



## **Secondary Teacher Package - Secondary Campus**

St Matthews Catholic School is a Kindergarten to Year 12 systemic Catholic school located in the beautiful and thriving township of Mudgee, NSW. The school has undergone unprecedented growth over the past 10 years, from 430 students in 2011 to enrolments of 1048 students in 2021. It was announced in July 2018, that the school would be moving to a multi-campus K-12 school, with a secondary school located at Broadhead Rd. As a result of this expansion, the school has developed an exciting and innovative leadership model that will support the school into the transition to the multi-campus model, and ensure sustainable and consistent leadership of the school for years to come. We are now searching for a vibrant, enthusiastic and professional leader who is excited about the challenge of learning and teaching in a dynamic and Christ-centred environment, and who believes they can assist in leading the school into this enlivening new era.

### **Selection Criteria**

The successful applicant will demonstrate the following capabilities:

1. The ability to develop and foster positive and productive relationships with the students, staff and families in a complex and dynamic environment
2. Knowledge of and current contemporary learning practices in general, with evidence and/or willingness to engage in adaptive and agile learning environments
3. Effective teamwork and ability to contribute to a high functioning collaborative team environment within a PLT Framework
4. Excellent organisational and communication skills, with demonstrated ability to work effectively with staff, students and families
5. An understanding of and commitment/support to the mission of Catholic Schools



## Role Description

**Job Title:** Secondary Teacher

**Conditions:**

**Reporting To:** Relevant KLA Coordinators to subject areas taught

### Purpose of the position

The Secondary Teacher is responsible for the outstanding learning and teaching that occurs within their classroom and, in collaboration with colleagues, a responsibility for the learning and teaching across the Secondary school. Each teacher in the school is expected to be a collaborative member of the Professional Learning Team for the stage/KLA they are a part of. This involves working in a collaborative team to set targets for student achievement, analyse student assessment data, and collaboratively develop differentiated strategies and assessment tasks.

### Responsibilities & duties

To fulfil this mission, the specific responsibilities of the Professional Learning Team Member include:

- Be a collaborative member of the Secondary KLA Professional Learning Team, playing a role in ensuring the KLA continues the successful delivery of the HSC Courses.
- Ensuring accurate programming of teaching and learning to ensure high quality learning of students within the KLA and all BOSTES/CEO accountabilities are met. Work with the KLA Coordinator to ensure the retention of appropriate work samples for all courses/units.
- As part of the KLA team conduct data analysis of student learning and facilitate a collaborative approach to the development of KLA and school wide approaches to teaching and intervention for students at all levels of learning.
- Implement innovative and research based contemporary learning practices within the classroom, including the appropriate use of ICT.
- Source and participate in appropriate professional learning to ensure high quality teaching and, as a result, high level learning of all students.
- Participate and organise appropriate extra curricular activities for students
- Participate and support activities that reflect the school's Catholic ethos such as prayer, liturgy, school masses.
- Other roles where reasonable as determined by the Principal

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## SECTION 3 - PLC'S, SCHOOL TEAMS AND ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

### 3.1 Professional Learning Community

#### 3.1.1 What is a PLC?

##### THE SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF A PLC:

In *Collaborative Teams That Transform Schools: The Next Step for PLCs*, Dr Robert Marzano and his colleagues (2016) identifies six specific characteristics of effective PLCs. These characteristics are as follows:

1. Mutual support and trust among teachers
2. Shared vision and values
3. Focus on improving student learning
4. Focus on teacher growth and professional learning
5. Intentional and systematic support of the collaborative model
6. Inquiry-based approach and use of evidence

These characteristics emphasise collaboration, critical inquiry and improving student learning, and they emerge as schools focus on effectively implementing the PLC process.

##### SIX PLC QUESTIONS

The PLC process is shaped by six compelling questions that collaborative teams use to inform and guide their work. The first four of these questions are derived from the influential *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* (DuFour et al. 2010), while Marzano et al. (2016) add the final two. Taken together, these six questions represent five areas of focus for schools on the path to becoming a PLC: curriculum, assessment, instruction, teacher development and school leadership.

