Executive Summary

To what degree are our learners engaged in their learning? Our school-Based Inquiry Question, 2007.
Paradise Primary School A Year Of………
Striving for Excellence – Achieving Goals – Building Diversity – Managing
New Growth – Ingraining Innovation.

As we end 2007 we reflect on the past year as Paradise Primary School has focused on building a bright future based on the best of the past. It has been an exciting, demanding challenge for Paradise PS as we look to maintain our identity and culture of care and success as well as incorporate the large number of new students and families to the school. The Motto for the school “Dedicated to Teaching and Committed to Teaching” has been the catalyst for change in terms of the changing student numbers, school profile, student demographics and the need for extensive work to be undertaken in curriculum development. These challenges have both +ve and –ve aspects. At the end of the year we enjoyed our highest attended Christmas concert with feedback indicating that enjoyment, satisfaction and approval was very high. The energy levels of parents, staff and student was spent by the last day. A commitment as high as PPS, has in maintaining learning at this level, is exhausting and was not unexpected, as the following overview will reflect.

Core Business

The priority of our core business has been more clearly defined by the focus of our Inquiry Question, “To what degree are students engaged on their learning”, because this being the second year that we have filtered development from an Inquiry Question focus. It is our belief that the greatest need next year is to pattern a predictable and consistent data collection and review processes. It is our belief that the greatest need next year is to pattern a predictable and consistent data collection and review processes. This year has seen occasional complaint being received by the District Office, taking grievances and concerns being taken beyond the school. It would be fair to say that the greatest hindrance with furthering a seamless connection with the local high school is the difficulty of being in a separate district and the Government push for large campuses.

Well Being

This year has seen occasional complaint being received by the District Office, taking grievances and concerns being taken beyond the school. This has identified the need for clearer Grievance Procedures for parents, staff and students to be established. Thus when a concern is raised and not dealt with in a manner or to an outcome that is unsatisfactory it is resolved appropriately.

Our school philosophy has always been about maintaining a positive and strong partnership between all members of our school and community. It has also promoted a need for defining effective and positive parental communication in this partnership.

A Summary of our Achievement

Targeted Strategic Directions 1 & 2. - We have moved in many areas to identify and record student achievement but we have not established nor maintained a CONSISTENT set of data R-7 across all subject areas. We have not collaboratively practiced the retrieval of that data to improve practice and achieve outcomes. Clearly the L&N data results validate the success of our students learning but as we worked to establish a consistent R-7 set of learning outcome expectations it was problematic that the data we collected was inconsistent from one class to another.

Targeted Strategic Directions 2. An area of specific need in the future is based on our failure to set and be very specific about the academic achievements of our students both, individually as well as in year level groups. We recognise this is a singular reflection on engagement but does echo the greater need for rigor with which the school and community pride itself.

Targeted Strategic Directions 3. The dramatic increase in enrolments over the past 2 years and the surge prior to the commencement of 2008 is a positive indicator of success of the link with many groups in the community. The strong relationship with the Preschools is increasing people making enquiries and then enrolling in the school. It would be fair to say that the greatest hindrance with furthering a seamless connection with the local high school is the difficulty of being in a separate district and the Government push for large campuses.

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**Engagement - School Enrolment Growth**

A vital part of the refreshing nature of the school has been the continual increase in enrolments over the last three years. From 2004 to 2007 the biggest increase, (57%) has been in the Junior Primary. As we move into 2008 the school will sustain 8 classes and be entitled to a leadership increase with the appointment of an Assistant Principal.

From the data presented the school had a net growth of:
- 13 students from 2005 to 2006.
- 42 students from 2006 to 2007.

It is anticipated that the school will commence 2008 with 195 students despite the annual loss of students moving to high school and other interstate and private schools. Clearly our public relations exercise and high profile in the community has resulted in many members of the local community choose Paradise PS as their choice of positive learning institution of their child. This is a considerable achievement given there are 5 school in a 2km radius.

An avenue that needs to be considered in the future is the small but consistent numbers of children leaving PPS for other local public and private schools in the middle and upper primary year levels.

**Engagement - Attendance**

In summary attendance has shown a small fluctuation over the last few years with an average of 92.8%. This places our attendance:
- Above the state average every year for the past 3 years.
- Above the district average for the past 3 years.

