfeld, 2012, 1) in <https://ilsop.canadianschoollibraries.ca/library-learning-commons/>

Highlights

The Panel noted the following highlights –

- Melbourne High School's response to Covid 19 and its focus on building student resilience
- Melbourne High School's co-curricular programs
- Melbourne High School's strong traditions and culture

2022 Review Terms of Reference and findings

Following initial visits, consultations and data reviews, the Panel proposed the following Terms of Reference.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 1:

To what extent does the school implement and ensure a consistent pedagogical model that promotes learning and engages students?

The panel found high levels of student engagement. Teacher planning was evident and a positive relationship between students and teachers was noted. Classrooms were observed as well managed learning environments in which there were high levels of student output and work quality. There was, however, an inconsistent approach to differentiation (that is, teaching to individual student levels), and a whole school approach in the delivery of a consistent pedagogical model was not observed.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 2:

To what extent does the school provide opportunities for students to have ownership of their learning and awareness of their stages of development?

Student voice and agency was highly evident in the co-curricular program that students engaged in. Many of the co-curricular activities were student initiated and run. Through classroom observation, teacher interviews and student forums it was apparent to the panel that the same level of student voice and agency was not as consistent in the delivery and design of curriculum in the classroom.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 3:

To what extent does the school have a consistent approach to student engagement and wellbeing that promotes resilience and prepares students for life in today's changing society?

Classroom observations indicated that students were engaged in their learning and respected each other's rights to learn. Melbourne High presented as a highly inclusive environment where different cultures and individual differences were supported through mutual respect within the student body.

Panel recommendation.

The Panel recommended the following key directions for the next strategic plan.

- Maximise student learning growth
- Student voice and agency in the delivery of curriculum.
- Connectedness, resilience and wellbeing of students.

2023 – 2026 Goals and Targets

The panel recommended the following goals and targets.

Goal 1

Maximise the learning growth of every student

Rationale

As a selective entry school, Melbourne High School is invested in extending the growth of students with high academic ability. The school has an outstanding record of academic achievement and maximizing all students' potential is at the core of its planning.

Targets

- 1.1 To improve Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC)² from 51% Positive Endorsement (PE) 2021 to 65% PE 2025
- 1.2 To improve SOS Use of a Pedagogical Model from 38% PE 2021 to 65% PE 2025
- 1.3 To improve SOS Planning Differentiated Learning Activities from 48% PE 2021 to 65% PE 2025
- 1.4 To decrease the number of VCE study scores of 30 or lower from 18.4% in 2021 to 10% by 2025.

Key Improvement Strategies (KIS)

1a Embed a consistent whole school pedagogical framework across the school.

1b Build teacher capacity to use evidence-based strategies to inform the development of a differentiated and engaging curriculum.

1c Build capacity of staff in data and assessment literacy to teach to every student's point of need.

Goal 2

Build student voice and agency to improve student engagement in learning

Rationale

One of the challenges identified in the 2018 school review was to "build student agency in their learning to support them as active and engaged learners". The evidence from the review indicates that the school should continue to focus on strategies that will engage students as co-partners in the learning process.

² The Department of Education's, *Whole School Guide to Curriculum Planning* states that 'all students receive the benefits of a guaranteed and viable curriculum'. McRel explains 'A guaranteed curriculum is often defined as a mechanism through which all students have an equal opportunity to (time and access) to learn rigorous content'...and 'for a curriculum to be "viable" there must be adequate time for teachers to teach the content and for students to learn the content...' <https://www.mcrel.org/does-your-school-have-a-guaranteed-and-viable-curriculum/>

Targets

2.1 Staff Opinion Survey: Improve the Use of student feedback to improve practice from 61% PE 2021 to 70% PE by 2025

2.2 SatS Improve Student Voice and Agency from 62% PE overall in 2019 to 70% PE in 2025

2.3 SatS Improve Effective Teaching Time from 63% PE 2021 to 70% PE 2025

Key Improvement Strategies (KIS)

2a. Build teacher and student capacity to utilise reciprocal feedback to inform teacher practices and student learning.

2b. Build teacher capacity to increase student agency in classroom practice.

