Building Powerful Learning Relationships with the Community

Robert Csoti – Principal Elwood PS
Community Alive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noble Park PS</th>
<th>Elwood PS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 370 students</td>
<td>• 810 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student Family Occupation .87</td>
<td>• SFO .22</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students from 40 different countries &amp; 40+ different language backgrounds</td>
<td>• School voluntary contribution-$270 actual 90% collected- Fundraising-$65K &amp; Building and library fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School voluntary contribution $20-actual % collected- 10%</td>
<td>• Total Staff 70- incl. 14 support staff</td>
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<td>• Total Staff 50- incl. MEAs &amp; other support staff</td>
<td>• Stephanie Alexander-Kitchen Garden</td>
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<td>• Women’s &amp; Play groups</td>
<td>• Enhanced Learning Program</td>
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<td>• Breakfast Club</td>
<td>• Focus on personalised learning-natural pedagogies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Enhanced Learning (Out of hours)</td>
<td>• Playpod</td>
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<td>• Focus on personalised learning-natural pedagogies</td>
<td>• Visual Arts focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Playpod</td>
<td>• High parent participation &amp; ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School based Kitchen Garden</td>
<td>• Everyone on first name terms</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 2 time winner of local choir comp</td>
<td>• Highly successful against all state benchmarks</td>
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<td>• Everyone on first name terms</td>
<td>• Staff selection based on relational qualities</td>
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<td>• Described in state sponsored research as a highly effective school</td>
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BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

CREATING DYNAMIC RELATIONAL SCHOOL CULTURES

“Anything that improves and enhances positive interaction, experience and understanding, leading to high aspiration for a successful future.”

PARENT CONNECTEDNESS
“Schools partnering with families to enhance children’s learning”

COMMUNITY LINKS
“Engaging in mutually beneficial activities to make us all partners in raising local children and youth”

PERSONALISED CURRICULUM
“Connecting students to their learning”

COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING
“Exploring alternative pathways”

Rob Cseti and David Rothsstadt in partnership with George Otero, from Creating Powerful Learning Relationships — A Whole Community Approach — HBE
Some Assumptions behind the Model

- Being a school is not enough anymore
- It takes a village to raise a child
- Schools, the community and families must work together
- Building social capital is important for each and every child
- Schools must partner with parents
- Our approach is outward facing
RelationaLearning – George Otero et al

- It is not a program it is a philosophy”

The model is dependant on authentic relationships

- Staff to Staff
- Staff to students
- Students to students
- Staff to parents/carers
- School to the broader community
- Student to the learning
- Staff and parents have a responsibility to role model positive interactions
- Building trust and understanding is integral to sound relationships

The quality of the relationships always determines the quality of the learning
Two schools - one approach
COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

“Exploring alternative pathways”
Community Based Learning– A rationale

This is about enhancing the learning of students, especially the disengaged, in partnership with the community, outside normal school hours and structures.
Community Based Learning – A rationale

In all schools there are students who are disengaged from school and the curriculum due to the way it’s delivered, their personal learning styles, or cultural, linguistic or social factors. These factors often cannot be overcome within the framework of the normal school day. We have developed a concrete after school program that specifically targets the most disaffected students.

This is achieved by providing a space and time to work with high levels of adult support and mentoring, opportunities to work on student determined learning goals and providing alternative learning experiences that are not necessarily tied to traditional curriculum offerings and assessment.
Enhanced Learning Outline

3:45pm - 4:00pm Snack and physical activity.

4:00pm - 4:30pm Student work on pre determined learning goals chosen by the student in consultation with lead learners and their class teachers. In some circumstances this could take the form of assigned classroom tasks or homework.

4:30pm - 5:30pm Switching onto success activity – Interest based, involving student choice and matching volunteer skill sets.

5:30pm – 5:45pm Circle Time – Conduct circle time to focus on celebrating and sharing program values before parent collection of students from group leaders.

A term will run for 6-8 weeks excluding the first and last weeks of term.

Two sessions a week will be held, which will normally be 16 sessions per term.
Personalisation

1. Dependant on relationships
2. Student choice to be involved
3. Students select their own learning goals
4. Students are able to plot their own learning through the enhancement phase
5. Mentoring is a key element
6. Social skills are a major focus
7. Learning styles are catered for
8. Assessment is flexible and determined by the students
At the end of each program a celebration is held to showcase activities undertaken, acknowledge the growth of students, lead learners and experts. Parents, families and community members are invited. This takes the form of plays, films, demonstrations, power point displays, and performances.
Celebration and Ceremony
Community Based Learning

- Future Foundations
- BOLT
- Kitchen Garden Programs
Community Based learning
Summary

- The community is involved in the learning
- Looking at the school day differently
- Mentoring
- Relationship Building
- Student Choice
Community Based Learning in your context

- What examples of Community Based Learning do you have currently?

- My Wonderings are............
PARENT CONNECTEDNESS

“Schools partnering with families to enhance children’s learning”
Why involve parents?

If we agree, as Don Edgar has suggested in his book *The Patchwork Nation: Rethinking Government – Rebuilding Community*, that a major purpose of the school is to help a family educate a child, then the community in which those families live will play an important role in that education.
Parent Workshops
Parent Connectedness
Women’s group
Building Parent Connectedness

- At Elwood primary school different elements create a feeling of connectedness.

- As a result, the respective parent communities are connected to the schools because they are connected to many members of the community through various groups and activities.

- Often, a few parents play a vital role in developing this connectedness in the schools.
Examples of how parents can connect to each other can be seen in the following:

- Fresh Fruit Friday
- Chats with Rob
- Parent reps
- Parent band
- Parent Workshops in classrooms
- Setting expectations for parent involvement and school culture
- Information nights
- Elwood Community market
- Chess Team
- Ski Team
- House sport stall
- Parent relationships
Parent Connectedness Summary

• Village to raise a child
• The key to quality participation is parent connectedness
• Parents as partners – acted out every day
• Trust your parents
Parent Connectedness in your Context

• What examples of Parent Connectedness are evident in your context?

• My wonderings are……………………
COMMUNITY LINKS

“Engaging in mutually beneficial activities to make us all partners in raising local children and youth”
Why involve the broader community?

The goal of linking the school and community in this model is to provide effective informal education while at the same time involving the community in the formal school program. We believe that when the community works with the school as we describe, we strengthen both the formal and the informal learning culture within our communities, while building social capital and identity.
Community Links at Elwood PS

- Art show vendors
- City of Port Phillip
- Ardoch
- Loins Club
- BOLT
- Individuals
- Play for Life
- Universities
- Book shops, local traders, Leaf, restaurants
- Bendigo bank
Community Links at Noble Park PS

Rotary

Probus

Local Businesses

NAB

Lions Club

Kimberley Foundation

$$$$s

Bendigo Bank

Kitchen Garden

Bank of Melb.

Hands on Learning

Play for Life

Monash University

Enhanced Learning

Hands on Learning

Mainfreight

Random House

Center 4 Relational Learning

Books in Homes Australia

Volunteers

Extra curricula student opportunities

Early Life Foundation
Community Links in your Context

• What examples of Community Links are evident in your context?

• My wonderings are..........................
Key Relational Elements of the Model

- *Every school can and should build social capital*
- *The quality of the relationships always determines the quality of the learning*
- *The ‘invitation’ to parents to engage in all aspects of school life is visible and authentic*
- *Being conscious of the importance of community links will allow you to see opportunities and act upon them*
- *The more adults involved in the learning the richer the experience*
- *A personalised curriculum leads to high levels of engagement*