MOGGILL STATE SCHOOL EXTERNAL REVIEWER REPORT

SECTION 1: SELF-DETERMINED REVIEW
The Self-Determined Review Process is an examination and evaluation of how all the schools systems and structures work together to improve student learning; it supports the Metropolitan Region State Schools Improvement Plan for 2016-2018. The review provides an opportunity for a school community to reflect on its improvement planning processes and self-evaluate how well, and systematically, it makes instructional decisions to improve the educational experience for all their students.

SECTION 2: THE CONTEXT
CURIOUSITY & POWERFUL LEARNING
In 2015 Moggill State School commenced its association with the Curiosity & Powerful Learning Project. This partnership coincided with the development of the schools 2016-2019 strategic planning process. As such, the schools priorities and organisational plan 2016-2019 is closely aligned to the ten Theories of Action outlined in the Curiosity & Powerful Learning initiative.

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE
Lifting student learning requires considered planning, careful implementation, and ongoing monitoring. Yet there is a paradox in education. Many changes are introduced and so often we seem to end up with no change at all. The paradox is resolved by working with people to change culture, by collaboratively changing ‘the way we do things’. There is a need to change the school environment so that it is ready for, and welcoming of, approaches to teaching and learning designed to promote student curiosity.

A self-determined review is an opportunity to be ‘deliberate and intentional’ about changing the school’s learning and teaching culture so that enduring and productive change is evident. The guiding priority is to improve the educational experience for ALL students. By doing this schools have two great advantages:
• Firstly, the students, teachers, parents and school leaders are the agents of change for the school.
• Secondly, the school acknowledges that they are the world experts about their school. Together with your school community, you are best placed to identify and analyse what you are doing now, and what you need to do next to enhance student learning.

TEACHING FOR CURIOSITY
Curiosity motivates learning. Exploratory Curiosity, emerges when we mix the attraction of novel stimuli with taking risks. Intellectual Curiosity is characterised by the desire to learn new ideas, to discover more about something that interests you. Students tap their capacity for curiosity as a resource for exploring and understanding their lives. Curiosity is innate. It is also an attribute that can be cultivated – students can learn how to use curiosity strategically. The challenge is to support students to learn how ‘curiosity thinking’ works and how to deploy it effectively.

Learning curiosity thinking relies on a positive school learning culture and a supportive classroom climate. Curiosity & Powerful Learning proposes ten Theories of Action that schools can enact to produce the culture and climate in which curiosity thrives. The emphasis is on explicitly teaching ways of thinking that draw on our students’ predisposition to curiosity. In an environment that puts the Theories of Action to work, curiosity thinking will be valued, modeled, scaffolded, and automatised in every classroom in the school.

SECTION 3: A NETWORK OF SCHOOLS
THE SELF-DETERMINED REVIEW PROCESS
Four schools - Fig Tree Pocket State School, Graceville State School, Indooroopilly State School and Moggill State School - have created an educational network to support each other through the self-determined review, strategic planning and implementation process. As a part of the peer-review process at Moggill State School classroom observations were undertaken to quantify current evidence of the ten Curiosity & Powerful Learning Theories of Action. To compliment this, teachers were also asked to reflect and complete self-report questionnaires about where they felt the school was currently positioned with regards to classroom practice and school climate.

Added to this, to ensure the school self-determined review process reflected the perspectives of the whole school community, a Collaborative Group Inquiry Process was undertaken. The inquiry process included participation, and consultation from classroom teachers, the Principal, Deputy Principals, Master Teachers, and the Head of Curriculum. Just as importantly, parents and students perspectives were also elicited through focus groups that sought to explore their understanding of high expectations, engagement and curiosity. Perspectives were documented, analysed and synthesized to generate a rich set of qualitative data to inform the strategic planning and decision-making process.

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

QUALITY ASSURANCE: REVIEWING THE REVIEW PROCESS

An independent external reviewer was engaged to evaluate key aspects of the school systems and structures as they relate to the Metropolitan Region State Schools Improvement Plan for 2016-2018 and the ten Curiosity & Powerful Learning Theories of Action.

The external reviewer analysed school data sets, the self-determined review documentation and engaged principals and identified constituents in conversations to capture the most accurate picture of the school’s practices. The following recommendations are based on this process.

RECOMMENDATION 1: CONNECT FEEDBACK TO DATA

Hattie (2009) highlights the important influence feedback has on student achievement. Academic performance data is efficient if teachers know how to store it and access it. It is valuable if teachers know how to interpret it as part of an evidence-based approach to teaching and learning. Activating an evidence-based approach relies a teachers familiarity with a developmental learning framework. Some specific evidence to ‘look for’ that would support this recommendation are:

• A variety of feedback to students, from both teachers and peers, is accurate, specific and timely. Feedback is developmental and supports the advancement of learning.
• Assessment criteria are clearly shared, students are aware of and able to articulate it, and there is evidence that students have helped establish the assessment criteria according to teacher-specified learning objectives
• School leaders and teachers provide a data-based rationale that identifies areas of growth or achievement gaps for all students. Tasks are planned and refined accordingly so that all students are cognitively engaged at a level consistent with their individual achievement.
• Teachers collaborate on designing and/or modifying common grade-wide, curriculum-aligned assessments, rubrics, and grading policies. These tools are used by teachers and administrators to track progress towards goals across grades and subjects areas and make instructional decisions.

RECOMMENDATION 2: HARNESS LEARNING INTENTIONS, NARRATIVE & PACE

When teachers are clear about the intent of their lesson, students are more engaged and secure in their learning. A strong sense of narrative enables teachers to engage in deviation, knowing how to bring the discussion back on target. Some specific evidence to ‘look for’ that would support this recommendation are:
• Instruction, outcomes, strategies, and learning experiences are derived from the Australian Curriculum and reflect the school’s leadership model of optimal student learning. Learning intentions and success criteria are evident throughout the entire learning experience.
• Instructional student groups are organised thoughtfully and are varied as appropriate; they build on student strengths and incorporate student choice as appropriate to maximise learning. Plans for lessons or units are structured, with appropriate pacing and time allocations.

RECOMMENDATION 3: COMMIT TO ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
Assessment for learning, or formative assessment, occurs when we seek out, and interpret, evidence that helps us and students to understand: where they are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get there. Some specific evidence to ‘look for’ that would support this recommendation are:
• Curriculum and academic tasks are designed to engage students, advance them through the content, and assess their understanding as evidenced by what a student does, says, makes or writes.
• Teachers monitoring of student understanding during lessons is visibly active and continuous: The teacher is constantly “taking the pulse” of the class and makes frequent use of strategies (e.g. cold call, questioning for explanation, stop and jot prompts, parking lot, double entry journals, exit slips etc.) to elicit information about individual student understanding and trends.
• Students consistently self/peer-assess against the assessment criteria (rubrics) and monitor their own understanding and progress either by taking initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher. Students are aware of their next learning steps.