The six PLC questions are as follows:

1. What is it we want students to know? (curriculum)
2. How will we know if our students are learning? (assessment)
3. How will we respond if our students are not learning? (instruction)
4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are already proficient? (instruction)
5. How will we increase our instructional competence? (teacher development)
6. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school? (leadership)



In transforming a school into a PLC, these questions must be addressed concurrently.

The manner in which the first question is answered dramatically affects the way in which the second question can be effectively answered, and so on. When given sustained and simultaneous consideration, the six questions serve as transformational forces that structure the journey towards PLC success.

### 3.1.2 What is the role of the PLT team leader at St Matthews?

The role of the Team Leader is significant and critical to the success of the evidence-based developmental learning and intervention method. The Team Leader is a key driver in PLTs, developing teachers' understandings and ability to strategically analyse assessment data for the purpose of improving teacher practice and student learning. Team Leaders will develop skills in team leadership, school and curriculum reform, assessment and testing, and action research.

### 3.1.3 How does the team leader promote the focus on improving teaching and learning?

This is achieved primarily through an analysis of assessment data and student observable learned behaviours. The team leader needs to:-

- Ensure that adequate information is communicated to all at team level.
- Ensure that collaborative and mutual responsibility for student learning is developed and maintained.
- Maintain the focus of discussion on the students and their observable development rather than on the teacher.
- Keep the discussion at a level of evidence and dissuade inferential discussions in the PLT.
- Attend professional development programs focusing on the use of data and its link to developmental learning.
- Report regularly to school principal and leaders on team function and management.
- Document student learning evidence and related teaching strategies and resources for later evaluation and evidence of links between intervention and learning.
- Discuss and defend resource use and teaching interventions using student observable behaviour as evidence.
- Share teaching experiences amongst colleagues during team meetings with leaders from other schools.
- Seek to develop the teachers' confidence in using an evidence-based developmental framework.
- Promote a culture of 'challenge' rather than a culture of 'sharing' using a language in the team based on student activities and observable behaviour rather than teacher activity and inference



3.1.4 Why is the leader regarded as a catalyst and responsible for the professional development of the PLT members in their school and not the provider?

- PLT members need to develop their knowledge base in areas of developmental learning, assessment and reporting, literacy and numeracy learning and teaching regardless of the discipline they teach.
- PLT members will need to develop a repertoire of teaching and intervention strategies suitable for a class of mixed abilities.
- Team leaders will need to assist the development of beliefs and attitude among the teachers that facilitate the learning of every student regardless of background, ability or learning history.
- Team leaders work with the PLT Coordinator to put structures in place to ensure that effective professional development occurs within the school, by setting formal dates, times and agendas for PLTs to meet and examine the data and its connection to their intervention practices, preparing appropriately for meetings.

3.1.5 What are the roles of the PLT team members at St Matthews?

Team members have specific responsibilities just as the team leader does. Teams ensure the opportunity for all teachers to contribute. Team members should be familiar with the reporting system and with the developmental continuum in each area. They need to spend the time and the effort to become familiar with each of the continuum. These are the focus of the work. They need to select students that they believe to be representative of levels on the continuum.

3.1.6 Each teacher should select students. The students should represent low levels, mid-levels and high levels on the continuum. Work samples and short vignettes or descriptions of the students should be taken to the team meeting. The teacher should explain, in terms of evidence and behaviour patterns, the appropriate level of development that they would place the student on within the developmental continuum. The discussion around the table then should focus on how to move the students to the next level or to consolidate them at that particular level. The discussion should always be evidence-based. That is, it should focus on what the students each do, say, make or write, using the language of challenge such as that provided by Bloom's taxonomy to describe behaviours.

3.1.7 The discussion with their peers would be focused on how to change these behaviours to provide evidence that they have either consolidated at the level or have moved to the next level. A record of this discussion needs to be made. The record should indicate how long the students will be given to either consolidate or move to the next level or else?. This might be a number of weeks or even months. For this reason it is necessary for the team to document the strategy, resources, and the



evidence that they will need to define the conclusion that the student has reached the next level.

