

2016

Annual School Performance Report



Mountain District
Christian School

Mountain District Christian School



MDCS VISION STATEMENT

It is the vision of the MDCS Association to provide by God's grace, a flourishing Prep to Year 12 school community where Christ centred education is paramount.

MDCS MISSION STATEMENT

The MDCS Association serves the families and the Christian Community of our district who desire a Christ centred education.

We do this by providing quality biblically-directed teaching and learning in a nurturing environment.

Such education seeks to develop the God given gifts of each child and, together with parents and the church, equip the child for a life of service in God's world.

Introduction

Mountain District Christian School is a P-12 non-denominational independent school located in the picturesque Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne. Established by Christian parents over thirty years, Mountain District Christian School has at its heart a desire to partner with parents in educating young people in values consistent with its biblical foundations. Mountain District Christian School is a welcoming school that seeks to nurture students in a supportive learning environment. Set on seventeen acres of bushland, Mountain District Christian School is blessed with attractive learning and play spaces.

Principal's Message



When I reflect on 2016, there are three things that come to mind.

- What does it mean to be successful?
- The Christian Education National whole school review
- New, experienced and innovative teaching and learning leaders

What does it mean to be successful?

This was a question that was explored with the school community throughout the year. The answer to the question was broken into three parts. Firstly, it requires *faithfulness* to the task (the reason why we seek to be excellent), it requires *excellence* (defined as the journey to our best outcome) which will deliver *success* (defined as an *individual's* best outcome). Each individual's success will depend on a range of factors and each will look different according to the individual's skills, abilities and gifting's given by God. Each person has been called to a

specific purpose and has a specific part to play in our school community and beyond. We want students to be prepared to serve their communities and God to the best of their ability through rigorous educational programs that provide opportunities to engage with the communities of which they are a part. This theme was explored throughout 2016 and continues on into 2017.

CEN whole school review.

Success as a school community can be enhanced by having others, outside of the local community, provide feedback. The idea of faithfulness, excellence and success was applied to all staff and our operation as a school. Early in 2015, the Board chair, Merryn, and I began to have a discussion about inviting CEN to conduct a whole school review for MDCS. An organisation external to MDCS had not been invited in since approximately 2001. The whole school review involved parent surveys, staff surveys and consultant discussions with Board and staff members during their on-site visit. The analysis of the surveys and review of documents (Principal reports to the Board, Financial information and academic outcomes) was presented to the Board with recommendations. From the report:

The surveys paint the picture of a school that in many important ways is achieving its vision to provide a good standard of Christian Education. The school is soundly committed to a Christian approach to learning and life...

It was wonderful to see the school affirmed by many in our community and the support we receive from the parents. However, it was important that the concerns that were raised be addressed.

Principal's Message (cont.)

New, experienced and innovative teaching and learning leaders.

It was a privilege to be able to welcome two new leaders to the leadership team, Samantha Leonardis and Paul Lock. Sam joined us after 20 years in the west. Sam spent 17 years at Strathalbyn Christian College (7 years as the Head of Primary) and 3 years at Geraldton Grammar. Sam has a strong approach to teaching and learning from a Christian perspective. She has completed her Masters in Christian Education through NICE.

Paul completed 11 years at Maranatha Christian School in a number of roles including Secondary Coordinator, VCAL coordinator and VCE coordinator. He also taught Product Design and technology. We welcomed Paul into the school as the first experienced VCE coordinator. His knowledge and experience have enhanced our VCE program. 2016 saw the highest average ATAR at MDCS in the last 7 years.

Jason Riding

From the Board President

One of the major initiatives and successes in 2016 was the decision to implement and deliver the Complispace platform across the school. The rigours of reporting and training with regard to new governmental requirements (eg Child Safe Standards August 2016) largely influenced and necessitated the shift to such a system.

Complispace is a technology based solution that facilitates organisational and legal requirements by ensuring that policies and procedures are up-to-date, and that school compliance requirements are monitored, managed and reported on.

It has been well implemented and now ensures live tracking and managing of risks, compliance obligations and incidents. It includes portals that provide for quick staff access to information and procedures, and modules that provide for training and assessment around such things as



OH&S and Child Safety.