Specific to our concerns are the following patterns of success and areas to be addressed. Our aim in 2007 was to achieve a minimum of 93% attendance for all year levels.

- This was not achieved in Reception and Year 1, or Year 3. These year levels have been traditionally lower across the school in the past few years. On further investigation we see that sickness and family reasons were the main explanation given for the lower than expected results.
- The school goal was achieved by Year 2, Year 4 & 5, as well as Year 6 & 7. This is a positive improvement for year 5 which has not always achieved such a high percentage of attendance. The possible reasons are the administrative teams follow up practices now in place for students absent and the high engagement learning to address these traditionally disengaged age groups.

As a school we document and reflect on both attendance and lateness. This has resulted in many families following more closely their child’s habits and behaviours before and after school.

Whilst the school policy is actioned every day with follows up especially with chronic and regular poor and non attending student in the end the inaction by DECS and the ultimately the state government means that there is really no where to go should families refuse to change poor or no attendance habits.

**Engagement – Building problem solving and confident learners.**

Paradise Primary has always been about building confidence in learners with students and staff as well as parents. As confident learners the ability to problem solve is heightened. For this reason our students have a high level of participation in extra curricula or value added programmes.

**Pedal Prix.** This programme run and coordinated by Ruth Williamson with assistance from Aldo Perilli involved 23 students and 40 parents in three major events included the 24 hour race at Murray Bridge. Two teams raced divided into an all Girls and all Boys. The boys completed a greater distance in the race despite withdrawing early. This was due to the poor condition of their vehicle which had had several crashes during the course of the race. Several younger riders including Ryan Cirocco showed future leadership when he completed the school record with a 3.30 minutes lap in the time trials on Friday night.

**Music.** With the acquisition of a Federal Government grant we were able to expand the music programme and provide students
with low level costs. During this year we had 30 students playing a wide range of instruments and 30 students who were involved in the Junior and Senior choirs. Our senior choir represented the school proudly as part of the festival choir.

**IT Development.** With a federal Government Grant we were able to replace our aged computing suite with large screens and fast hardware. The aim of this was to provide engaging and capable machines to support learning. The Resource Centre was also able to acquire a portable multi-media unit for assemblies and resource based learning for use throughout the school. Each classroom was provided with a Smart (Interactive) white board. A series of T&D activities which included a full closure day has meant that these wonderful assets have brought our school to the forefront of the district in technology supporting our highly engaged learning.

**Student Voice.** The school has addressed this issue with some degree of success. Aldo Perilli and Ruth Williamson established student forums which reflected every area of school operations. With our ongoing priority of student ownership of learning, this decision making process struggled in the demanding requirements of time put upon the curriculum. We have achieved several successful outcomes including contributing to the whole school review, influencing the Uniform policy review as well as several fundraising activities. 2008 will build on this solid foundation. The whole concept is in review with the possible promotion of whole school forums.

**Camps and Excursions.** In 2007 we had a whole school camp and or excursion week. This incorporated the year 6/7 students participating in the Aquatics programme at Murray Bridge while the year 3 to 5 student’s participated in an outdoor educational programme at Arbury Park. On the second day of the outdoor camp all of the reception to year 2 classes attended and joined in the activities at Arbury Park. It’s worth noting the weather was extremely wet during this time, but our resilient students joined in and appeared to relish the opportunity to get dirty whilst learning. Each of these activities plus additional opportunities such as PE week etc builds and contributes to confident and resilient learners who will always be success in achieving their potential.

**Learning**

As a school we support student learning above the expected commitment required by providing Support Offer time for each class and in several specialist intervention programmes. In the last 3 years we have been constructing and modifying an accountable intervention strategy. As a result 49 students have received additional specialist support this year. Additional to this is Early Intervention Reading, which has had 38% of JP Student’s participate. Rainbow reading has responded to 35% of all middle and upper primary students.

**Literacy.** Literacy and Numeracy are an integral part of what we do at PPS and this year all students were required to participate in the Premiers Reading unless withdrawn by the parents. Over 80% of students completed the task and reached either their achievement or a medallion for 2nd and 3rd year’s successful engagement. In 2008 we will closely report the participation and accomplishments of all students in the Newsletter as a method of celebration and motivation to succeed. We will also establish a strategic committee to build on this and have a greater focus in Literacy and Numeracy week.

