Parent and Community Engagement Framework

PURPOSE
Parents and the broader community play a vital role in supporting successful learning outcomes for our children. This framework is about our school engaging with parents and the community to work together to maximise student learning outcomes.

The research tells us that the most meaningful partnerships are those where schools, parents, students and the community work together to focus on student learning. Parent and community engagement that is effectively focused on student learning can deliver powerful outcomes.

This Parent and Community Engagement Framework identifies what we do to strengthen learning outcomes for students – through effective partnerships between principals, teachers, students, parents and the community. There is overwhelming evidence that parent engagement has a positive effect on student achievement.

INTRODUCTION
The education of our students is a shared responsibility, benefiting all students, our society and economy as a whole. Therefore, parents and broader communities have a reciprocal responsibility to engage with schools.

Schools are better able to support student achievement by developing strong engagement with and between:

- Students
- Teachers
- Parents and carers
- Support staff
- Community industry and business groups.

The quality of these relationships will determine the quality of the learning. This framework outlines five key elements of parent and community engagement to make a positive difference in our students’ education.

COMMUNICATION
Effective communication between schools, parents, the community and students forms the foundation in developing and maintaining partnerships. Schools also have a responsibility to help parents understand the language of learning.

At Biddeston State School, our communication to parents and the wider community includes:

- Parent information sessions
- Parent teacher interviews
- Weekly newsletters
- School website
- SMS messages
In our communications, we focus on the following:

- Curriculum, including information, reading sessions for parents of pre-prep and early years parents and grandparents,
- Curriculum tips in the newsletter
- Student improvement
- Student behavior
- Health and safety considerations
- School policies sent home
- Community partnerships – Options program, CWA house visits, Kindy transition visits
- Showcasing student work
- School-based playgroup

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Learning is not limited to the classroom. The beliefs, expectations and experience of parents is a powerful determinant in student's achievement. Understanding the school, home and community contribution to student learning helps cultivate a holistic learning environment.

At Biddeston State School, our learning partnerships with parents and the wider community includes:

- Parent information sessions – classroom work and reading information
- Parent teacher interviews
- Positive postcards
- Phone calls and informal discussions
- Parent volunteers in the classroom
- Discussion with parents on topics such as homework, student goals and achievement and progress towards benchmarks, strategies suggested for home and school alignment.
- Parent resource library
- Enrolment interview
- Meet and Greet
- P&C meetings
- Weekly newsletters include curriculum information and tips for parents for home learning
COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

As the central hub of our community, we work with community members for the benefit of all. At Biddeston State School, we have partnerships with:

• Our Adopt-a-Cop who regularly provides information and learning for students around personal safety, bicycle safety, no bullying
• Community partnership with Oakey C&K Kindergarten for pre-prep transition
• Community partnership with Oakey CWA House where students visit annually to provide entertainment and own made gifts to residents
• Community and parent engagement with Options program in terms 2 and 3
• Engaging in excursions, incursions and with local schools in cluster, including feeder high schools
• The school has facilities regularly used by the community – tennis court and bicycle track

DECISION-MAKING

Providing opportunities for relevant consultation ensure decisions reflect local needs – whether for an individual student or the school as a whole. Greater community ownership and trust of school directions and decisions can be developed through open and authentic consultation.

At Biddeston State School we ensure design making is consultative and informative within our community through:

• Parent meetings for consultation and review of school policies
• Quadrennial school review
• School Opinion Surveys – inform decision making
• Centenary planning and organisation
• P&C meetings – encourage involvement
• Policies sent home regularly, with explanation in newsletter and invitation to comment
• School Review – parents and community members encouraged to participate
• Parent reading sessions

PARTICIPATION

In a society where parents lead complex lives, opportunities to participate in a variety of ways, times and places is key to improvement. Parent and community participation in student learning and the school community should be acknowledged and valued. This involvement sends a clear signal to students about the value of education.

At Biddeston State School, there are many ways in which parents and community members can participate in student learning and being involved in the school community. Participation opportunities include:

• Special parade
• Volunteering in classrooms and sporting events
• P&C committee and associated events
• Meet and Greet
• Parent information sessions
• Options program
• Attending meetings to update and discuss policies
• Centenary Committee
• ANZAC ceremonies
• Special events, eg openings and milestones
• Attending sporting events
• Grandparents days
• Open days – pre-prep transition
• School-based playgroup
• Parent teacher interviews

MARKERS OF STRONG PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
• Parents are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school, are acknowledged as the first teachers of their children, and engage as partners in their children’s learning
• Communication with parents provides information about where students are up to in their learning, what progress they have made over time and what they might do to support their children’s further learning
• Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact and in the language they use in both formal and informal settings
• Schools have regular and ongoing ways of finding out what parents need to engage with their child’s learning
• Parents can list the school’s key expectations for behaviour, attendance, homework
• The principal and the teachers use many styles of communication appropriate for parents’ cultural backgrounds, availability, working conditions etc
• The principal and teachers regularly connect with the parent/s of every child in the school
• There are mechanisms to build relationships with relevant members of the community.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT
Biddeston State School is committed to continual improvement of parent and community partnerships to maximize student outcomes and ensure our school community commits to, and provides a supportive and informed culture of learning.

The Teaching and Learning Audit Dimension 3 – a culture that promotes learning provides a mechanism for schools to review their parent and community engagement.

The School Opinion Survey also provides schools with valuable data to reflect upon the effectiveness of their parent and community engagement.

School and Community Partnerships is one of the central elements for inclusion in the Annual Implementation Plan and School Plan.