Why do some disadvantaged Queensland schools appear to be better at parent engagement than others?

Investigating exemplary Principal leadership practices

There are strong links between parent-school-community engagement and children’s learning academically, socially and emotionally. While educationally disadvantaged schools tend to have lower parent-school-community engagement levels, phase I of the Parent Engagement in Schools (PES) project identified high levels of parent-school community engagement in some of these schools. This research seeks to investigate how principal leadership facilitates engagement in four, educationally disadvantaged Queensland state primary schools. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the research will explore the principal leadership practices that enable these schools to engage parent/community members. These case studies will: a) provide examples of good practice; b) support future research; and c) aid in the development of a measure of parent-school-community engagement.

PES project phases II – 2016/17

- Four lower-ICSEA schools that appear to be doing parent-school-community engagement well have been identified based on data collected in phase I of the PES project
- Data are being collected on the principals’ parent-school-community engagement knowledge and leadership practices using quantitative and qualitative methods:
  - Online surveys of teachers and parents
  - Focus groups of teachers, parents and students
  - Interviews of principals and P&C presidents
  - Analysis of websites, newsletters and other school documents
  - Observation of schools’ physical layouts, dedicated parent spaces and signage

What will be developed?

1. Detailed, nuanced and contemporary case-studies of principal leadership practices that support parent-school-community engagement in educationally-disadvantaged schools
2. A contemporary framework of principal leadership for parent-school-community engagement in disadvantaged schools, to improve the learning and wellbeing outcomes of disadvantaged students