

Bankstown Senior College

Antwerp St, Bankstown, NSW 2200

Established in 1992, Bankstown Senior College (BSC) is a Government senior high school encompassing years 10-12 and Sydney's only adult Intensive English Centre (IEC). The College provides an adult learning environment for students, aged 16 and over, seeking an alternative to conventional schooling. The student population is culturally diverse (40% of students are refugees, 70% are new migrants, 90% are from a non-English speaking background). In 2002, over 30 different languages were spoken by students who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds including Arabic, Assyrian, Somali, Vietnamese, Serbian, Kurdish and Chinese. Many are mature and re-entry students (70% are aged 18 and over) whose formal education has been interrupted or who are at a risk of not completing their formal studies. 435 students were enrolled at the college in 2011 with 247 male and 159 female students across Years 10-12.

How this program works

Bankstown Senior College aims to *empower students* to be *active, confident, lifelong learners* by creating a safe and secure learning environment that is built on mutual respect between staff and students. Learning is considered a partnership; students' life experiences are valued, different ways of learning are recognised and student participation is promoted, for example, through the student representative council and leadership program. The college values and builds on the cultural diversity of its students working to develop relationships within the wider community through Community Liaison Officers and through school events that celebrate different cultures and foster a sense of belonging, for example Harmony Day and Team Building Day.

Full-time study takes place over 4 days and there are no school bells or uniforms. The college is committed to academic excellence with a focus on vocational education, English language support and the development of literacy and numeracy skills. An extensive range of accredited academic and vocational subjects are offered at Year 10, 11 and 12. This includes Cert II in General and Vocational Education and Higher School Certificate courses, as well as Intensive English Classes and Cert II in Spoken and Written English. ICT and e-learning are integrated into the curriculum. Students have individualised learning plans and reflection is used as a learning tool. There is a proactive student support program with developmental programs fostering physical, social, emotional and academic well-being and intervention programs which focus on specific individual needs, for example, the Bankstown Tutorial Program for students with internalising behaviour and mental health issues, one-to-one tutoring support for Aboriginal students, and an embedded learning support program to help students clarify their goals and develop their academic skills.

Outcomes

Positive outcomes, indicating the success of this program, include: growth in academic, social and cultural areas within the school, attracting a healthy number of students, offering a wide and varied curriculum and student academic and non-academic achievements:

Credentialed attainment: 68 year 12 students attained HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification (2011). 95% of students on CGVE II course attained the qualification (2011).

Program wide achievements: The College achieved higher than state average HSC results for Arabic Continuers, Chinese Background Speakers and Vietnamese Background Speakers and performed

better in Business Services examination than the Like School Group average. Students showed improved average marks for English as a Second Language and Mathematics (2011) and NAPLAN tests showed improvements in year 10 and 11 literacy and numeracy results (2011).

Individual student achievements: These include: a student placing first in the state in the HSC results for Arabic Beginners (2011), a student receiving an award for excellence in retail at the Regional VET Work placement Awards (2011), a student receiving a Student Award for Outstanding Achievement in Work Studies (2011), 5 year 10 students received Padstow Rotary Youth Vocation Awards for their commitment to their Vocational courses (2011), students chosen to play in regional and state sports teams including baseball and rugby (2012), a student having his major work for his HSC accepted for display by Art Express at Sydney Olympic Park (2013).

Destinations and pathways: Many students who complete the Intensive English Course gain entry into further credentialed study. Post HSC, 48% of students continued with their studies (20% of students at University, 28% through TAFE) and 21% of students secured employment (10% full time work, 9% part time work, 2% apprenticeships).

Engagement and participation in learning: Student enrolment remained steady at 406 students in 2011 from 410 in 2010, after increases in numbers from 2009 (381 students), 2008 (352 students) and 2007 (324 students). 95% of students responded positively to the Learning Support program in an end of year survey (2011).

Productive partnerships: During 2011, the BSC joined the National Partnerships for low SES communities receiving financial support from the Federal Government to improve student learning outcomes.

Why this program is successful

The Deputy Principal at the college believes that *contributing factors to our student's success can be attributed to various teaching and welfare programs offered at the college which cater for both the well-being and academic needs of the students. Our aim at BSC is to provide a quality educational environment that recognizes the importance of the whole person!*

Want to know more?

<http://dusseldorp.org.au/programs/bankstown-senior-college/>

<http://www.bankstown-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/>

Sources of information

Bankstown Senior College (2013) school website (accessed 25.02.2013).

Bankstown Senior College (2013) General Information Handbook.

Bankstown Senior College (2012) Student Welfare Handbook.

Bankstown Senior College (2012) School Newsletter Term 1.

Bankstown Senior College (2011) Annual School Report.

Please note, where possible and appropriate, we have adopted the language and terminology used by the program (*italic fonts*) and referred to the most recent publically available information.

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