This important investment has provided the Executive, Board and staff instant and fluid access to policies, programs and procedures and provides great confidence that we are in a well monitored and managed position. We are extremely satisfied as a Board that this platform lifts the compliance and risk monitoring aspects of school life to a whole new level of accessibility, transparency and interactivity. The Complispace suite will serve us well into the future as it is updated on an ongoing basis.

A second exciting initiative by the School Executive was the transition to a new, more effective, Learning Management System called SEQTA. Staff reporting on students is now generated directly from SEQTA, and features such as attendance and pastoral care tracking are enabled. It offers further components such

as Continuous Online Reporting to be rolled out progressively and utilised into the future. 2016 has seen a number of focal points addressed in response to the CEN School Review that was undertaken. This has included a tightening of student behaviour management and monitoring, an increased focus on academic rigour and improvements in marketing and telling our story better. Internet connectivity and network issues have also been reviewed and solutions sought to improve our capabilities and access.

Whilst we face the complexities and challenges of being a small school and the influence that fluctuations of student numbers has upon the finances of the school, we have had to make some decisions including postponing the build of the VCE & Performing Arts Centre and re-prioritising the master plan to achieve smaller scale Capital Expenditure programs first.

2106 saw the delivery of the Library renovation, the complete refurbishment of the Year 7-9 classrooms and final installations of reverse cycle split systems to ensure every classroom is now fully air-conditioned. The Year 3-6 classroom upgrades were also commenced over the Christmas holidays. I'm sure you'll agree that the direct benefits of these renovations and increased comfort levels within these spaces has been, and will continue to be, a great return on investment.



The quality of our teaching staff continues to be one of our greatest strengths and assets. We continue to seek to provide learning and professional development opportunities to staff and Board alike to grow our personnel.

We ask that you continue to uphold the school board, executive leadership, teachers, parents and students in your prayers and in acts of service and encouragement. Avail yourself of opportunities to be a part of school life, build relationship and connect, and as you do, community grows. We encourage you, as Association members, to look for opportunities to bless the wider community and promote the school in your churches, youth groups, kindergartens, childcare centres, workplace, sporting club and places of connection. The

stronger we can build this school for the kingdom and for your children, the better!

'Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him'
Colossians 3:17

Merryn Van Bremen



From the Treasurer

In 2016 the school incurred a loss or deficit of nearly \$200,000. Although this is not a positive figure, it was expected and we had planned for this to occur. The main reason we permitted a budget with such a deficit was that over \$300,000 in expenses were non-cash depreciation and amortisation items. As such our cash flows from day to day operations are positive at nearly \$60,000 and we have continued to pay down our loans systematically, leaving us in a strong position. The school has a strong balance sheet, with many families paying in advance each year and our loans are very low compared to standard benchmarks. It is important to note that some extra expenses incurred relate to software purchased to ensure a more efficient way of meeting our compliance tasks (CompliSpace) the addition of administration software/ learning management software (SEQTA) was also purchased to ensure these areas are of a high standard.

The underlying reason for this deficit in comparison to the surpluses of previous years is the decline in student numbers. The current



2017 budget and the plans for 2018 continue to adjust the school's cost structure to ensure sound ongoing stewardship. This of course should be managed carefully, as our main cost is our teaching salaries, so we continue to plan carefully and put in place strategies to grow our student base.

In the short time Andrew North was with us, he maintained the financials effectively, helped implement lots of improvements, and left us with very organised financial systems. We commend him on his service to the school in both the financial management and broader business manager roles he performed.

