THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA

pes
Parent Engagement in Schools

Principal leadership for parent-school-community engagement

P&Cs Qld

Schwab's (1973) framework will be used to analyse the data:

★ How does the Principal enable **teachers** to develop knowledge of **students** - general and personal - through direct and indirect involvement with them?

★ What knowledge of **curriculum** and **teachers** (backgrounds/personalities) does the Principal possess that helps him/her to support how s/he, and the teachers, engage with parents/community members?

★ How does the Principal's knowledge of the **milieus** operating between and among children and adults and various subgroups and communities, serviced in and by the school, inform his/her engagement practices?

What knowledge and strategies do Principals, who appear to facilitate effective parent-school-community engagement, use?

Parent-school-community engagement and student learning are strongly linked. Principal leadership influences school culture and is central to shaping parent-school-community engagement. The strategies Principals use to facilitate effective engagement however, vary according to school contexts. The 2016 Education Horizon project investigated 'Principal leadership for parent-school-community engagement in disadvantaged schools'.

Extension of Phase II in 2017

The 2017/19 Education Horizon project will extend data collection into 8 more schools and include educationally-advantaged as well as disadvantaged schools. Data are being collected on the Principals' parent-school-community engagement knowledge and leadership practices using quantitative and qualitative methods that include: online surveys of teachers and parents; and phone/Skype interviews of Principals and P&C Presidents.

PES project phase III 2017/18

In Phase III of the PES project, the research team will, where possible, follow up with a site visit to collect information and material about the school's strategies to develop a **Parent Engagement Toolkit (PET)** for Principal, teacher, P&C, and parent use.

PET will be hosted on the P&Cs Qld website with links from the DET website to redirect users to the site. Apart from illustrations (e.g., videos, photographs) of innovative and exemplary parent-school-community engagement strategies and practices, the site will host tip sheets, case studies, infographics, summaries, vignettes, and publications.

A parent-school-community engagement professional development online module for teachers and preservice teachers will be developed to provide a resource to improve and enrich knowledge and practice without the need for in-situ delivery. The module will complement existing professional development modules and materials and ensure alignment between policy and practice.

PES project phase IV 2018/19

Phase IV of the PES project will pilot test PET and the parent-school-community engagement professional development online module.

The research team will call for an expression of interest from schools wishing to improve their parent-school-community engagement practices to trial PET and the module. Schools that best fit the pre-determined inclusion/exclusion criteria will be selected for the trial.

All Queensland schools will have access to these materials following the pilot evaluation and subsequent modifications to the PET website and professional development online module.

PES project phase II – 2016/2017

A multi-method study, which incorporates surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation of school environments, and review of school websites.

Key elements of parent-school-community engagement across the four schools were that the Principal:

★ Practised visibility
★ Proactively built personal relationships with all stakeholders
★ Valued the voice of each stakeholder
★ Utilised student agency to engage parents
★ Built teacher capacity to encourage parents into the school and engage with student learning
★ Viewed the curriculum as shared responsibility with parents and the community
★ Spent time in classrooms
★ Networked purposefully with the local community
★ Used multiple means of communication to engage parents

Common challenges for parent-school-community engagement across the four schools included:

★ Language and cultural complexities
★ Previous negative experiences
★ Parents working inflexible or long hours
★ New imperatives driven by structural changes in education such as the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and standardised testing
★ Lack of conflict resolution strategies by school leaders

Innovative parent engagement strategies:

★ Student agency
★ Principal 'Prattle'
★ Values workshops
★ Community Liaison Officer