Domain: Teaching
Element: Collaborative Practice

Statement of Excellence
In schools that excel, there are explicit systems for collaboration and feedback to sustain quality teaching practice.

About Colgullie High School

Colgullie High School is located in the NSW mining town of Colgullie. The nearest regional centre is approximately 300 kilometres away. The school has a student population of fewer than 300, of whom about 20 per cent identify as Aboriginal and 5 per cent have a Language Background other than English (LBOTE). The school’s Family Occupation and Educational Index (FOEI) of about 120 is in the average range.

The school has about 30 teaching staff, including four Head Teachers who work collaboratively, are enthusiastic and provide a range of extra-curricular activities for students.

Seventy per cent of the teaching staff are in the first five years of their teaching career and 40 per cent of staff are accredited at Proficient. There is significant staff mobility resulting in early career teachers joining the school each year.

The school’s strategic directions for 2015-2017 are:
- Engaging the school community
- Student voice
- Curriculum engagement
What are the practices in our school that support collaborative practice?

The School Plan
The school team identified the following processes that are focused on improving collaborative practice:

- Teachers regularly engage across Key Learning Areas (KLAs) for professional learning periods.
- All teachers have participated in lesson observations and received feedback.
- English and Maths Virtual Faculties are established with other schools, which supports collaboration and sharing of strategies across the learning community.

Other school practices:
- Support is provided for the significant number of beginning teachers. This allows for a reduced teaching load and includes the allocation of a peer mentor to assist them with completing their accreditation.
- All faculties meet once a term to evaluate teaching and learning programs.
- A well-established Learning and Support Team meets regularly to review identified students.

Where will we find the evidence of impact? What data will we use?

The school has a yearly planner for teacher professional learning (TPL) that shows teachers participating in cross faculty groups to develop strategies for improved teaching practice. There are always agendas for staff meetings and minutes are taken. These are stored electronically.

A detailed agenda and overview of each Virtual Faculty meeting are developed each term.

The Learning and Support Team keeps detailed minutes using a computer-based database. Educational decisions and information about individual students are recorded in the database.

There is a school timetable of lesson observations of all teachers, and teacher observations are recorded on a schoolwide reflection sheet that links to the Professional Standards for Teachers and the NSW Quality Teaching Framework.

Sources of data analysed
- Teacher Professional Learning Agenda
- Virtual Faculty Agendas and Overviews
- Learning and Support Team Meeting Minutes
- Lesson Observation Teacher Reflection

Other sources of data that could be used
- Performance and Development Plans (PDPs) including reflections
- Tell Them From Me ‘Focus on Learning’ teacher survey
- Evaluation of professional learning (e.g. Exit Slips, Survey Monkey)
- Classroom observations

When we analyse our data what does it tell us?

The school’s analysis indicates:

- The school is prioritising planned professional learning to build the skills and strengths of all teachers. All teachers are participating in professional learning across the school within and across faculty groups.
- The school has an explicit and planned approach to professional learning that builds collaboration beyond faculties and is linked directly to teaching and learning programs and school priorities. The expertise of staff is being used to deliver professional learning across the school.
- Formal mentoring and targeted professional learning is being provided to beginning teachers.
- The Virtual Faculties are building collaboration across the schools involved and enables Colgullie High School to draw on a wider range of expertise to enhance teaching and learning. The agendas and overviews show a focus on planning, teaching and learning, assessment, use of data and differentiation.

- Individual student learning needs are regularly reviewed and discussed through the Learning and Support team structures. Recommendations are available for all staff to ensure that teaching and learning can be modified.
- There is a planned structure in place for providing constructive feedback from school leaders to improve teaching. The feedback structures are linked to the Australian Professional Standard for Teachers and the NSW Quality Teaching Framework.
What can we reasonably conclude about our school?
(Making judgements using the School Excellence Framework)

School Excellence Framework: Collaborative Practice

**Delivering**

Executive, staff, faculty/stage, team and other meetings are used to review the curriculum and to revise teaching and learning programs.

Staff regularly evaluate teaching and learning programs including the assessment of student outcomes.

**Sustaining & Growing**

Teachers work together to improve teaching and learning in their year groups, stages, faculties, or for particular student groups.

Teachers provide and receive planned constructive feedback from peers, school leaders and students to improve teaching practice.

Processes are in place to provide formal mentoring or coaching support to improve teaching and leadership practice.

The school identifies expertise within its staff and draws on this to further develop its professional community.

**Excelling**

Teachers collaborate within and across stages and faculties to ensure consistency of curriculum delivery, including strategies for differentiation and consistency of teacher judgement.

The school has embedded and explicit systems for collaboration, classroom observation, the modelling of effective practice and feedback to drive and sustain ongoing, school-wide improvement in teaching practice and student outcomes.

School-wide and/or inter-school relationships provide mentoring and coaching support to ensure the ongoing development of all staff.

**Why is this school Delivering?**

The school has in place established systems to ensure all staff members meet on a regular basis, to review curriculum and teaching and learning programs. There are explicit systems in place to allow teachers to collaborate through professional learning within and beyond their faculties. Virtual Faculties provide opportunities for collaboration across schools to build teachers’ subject knowledge and understanding. Teachers receive planned feedback from school leaders. Formal mentoring structures exist for beginning teachers and feedback is provided to all teachers.

**What does this school need to do to reach Sustaining and Growing?**

To sustain and grow, the school needs to demonstrate that collaboration involves teachers working together to improve teaching and learning beyond participation in professional learning. The school should aim for evidence that professional learning collaboration, via observation and teacher feedback, has resulted in sustained improvements to teaching practice. Evidence would also need to show that practices give opportunities for teachers to provide and receive feedback from a wider group, including peers and students. Formal mentoring or coaching would enable teachers and school leaders to improve classroom practice and develop leadership capacity within a supportive and collaborative environment.

**Planning for the future – what do we need to do next?**

**Strengthening Practice**

- Deepen knowledge and understanding of best practice through a culture of collaboration and teamwork across faculties that involves sharing of practice.
- Incorporate explicit and targeted feedback in the classroom observation process that includes peer reflection and feedback and opportunities for student feedback.
- Develop formal coaching and mentoring processes across the school, not just for beginning teachers.

**Strengthening Evidence**

- Collect a wide variety of sources of evidence to demonstrate constructive collaborative practices.
- Ensure there are comprehensive peer reflection templates for the classroom observation process to enhance the feedback process.
- Conduct regular reviews of timetabled coaching and mentoring sessions which focus on a growth mindset.
- Capture and analyse program outlines of Virtual Faculty meetings.
To develop collaborative practice, schools could consider the following:

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<th>Practices</th>
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<td>Conversations to change practice – Leadership Pathways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective Performance and Development</td>
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Collgullie High School shared the evidence of practice with its staff as part of its annual self-assessment practices. This was part of a whole staff discussion which focussed on the ways to build collaboration with a focus on feedback for high quality classroom practice.