Courtney Clowes



Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association

ACN: 005 633 670

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2016

	Note	2016 \$	2015 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	12,448	12,596
Trade and other receivables	6	94,287	56,566
Inventories	7	10,747	11,154
Other assets	8	92,739	56,568
Total current assets		210,222	136,884
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	9	4,939,215	4,945,540
Total non-current assets		4,939,215	4,945,540
TOTAL ASSETS		5,149,437	5,082,424
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	164,100	195,932
Financial liabilities	11	532,331	364,743
Short-term provisions	12	389,674	353,663
Other liabilities	13	429,626	426,566
Total current liabilities		1,515,731	1,340,904
Non-current liabilities			
Parents' deposits	10	72,000	65,900
Financial liabilities	11	205,885	126,005
Long-term provisions	12	50,296	51,415
Total non-current liabilities		328,181	243,320
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,843,912	1,584,224
NET ASSETS		3,305,525	3,498,200
EQUITY			
Reserves		662,064	662,064
Accumulated surpluses		2,643,461	2,836,136
TOTAL EQUITY		3,305,525	3,498,200

Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association

ACN: 005 633 670

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 31 December 2016

		2016	2015
	Note	\$	\$
Revenue	3	3,837,971	4,038,938
Employee benefits expense	4	(3,066,493)	(2,882,421)
Finance cost	4	(27,220)	(37,092)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(313,473)	(300,832)
Tuition expense		(201,612)	(192,962)
Administration expense		(91,718)	(67,702)
Bus transportation costs		(84,606)	(81,138)
Property maintenance costs		(98,897)	(78,760)
Other expenses		(146,627)	(169,964)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(192,675)	228,070
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		(192,675)	228,070





MDCS Staff

Mountain District Christian School employs over forty people. In addition to teaching staff there are a number of people who work behind the scenes to support the school including educational support staff, maintenance and cleaning staff, bus staff, a chaplain, and administration team members.

Teaching Staff

Mountain District Christian School has a talented teaching team with a range of teaching experiences and qualifications. In 2016 we welcomed back Mrs. Lia Burke, Mrs. Bronwyn Hamilton and Mrs. Thea Maguire who took leave in 2015.

Mrs. Tracy Williams returned to MDCS, although this time as a Primary school teacher.

We were saddened by the resignation of Stephen Duke. His heart for students and desire to see them participate to their full potential in the school community and beyond was second to none. He fulfilled his role with a high level of integrity and we are grateful for his contribution



over the 4 years he was here.

MDCS sadly said farewell to Mrs. Bronwyn Hamilton, Mrs. Denise Scott and Mrs. Leanne Dube as they explored other opportunities elsewhere.

There are currently no employees of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent.

MDCS Teachers and Qualifications:

Mr. W. Baird BEd (PE)
 Mr. J. Beer BA(Hons), GradDipEd
 Miss E. Bennett BEd(Prim)
 Mrs. L. Burke Dip Teach
 Mrs. J. Bratton DipTeach, Grad DipEd

Mrs. A. Chaney DipTeach, BEd
 (Conversion)
 Mrs. H. Denny BMusic, BEd
 Mrs. E. Diprose BA, BTeach
 Mrs L. Dube B.ED (PE),
 Mr. S. Duke BEd(PE), GradCert
 (Theology)

Mrs. E. Fensham BA, GradDipEd
 Mr. A. Grace BSci (Chem) Grad Dip Ed
 Mrs. G. Godman BA, BTeach
 Mrs B. Hamilton B ExSc, DipEd
 Ms. S. Hanscamp BA, DipEd, MEd (Christian
 Education)

Mrs. N. Heading BA, DipEd
 Mrs. R. Holland B Early Childhood Ed
 Mrs. L. Knight BTeach, Grad Dip Sp. Ed,
 Grad Dip Grief Counselling
 Mrs. S. Leonardis DipEd (Primary), BEd, MEd
 (Christian Education)

Mr. P. Lock BEd. (Design &
 Technology)

Mrs. T. Maguire
 Mr. K. McDowell

Mr. T. Nyhouse

Mr. J. Riding

Mrs. D. Scott

Ms. S. Sumarno
 Mrs. T. Williams
 Mrs. C. Wyngaard

BA, DipEd
 BA (Biblical History)
 Grad Dip Ed
 Cert III Carpentry &
 Joinery, Cert IV WPT&A
 BEd (PE), Grad Dip Chr Ed,
 Dip. Management
 BA, Dip Ed, Grad Dip
 Maths Ed
 BA, B Teach
 BEd. (Primary)
 BEd, Grad Dip Ed, Med
 (Christian Education)