**L&N Results for 2008**

Overall the student’s assessment for 2008 was pleasing, specifically when we consider the many individuals who achieved results that reflected a great deal of hard work and commitment to their studies. This is reflective of the Literacy and numeracy blocks that each class is required to have each day with uninterrupted time. In addition to this is the extra support provided for each class to address any concerns or small group focus to increase achievement levels. It will be our challenge in 2008 to maintain our higher level of accomplishment in both Literacy & Numeracy above the state and district average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numeracy</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LaN Results for Year 3.**

In summary we can see that in the literacy results from the past two years were well below the state and district average and in 2007 we are above the state average. In Numeracy our results were again stronger than the state and district this year after last year being below those two averages. The probable reasons for this are the:

- Improved communication between the year 2 and 3 teachers in expectations and academic requirements
- The construction by the Junior and Lower primary Teacher for a Reception to year 3 non negotiable curriculum that took into account the expectations of the LaN testing in reading, writing and reading.
- Large number of students in year 3 which reduces the impact of less successful student had on the overall result.

**LaN results for Year 5.**

In summary these results in the Literacy outcomes achieved indicate that last year was an abnormality with results being well below previous years and this year. The numeracy results were also above last years but in consistency with the last 3 years well above the state and district average. The only discrepancy is that the district and state improved at a great rate despite still being below our level of achievement. The reasons for this are possibly;

Paradise Primary School Dedicated to Learning, Committed to Teaching
The impact of not having stronger communication between the middle primary year levels.
The changes to staff in these years levels over the last few years.
The potential of this cohort being well prepared to meet their potential.

LaN results for Year 7
In summary the results for the year 7 reflected the academic capability of several students from a small cohort who achieved strong outcomes as individuals but not against the state or district average. Overall this group achieved good results because they applied themselves and the middle school initiative supports their growth. I am confident that these students will continue this high level of achievement as they move onto high school.

School Finances.
Once again the school faced many challenges to build a strong and solid financial base from which to construct greater flexibility and commitment to learning priorities in the future. Over the last two years we have turned around a significant debt and still provided increased spending in some key learning areas. (The Resource Centre, classroom based support for student learning etc). The cash flow, payment from DECS and their debiting system has caused a school with no reserves to struggle to keep ahead of a demanding repair and replacement programme. Many resources are 25 to 30 years of age and simply required major repairs or modification to meet the needs of learning in 2007. In Summary
1. The school finished in the black (in the positive) despite a couple of short periods during the year when we went into the red (in a deficit) which reflected a cash flow issue rather than inappropriate spending.
2. We are seeking reimbursement for, $14 000 in TRT usage, $50 000 in break down maintenance to effectively balance this years budget.
3. We are committed to establishing OSHC as an independent company. This will prevent any further financial demands on the school finances.
4. We have committed to having a $20 000 reserve in place for next years budget despite the hardships it creates in all other expenditure and possible needs of the school.

Perception Data
The following data represents a survey from a comprehensive exercise completed in term 4 as a part of the principal’s whole school review. Based on a DECS model that is very much under construction the strengths of the school with potential need are clarified. The hard data is reflected below and to the side.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Focus on Learning</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thinking Systemically</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shared Leadership</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attend to Culture</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Listen &amp; Respond</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Make Data Count</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Set Direction</td>
<td>not completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Target Resources</td>
<td>not completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the school is performing well in listening and responding. This can change significantly with the individual contributing to the survey and the timing of the survey. Overall the school is seen as a continuously improving responsive organisation, with good shared leadership and focus on learning.

• Making Data count, Thinking Systemically are two areas that are identified as needing improvement

It is important to note that the number of junior primary parents completing the surveys shows greater optimism and commitment to their child's learning.

Partnerships
A significant factor for building the partnership between parents, students and their teachers was the re-instatement of Acquaintance Night and innovation of Student Led Parent/teacher Interview. The interviews were based on part of the School Report that reflected the areas of Persistence – Getting Along – Organisation – Cooperation. (Programme Achieve). Students prepared a brief presentation and discussion on one of the areas of these study habits. Parents, students and teachers then committed to written indicates that would demonstrate their contribution to a strong partnership for their Child's success at school.