Depending upon the size of the professional learning team this means that there is a **large amount of discussion of individual student work within the team**. A large team, for example, would be attempting to discuss a very large number of students. This may take several meetings. When this group of students has been discussed, another group of students per teacher needs to be added to the list for discussion.

### 3.1.8 Who should be the PLT team leader?

The choice of leader for the professional learning teams is a critical decision. The leader is responsible for organising, developing, supervising and sharing a professional process. They will need a structure for the meeting and a definite purpose to be achieved within the time allocated. The team leader's role described in these notes illustrates how important it is that they tightly control the meeting procedures.

They need to be able to help the teachers in their team develop a knowledge base. They also need to help the teachers develop a range of pedagogical skills. This doesn't mean that the team leader is the front of all this knowledge but that they may have to seek external assistance to provide it. They need to be a catalyst for their team's development.

So the team leader needs to have special qualities. Certainly leadership is an imperative quality - so too is the knowledge of data use and interpretation and its link to instructional intervention. The team leader also needs a thorough understanding of assessment and reporting. They need to understand different forms of assessment that might be classified for PLTs 9 three ways. These can be the formal structured objective assessment using paper and pencil tests and objectively scored.

The second would be judgement based assessments using predefined and highly structured rubrics. The third is an informal form of assessment which is ongoing, unstructured, yet linked to an interpretive framework based in the developmental continuum. The central glue of these three approaches to assessment is the developmental continuum. It enables all data on all observations to be interpreted and allows the teacher to monitor students' progression through stages of increasing competence while at the same time identifying intervention points where the student is most ready to learn.

### 3.1.9 What is meant by a developmental continuum? Numeracy and Literacy Continuum

Any developmental continuum presents two things. The first is that it represents the development or growth in learning by the pupils. Because it is a continuum there are



steps or levels through which the students pass. It is not a definition of the learning progression or pathway of every individual student.

#### 3.1.10 What support will be available to the team leader?

Team leaders obviously need training in many areas. This can be provided either through an informal process between St Matthews and other schools or through team leader meetings that are facilitated by an individual capable of focusing on the use of data, setting a meeting agenda, and interpreting assessment and reporting results.

#### 3.1.11 What support is available to teachers?

The teachers as team members also need support. It has to be possible for a teacher to ask for help during the discussion of an individual student. The human resources that the team accesses is most precious. It must be nurtured, developed and rewarded. **The one thing that is mandatory is that teachers are supported in the decision-making so that they can follow through with interventions that they understand to be best suited to particular students and do this with a confidence that they are supported by their colleagues.** This should also give the teachers and power to evaluate and make decisions about which advice is most suitable for which particular situation.

#### 3.1.12 What is the recommended PLT meeting agenda?

Team meeting agenda

Review

Plan

Strategy

Resources

The meeting agenda is recommended to be divided into five parts. The first ten minutes can be devoted to a sharing session to allow for administrative and personal issues to be given some time. However the PLT chair or leader should never allow this section of the meeting to be extended. The guillotine must be used at the end of 10 minutes.

At this stage the conversation should shift to the evidence presented on the work of the students that one of the teachers has collated. This is the review session. Once the data or evidence of the students has been presented the team then takes a few minutes to discuss possible intervention strategies for these three representative students. This is the strategy session. The next phase of the meeting examines the resources needed and then the team agrees on what the effect can be expected and how this will be recognised. These are explained further below.

#### 3.1.13 Why is the agenda recommended?

The fixed agenda is recommended because there needs to be a structure to the meeting. The team leader also needs to be firm about the discussion in order to make



the most effective and efficient use of the time set aside for the meeting. We have found that when this is not followed the discussion drifts off onto other topics and the meeting takes longer to achieve the same or fewer outcomes. A fixed agenda also allows all members to understand the process and to know what to expect of themselves and of their peers.