Teacher Professional Development

It is a key goal of MDCS to build the capacity of the teaching team to deliver quality educational programs from a Christian perspective. While below there is an outline of some of the professional development



activities undertaken, building capacity involves growing culture, establishing and providing time for staff to work in teams, as well as providing mechanisms for real growth through appraisal and professional development programs. A key component of our efforts to grow staff in their understanding and development of teaching content and developing teaching practice from a Christian perspective includes our participation in Masters Studies with the National Institute of Christian Education (The Institute). The Institute is the training arm of our national Christian schooling body, Christian Education National. As a condition of employment at MDCS, teaching staff are required to study with the National Institute, completing the two foundational units towards their Masters of Education. In 2016, four staff undertook study with the Institute and two staff completed the Certificate of Christian Education as part of their induction program.

A focus for 2016 was on beginning to develop teachers understanding of what it means to effectively differentiate in the classroom. We welcomed, Kylie Bice, an educational consultant to begin the conversation. She spent two and a half days with teachers and learning assistants to provide information, small group consultation and observation of teaching practice.

Approximately \$35,500 was spent on professional development. This worked out to be \$1260 per teacher spent on professional development programs in 2016. These included courses in health, well-being and safety such as first aid and anaphylaxis training. Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) also provided seminars and training programs for our teaching staff. These included programs in literacy and numeracy, the use of Information and Computer Technologies in learning, and classroom management. Senior Secondary staff also participated in a range of professional learning activities specific to the subjects they deliver at the VCE level.



Key Student Outcomes

It is a requirement of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) that we maintain an Attendance Register. Children between the age of six and seventeen are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are undertaking approved home tuition or correspondence education through the Distance Education Centre. Mountain District Christian School requires parents to inform the school when their children are absent from school.

Non-attendance is recorded on school reports each semester. Repeated non-attendance can have a detrimental influence on a child's educational outcomes. In circumstances of regular non-attendance the school will look to establish meetings with parents to assist them with any issues that may be attendance related and implement strategies to assist the student. In 2016 overall student attendance improved by 1.3%. It was 92.93%.



As part of teaching and learning teachers collect 'data'. This data is often very rich and can include classroom observations, work samples, assignment and test results, and standardised assessments. NAPLAN is one of the standardized assessments used by schools within Australia to inform student learning. At

MDCS other standardised tests used include the PAT Maths and English, the South Australian Spelling Test, TORCH and a number of assessment tools created by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). We do recognise that

standardised testing can have limitations and should not be considered in isolation from other available information on student learning. It is important, however, that data be used wisely to assist teachers, parents and students to establish good work programs within a safe environment and thus facilitate learning. Below are the NAPLAN results from 2016. Please note the small sample sizes.

MDCS Students achieving National Benchmarks:

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Numeracy	Grammar
Year 3					
Total number of students in year	15	15	15	15	15
Number present for test	11	12	12	13	12
% meeting national benchmarks	100	100	100	100	100
Year 5					
Total number of students in year	23	23	23	23	23
Number present for test	19	18	20	19	20
% meeting national benchmarks	100	95	90	100	100
Year 7					
Total number of students in year	22	22	22	22	22
Number present for test	20	19	20	20	20
% meeting national benchmarks	100	95	100	95	100
Year 9					
Total number of students in year	23	23	23	23	23
Number present for test	21	21	23	23	23
% meeting national benchmarks	91	95	96	100	91

Mountain District Christian School, Monbulk, VIC

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assesses all students in Australian schools in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. For more information visit the [NAPLAN website](#).

The chart below displays average NAPLAN scores for each domain. The selected school's scores are displayed in blue. Also displayed are average scores for statistically similar schools (SIM) and all Australian schools (ALL). The coloured bars indicate whether the selected school's scores are above, close to, or below the other scores.