ADDOTION COMMONWEALTH REQUIREMENTS

○ Teacher Attendance data
The data attached in the appendix highlights a low percentage of absenteeism for teaching staff with 2.08% of our total teaching time being recorded for illness. Several staff took long service leave and travelled throughout the world and interstate.

○ Teaching Staff retention
Paradise PS is much desired as a school for staff to work in as demonstrated by the number of applications submitted when vacancies occurred. In 2008 the school will have at least 3 new teaching staff with all current teachers remaining. The reason for new staff is the departure of a teacher returning to England, the promotion of another teacher to a leadership position at another Paradise Primary School Dedicated to Learning, Committed to Teaching
school and the conclusion of the contract by one of the short term placed teachers in the school. Three staff have commenced their 7th or 8th year.

- **Teacher Qualification**
  Our staff is very experienced in the number of years and diversity of schools and learning environments worked in, with the average age of teachers and SSO’s being 50. 30% of the teaching staff have a Bachelor of Education and all staff have a minimum qualification of Diploma of Teaching. 30% have both Bachelor’s of Education and Diplomas of Teaching. 33% have degrees or diplomas in other areas including Human Resource Management and Business Administration. 50% of our SSO staff has a tertiary qualification in Child Care, Finance or Special Education to support their role and function in the school.

- **Expenditure and Teacher participation in professional learning**
  An allocation of $100 per FTE teacher was established with $500 for the Principal. Staff also supported each other creating self-release for individual and school-based learning. Each teacher is also allocated 3 days for T&D etc to support their personal development. Many staff has spent reasonably large amounts of money of their own which reduces the accuracy of the $3200 allocation and usage committed for T&D.

- **Value Added Student Reporting**
  In addition to those areas already identified we trialled Middle Schooling, particularly in Literacy & Numeracy. Additional salary has been put into this area with the realisation that several students who were previously assumed to be capable in the basic and core areas were missing key concepts. This was radically addressed and will be further developed in reporting and assessment procedures to ensure progress is maintained.

### Moving towards a new year - 2008

As we move towards 2008 with several new staff on board and a continued increase in enrolments, the priority will continue to be, to build on the strong and positive culture focused on successful learning. The most significant difference in 2008 will be the construction and evolution of a leadership team. This will see a dramatic improvement in the quality of what is being done rather than how much is being done. This in turn will energise the team of staff and parents to a higher level of accomplishment.

#### Strategic Direction
- Setting & Maintaining High Standards (targets) in Learning.
- Building Consistency in well being across all partners and partnerships.
- Build up the school environment to match our ethos and involvement in all learning areas.
- Incorporating a standardised PPS data set to maximise consistent improvement in all aspects of learning, school and community.

#### Impacting factors
As we address this development of the school the need to overcome the potential difficulties created by the challenges of;

1. Moving from a flat leadership model to a structured leadership team particularly in light of the long term experience of the current admin and staff of a single team leader.
2. The staffing balance between youthful enthusiasm and quality experienced staff. Whilst enthusiasm and flexibility is certainly not exclusively associated with youth, the energy required to continue to build the school will need to be maintained by a more experienced group of teachers and staff.
3. Funding to support learning initiatives with wise financial management is paramount when considering the very limited funding available to the school. Unfortunately as a small school we do not have the ability to have staff spend time acquiring grants and additional funds that make a significant difference budgeting etc.
4. Building resilience in the students with & through our community. Clearly this is an area pivotal to effectively building partnerships and student’s success in learning.
5. Managing a growing school population within current classroom areas. Not all areas are available to the school and all areas are under pressure to provide for classroom teaching.

### Principal Concluding Comments.

2007 has been a challenging year as we moved from being a small school to a medium sized school. The leadership structure was challenged to accommodate the needs of the organisation. Clearly the school will be better off and far more dynamic with a larger leadership team. Paradise Primary School has always been about involvement and the sharing of expertise and resources. This was reflected in the success of a supportive culture being maintained throughout the busy and demanding year. In the end our year 7 students enjoyed a wonderful year during which they lead the school in a high level of engagement and academic success. I look forward to next year with great enthusiasm.

Peter F Scragg, Principal