

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING – Building communities

Definition: Effective schools establish links and build relationships with a broad range of people and organisations to expand opportunities and improve outcomes for their students. They recognise that developing relationships with the local community, business, government, community organisations and other education providers, strengthens the capacity of schools and families to support their students' learning and development outcomes, as well as having the potential to enhance social inclusion and build social capital. These relationships provide access to expertise, facilities, resources, support and services, opening up additional opportunities for students to reach their full potential and achieve outcomes.

Schools that partner with families and community-based organisations create a network of support for student wellbeing and engagement. Such networks can mitigate against barriers to student learning such as ill health, bullying and isolation. Genuine school/family partnerships are based on trust and mutual respect and support the school's vision and values. They have the greatest impact when they are focused on student learning and wellbeing and underpinned by student agency.

The Essential Elements underpin FISO and provide a foundation for school improvement. They are evident (indicated by green shading) at the Evolving stage and are further articulated in the Embedding and Excelling stages in some dimensions.

Essential Element 5		Whole-school approach to health, wellbeing, inclusion and engagement	
Emerging	Evolving	Embedding	Excelling
The school develops parent, carer and family engagement			
<p>The school identifies parents/carers as important partners in raising student achievement. It encourages family engagement through provision of information on school activities, policies and programs and how to support their child's learning at home.</p> <p>Teachers update parents/carers on the status and progress of their child's learning and has protocols in place to respond to issues and concerns.</p>	<p>The school provides opportunities for parent/carer participation in the operations of the school. It engages parents/carers in their child's learning and in the priorities of the school.</p> <p>Inclusive school policies, programs and practices are developed to build mutual trust and respect between school and families. The school regularly collects feedback from students, parents and staff to evaluate program effectiveness.</p>	<p>The school works with parents/carers to highlight the importance of high expectations and challenging goals for students. Schools, parents/carers work together to give consistent support and reinforcement of expectations about learning and behaviour and celebrate student achievements.</p> <p>Inclusive school policies, programs and practices are monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness.</p> <p>Parents/carers have avenues to work with the school to overcome barriers to family engagement in supporting their child's learning.</p>	<p>The school has developed sustainable and effective partnerships between teachers, parents and families resulting in high levels of family involvement in school activities. Parents/carers are active contributors to school decision-making processes and have a voice in relevant school decisions.</p> <p>Parent/carer and family diversity is catered for by embedded school practices. These parents/carers and families engage with the school to understand the learning progress of their children and how to effectively support learning. Barriers to engagement are identified and addressed.</p>
The school builds community partnerships			
<p>The school ensures students' learning is enhanced through learning experiences beyond the school.</p> <p>The school identifies potential community partners based on their capacity to contribute to improved student learning, health and wellbeing and creating strategies for student support.</p> <p>The school encourages community participation in school activities and provides access to school resources to strengthen school and community partnerships and connections.</p>	<p>The school explores community partnerships to access targeted learning activities, resources or services not readily available within the school to increase learning opportunities for students and parents.</p> <p>The school collaboration with community partners is planned with clear goals, roles and responsibilities, focused on student learning and wellbeing.</p> <p>The school and community partners develop effective communication methods to share information and resources to facilitate implementation of their joint projects.</p>	<p>The school formalises partnerships to address identified student learning and wellbeing needs and enrich learning experiences and opportunities.</p> <p>The school harnesses the capacity of its partners to collectively meet the diversity of its student needs by accessing such things as expertise, professional development and delivery of activities and services.</p> <p>Partnerships are monitored and reviewed to measure their effectiveness. The school and its partners co-design learning experiences that have mutual benefit</p>	<p>The school as a whole is community-focused and outreach-oriented. It functions as a community hub, facilitating collaboration with a diversity of partners to provide services and activities before, during and after school hours.</p> <p>Co-located services share information and work together to provide integrated service delivery, enabling them to address complex social barriers to participation in learning by students and parents/carers. Community partnerships deepen and enrich teacher and student learning and innovation.</p> <p>Partnerships are regularly evaluated and updated to ensure they are meeting the needs and objectives of the school community.</p>
The school has partnerships to support student health, wellbeing and achievement			
<p>The school takes opportunities to engage with community organisations that offer support to individual students in their learning, health and wellbeing. Schools work with specialist services involved with individual children who have significant health or learning issues.</p>	<p>The school has well-established links with community services for promoting positive health in all students and for supporting specific health needs of individual students including those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged.</p> <p>The school works with community partners to offer resources and activities that support student learning, health and wellbeing needs, including specialised health services. It also uses partnerships to help overcome barriers to student participation in learning programs.</p>	<p>A shared commitment and collaborative actions by the school, families and broader community, assists community organisations and agencies to provide services and maximise benefits for students aligned to the school's policies.</p> <p>The school ensures early intervention for students who have additional needs or are at risk of disengagement. It collaborates with community agencies to support specific learning, health and wellbeing needs of these students.</p>	<p>Partnerships with parents, families and community organisations, health professionals and agencies support a holistic approach in targeting services to meet the health, wellbeing and learning needs of students and their families.</p> <p>The school has an integrated approach to learning, health and wellbeing focused on providing group-based and individual student support, workforce capacity building, parent/carer information sessions and provision of specialised services.</p>