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Colour Scheme Red & Green Submit Alternate view: Results in graphs										
	Reading		Writing		Spelling		Grammar and Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 3	431 392 - 469		429 400 - 459		380 348 - 413		442 403 - 480		433 404 - 461	
	SIM 435 426 - 444	ALL 426	SIM 430 422 - 438	ALL 421	SIM 429 420 - 437	ALL 420	SIM 445 435 - 455	ALL 436	SIM 408 400 - 417	ALL 402
	529 503 - 556		470 446 - 495		468 444 - 492		507 478 - 535		496 474 - 518	
Year 5	SIM 513 504 - 521	ALL 502	SIM 484 476 - 493	ALL 476	SIM 503 495 - 511	ALL 493	SIM 519 510 - 528	ALL 505	SIM 501 493 - 509	ALL 493
	564 540 - 587		535 504 - 565		534 509 - 559		543 516 - 570		549 526 - 571	
	SIM 550 543 - 557	ALL 541	SIM 522 514 - 531	ALL 515	SIM 556 548 - 563	ALL 543	SIM 552 543 - 561	ALL 540	SIM 562 554 - 570	ALL 550
Year 7	609 586 - 632		584 553 - 614		575 550 - 601		592 566 - 618		582 561 - 602	
	SIM 588 581 - 595	ALL 581	SIM 556 547 - 566	ALL 549	SIM 589 581 - 597	ALL 580	SIM 577 568 - 585	ALL 569	SIM 598 590 - 605	ALL 589
	564 540 - 587		535 504 - 565		534 509 - 559		543 516 - 570		549 526 - 571	
Year 9	609 586 - 632		584 553 - 614		575 550 - 601		592 566 - 618		582 561 - 602	
	SIM 588 581 - 595	ALL 581	SIM 556 547 - 566	ALL 549	SIM 589 581 - 597	ALL 580	SIM 577 568 - 585	ALL 569	SIM 598 590 - 605	ALL 589
	564 540 - 587		535 504 - 565		534 509 - 559		543 516 - 570		549 526 - 571	

How to interpret this chart

SIM schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds

ALL Australian schools' average

☐ Student population below reporting threshold

☐ Year level not tested

Selected school's average is

- substantially above
- above
- close to
- below
- substantially below

How to interpret this chart

- SIM** schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds
- ALL** Australian schools' average
- ☐ Student population below reporting threshold
- ☐ Year level not tested

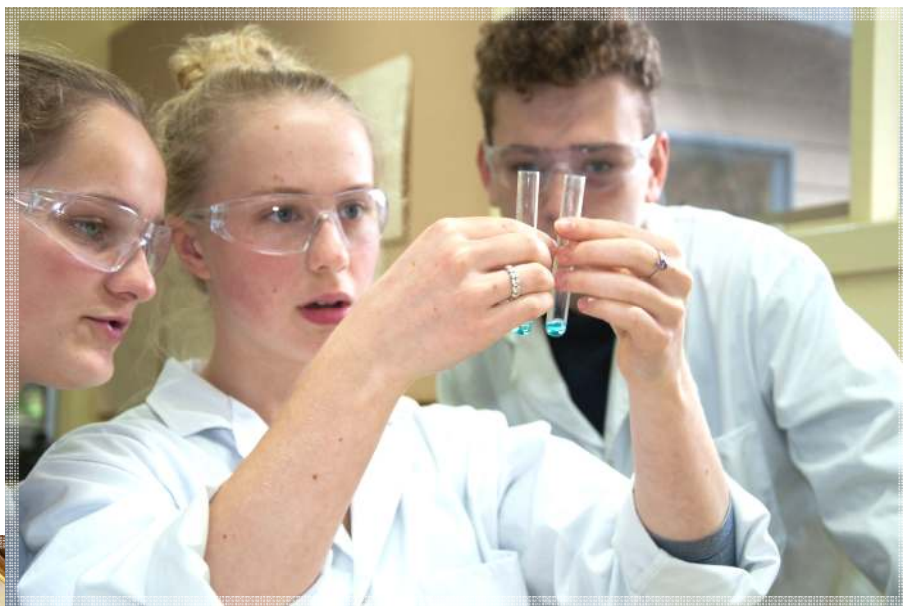
- Selected school's average is
- substantially above
- above
- close to
- below
- substantially below