2c. Investigate broader curriculum options and learning opportunities to cater for student needs.

Goal 3

To strengthen the connectedness, resilience and wellbeing of all students

Rationale

When students transition into a selective entry school they are required to manage a range of new academic and social challenges and expectations. Establishing and maintaining structures to support students entering the school, navigating their way through their years at the school and then facilitating a successful transition to further education and employment will ensure learning, wellbeing and students' personal and social development are maximised.

Targets

3.1 SaTS Improve Teacher concern from 53% PE in 2019 to 65% 2025

3.2 SaTS Improve Advocate at School 76% PE in 2021 to 80% 2025

3.3 SaTS Improve student Connectedness from 77% PE at year 10 to 12 2021 to 83% PE 2025

Key Improvement Strategies

3a. Strengthen preventative programs, structures and processes that promote student pastoral care and student and parent/carer resilience.

3b. Embed a whole school agreed approach to student wellbeing that involves all stakeholders - students, teachers and parents/carers.

3c. Build the capacity of staff to recognise and support students with mental health needs.

School Vision

To provide an environment that enables highly capable, aspirational learners the opportunity to flourish, to be courageous in their learning endeavours and audacious in their contributions to the communities they serve.

Statement of Purpose

Melbourne High School's educational philosophy is based on the concept of a well-rounded liberal education that will prepare students for all aspects of their future life. The School motto; 'Honour the Work' expresses a determination to apply ourselves to the pursuit of demanding and socially responsible goals.

Melbourne High School students are required to combine their academic studies with an equal emphasis on co-curricular pursuits. Students are expected to develop a strong sense of personal integrity and a commitment to active citizenship. The School will nurture the capabilities students require to lead successful and socially responsible lives in the twenty-first century. These capabilities are based upon the National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. Fostering these capabilities is the collective responsibility of the student, their family, the School and the community.

Successful learners:

- Study a curriculum that embraces all learning areas and balances breadth and depth of focus
- Can think critically and deeply within and across learning areas
- Are creative and innovative in their thinking and application of learning
- Take responsibility for their learning and are motivated to reach their full potential
- Can work independently and collaborate in teams and effectively communicate ideas
- Are lifelong learners with the agility to adapt to changing circumstances

Confident and creative individuals:

- Are able to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- Have the ability to establish and maintain healthy and satisfying lives
- Are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities
- Develop personal capabilities such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- Relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships
- Are well-prepared for life roles in their family, community and the workforce
- Are optimistic, make rational decisions and accept responsibility for their actions

Active and Informed Citizens:

- Are responsible and active global and local citizens
- Appreciate and respect individual, cultural, social and religious diversity
- Relate to and communicate across diverse cultures
- Demonstrate a commitment to the values of democracy, equity and justice
- Develop a personal ethical understanding and act with integrity
- Are able to exercise civic leadership for the common good

School values

Core values

In 2022 a number of student focus groups were undertaken to crystallise what students felt were the School's core values. They agreed on the following three.

- Growth
- Respect
- Responsibility

Our commitments

MHS is committed to excellence by:

- Challenging every student to achieve their full potential, beyond their perceived capabilities
- Recognising and developing academic and co-curricular achievement
- Providing challenging engaging and inclusive teaching
- Supporting the highest professional expectations amongst its staff

MHS is committed to tradition with a vision for the future by:

- Appreciating and upholding the traditions of the School's rich heritage
- Developing the capacity to adapt quickly to change and embrace innovation
- Developing the capacity to confidently meet the challenges of changing circumstances and global citizenship

MHS is committed to the development of socially responsible and well-rounded individuals by:

- Providing an education for all aspects of future life
- Fostering creativity, teamwork, leadership and the care of others
- Supporting humour, inquiry, pragmatism, balance, optimism, resilience and lofty aspirations
- Developing the capacity for self-determination and social responsibility

MHS is committed to an involved and diverse school community by:

- Providing students, parents and staff with a sense of belonging to a community with clear goals
- Encouraging and expecting the involvement of all members of the school community
- Fostering understanding, empathy, cooperation and harmony within a diverse school community
- Supporting social responsibility in a local, national and international context.