Identifying School and Community Goals

Knowing your community

Engaging and collaborating with the community is a crucial first step in identifying issues that affect the learning, development and wellbeing of children and young people. Engaging families, local government, community organisations and local businesses can:

• identify what types of values the school and its community wants to uphold

• help determine the suitability of any proposed networks

• uncover risks associated in networking with external organisations

• utilise valuable sources of knowledge about what a school needs to achieve through networks.

The school might like to consider involving children and young people in network planning so as to help build stronger school communities and give them a say in how the network is focused and shaped.

Analysing the Parent Satisfaction Survey and the Attitude to School Student Survey can help identify potential issues that can be addressed through a network. These surveys can provide a basis for discussion with children, young people and their families about issues they would like to see addressed.

Schools have an opportunity to collaborate with the student community through the Student Representative Council. The DEECD document Part 3 of Represent and *Student Voice* details how children and young people can become active participants in their learning, including making decisions about what and how they learn.

A list of questions to ask the school community is included at the bottom of this fact sheet. Further information on community engagement can also be found in the *Understanding Community Engagement* fact sheet.

Questions to ask the school community about networks

☐ What is the school's ethos and background?

☐ What are the goals for the next 12 months and how can they be achieved?

☐ What organisations can assist in achieving these goals?

☐ What types of organisations do we want to network with (or avoid) to achieve these goals?

☐ Who else has been involved in networks and what were the experiences and findings?

☐ Is there someone in the regional of central DEECD office that I can talk to about networks?

☐ What rules and restrictions effect who schools can network with?

☐ What mutually beneficial outcomes would be gained by establishing a network with this organisation?

☐ What risks do we need to consider before establishing a network?

☐ Do we have the resources and capacity to invest in a network?

☐ What background research on potential network partners will need to occur before committing to a network?

More information

VIC SRC *Represent*:(http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/src-resource-kit.pdf)
Student Voice: (http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/publ/Student_Voice_report.pdf)