Senior Secondary Outcomes

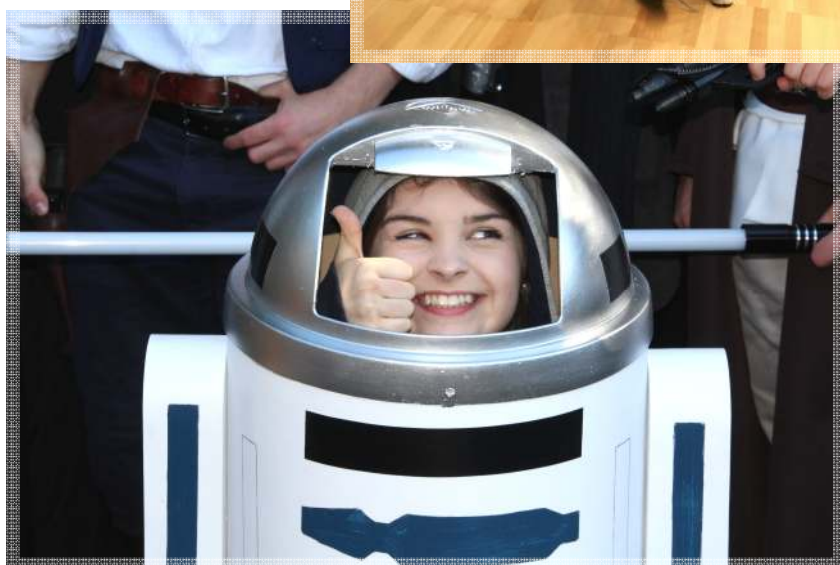
In 2016, twenty nine students undertook a Unit 3 & 4 sequence of study towards their Victorian Certificate of Education. In all, thirteen students completed Year 12 at MDCS. The students participated in a variety of subjects. These included Biology, Chemistry, English, Further Mathematics, Health and Human Development, History, Mathematical Methods, Physical Education, VCE Dance, Psychology, Studio Art, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, Literature and Drama. The number of subjects offered at MDCS is very high when considering the number of students enrolled.

It was pleasing to note that 100% (13) of students that completed Year 12 achieved the successful completion of



their VCE. The students completing a Unit 3 & 4 study sequence achieved some excellent results. 2.8% of students achieved a study score over 40 (twice as many as the previous year). The median study score for students completing a Unit 3 & 4 study sequence in 2016 was 28. The average ATAR improved by 7 points, up to 60.63

It was pleasing to note that all students that applied for tertiary courses were provided with an offer in the first round. The courses they were accepted into included Commerce, Creative Arts, Justice, Sports Science, Law, Science, Teaching and Veterinary and Wildlife Science.



Satisfaction Surveys

In 2016, Christian Education National was engaged by the Board and Principal to conduct a whole school review. This external process involved:

- Initial telephone discussions of the CEO of CEN
- Implementation of an on-line Parent Satisfaction Survey and an on-line Teacher Satisfaction Survey
- Analysis of survey results
- Review of documents (including Principal's report to the Board, Finance reports, analysis of academic performance)
- Consultants' discussions with Board and Staff members during on-site visit 19-20 April.
- Written report with recommendations to the Board
- One consultant's attendance at May 2016 Board meeting to discuss the report

An excerpt from the report:

"It is very important to appreciate the context in which we make these comments and suggestions. The surveys paint the picture of a school that in many important ways is achieving

its vision to provide a good standard of Christian Education. The school is soundly committed to a Christian approach to learning and life and the Principal and teachers are warmly regarded and respected... It is worth noting, too, that parents are very happy with the staff overall and affirming of the love and care provided by the staff to their children.

So there is much to affirm and it is important to warmly commend and encourage all those who have contributed to this positive result; in particular, of course, the Principal and the staff of MDCS.

In the opinion of both parents and staff, however, the school could improve in:

1. **Academic rigour** and motivation for students of all abilities, but particularly for those students at the higher end of the spectrum. (It should be noted that some of this negative perception is ill-founded. The overall standards of the school are quite sound. A review of the data reveals that the school's academic performance is as good as other schools in the general area.)
2. Having much improved **technological support** – covering internet connectivity and network issues
3. The handling of some **student behaviour/relationship issues**.

It has been a number of years since 'outside eyes' have been invited in to provide feedback to Mountain District Christian School. It was wonderful to hear that there was much to affirm. It did, however, highlight areas that the school needs to address.





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