#### 3.1.14 What is meant by the review in the PLT meeting agenda?

At this step, the team examines the data from the student formal test-based assessment as well as other evidence in the form of teacher observations, samples of the student work and some case history of the student. It is a combination of several possible forms of evidence. For example it might use the data from the formal testing program and these data are presented in the form of graphs and reports from an online reporting software package. Work samples, behaviour profiles, home backgrounds, teacher observations and so on. The important thing is that the evidence is only about what the student does, says, makes or writes and it is NEVER about what the teacher interprets or infers. The latter is not evidence.

#### 3.1.15 What is meant by PLT identifying a strategy for the student?

Strategy is the teaching approach that the team recommends to a teacher in order to move the student(s) from one level to the next or to consolidate the student at a specific level.

#### 3.1.16 What is meant by identifying resources?

Let's continue with the example of the student whose reading level is low. What are the resources we could advise on for the grade 2 student? How much time would we allocate in order to see development in each of the subjects and in reading? Who is responsible for the reading development? Or even consolidation? What would we be looking for to conclude that progress had been made or that the student had consolidated? What materials might we need? Does each teacher feel comfortable with this or do we need to recommend some form of professional development for them – they are after all the most important resource. Are there special facilities needed? What about equipment? These are the topics the team needs to discuss to focus on the student's development and growth.

#### 3.1.17 What is meant by planning for the next stage?

Once the strategy and resources are identified and agreed on by the relevant teachers and documented in the PLT minutes, the planning needs to be finalised. Who takes responsibility for these students. In a secondary school it could be that each of several teachers has a specific task to undertake. How long do the teachers have? When will this student be discussed again by the team? What is the evidence that will be used to make decisions about change and development?





3.1.18 How frequently should the teams meet and how long should a meeting last?

Primary - Weekly for 1 hour

Secondary - 3-4 times per term

3.1.19 How does the team leader encourage the teachers to link the evidence to developmental learning?

This is important because the team leader must emphasise the importance of the discussion always focusing on evidence. Evidence is restricted to what the students do, say, make and write. Evidence is only what the teacher can hear, see or touch. Anything else is an inference. So the team leader's job must be rehearsed during the team leaders' meeting. Even the team leaders must emphasise evidence not inference in their discussions. This is emphasised because it is important that the teacher focus on what they can change. We need teachers to emphasise what they can explicitly change at the student level. Teachers can directly and explicitly change what students do, say, make and write. They cannot directly and explicitly change what students think, feel, know or understand. However, by changing what students do, say, make and write they can infer that they have changed what students think, feel, know or understand. Hence to link evidence to teaching and learning, the conversation and the discussion on the collaborative decision-making should always emphasise the evidence.

3.1.20 How does a team leader encourage accountability amongst the team members?

Team minutes and agendas can help do this. If the team leader maintains a log in the minutes of the decision-making and the materials and strategies that have been agreed upon, it's a relatively simple matter to use this as a document for accountability at subsequent meetings. Teachers who have not used differentiated instruction, or have not used explicit teaching of specific students, need to be able to defend why they make that change and the defence must always be in terms of evidence of student performance. If it produces the desirable change, then it is defensible.

3.1.21 What support should the leaders expect?

The first level of support that leaders must have is from the PLT Coordinator, then the Assistant Principal and then the School Principal. The PLT Coordinator, AP's and principal must be convinced, enthusiastic and supportive. The leaders must be given the authority that goes with the position. They carry a lot of responsibility. They are responsible for the way in which the team operates, the extent to which their team improves student learning, the way in which teachers undergo collaborative decision making and the way in which this team strategy contributes to the overall school improvement. With this responsibility there must be authority. Unless there is delegated authority the team leader's job becomes untenable. The authority must be there in order to make change, direct teachers in holding a meeting, making



recommendations about PLTs resources and materials that are required, making decisions about student intervention, staff professional development, their own professional development, and how information is provided to the school leadership.

3.1.22 What is meant by shifting the culture from “my class” to “our students”?

This is an important shift. It takes time for a group of teachers to collectively take responsibility for all of the students under the charge of team members. This is the most difficult change that the team leader needs to facilitate. Only when each team member takes a personal interest in the students discussed at the meeting regardless of whether or not they teach them, will the culture of “our students” emerge.