

The Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau Quarterly Newsletter

July 2014



National Parent Engagement Definition:

In the schooling context:

Parental engagement is an intentional and collaborative strategy to support and leverage the knowledge, capacities and social capital of families to improve learning and well-being outcomes for all children and young people.

Message from the Bureau: Fresh from the recent study tour we see that this is an exciting time for the Bureau. We move into witnessing tangible results for all the work that has gone before us. Our project schools are beginning to record data that enables them to see the effect of engaging families and our Framework will start to appear in its new form, accessible and interactive.

Family School Community Partnerships Bureau 2014 National Symposium Overview

More than 40 years of research shows that when families, schools and the community partner effectively, children and young people's life and learning outcomes improve.

In their recent report on Turning Around Schools, the Grattan Institute found engagement of parents and the community to be one of the five steps common to school turnaround. If systemic and systematic partnerships are to be built between families, schools and communities, then what are the critical policy levers, how do these translate into practice and how is effectiveness measured?

These are the critical questions that will be explored by accessing the wisdom and experience of a team of international and national experts in the field. It is time to move from rhetoric to action, from ad hoc to systemic, from measuring activities to impact, if we are to provide all children and young people with the best start in life....

2014 National Symposium

POLICY

PRACTICE

EVALUATION

Improving learning and well-being

8th & 9th September

Rydges Melbourne

Go to www.familyschool.org.au to register

National Symposium Presenters

Joseph Flessa: Leadership, Adult and Higher Education Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto, **Anne Henderson:** Senior Consultant Community Involvement Program Annenberg Institute for School Reform (video vignette), **Dr Karen Mapp:** Harvard Graduate School of Education (Video vignette), **Dr Sara Glover** Director Education Policy Mitchell Institute University of Victoria, **Adam Smith:** Family School and Community Partnerships Bureau, Education analyst, Director ACER and Public Education Foundation plus more.....

An audience with Anne Henderson

On our recent study trip the Bureau manager and both the longitudinal study and Framework project officers met with Anne Henderson.

The meeting provided opportunities to discuss and compare Family Engagement policy and strategies of both the United States and Australia and video, vignettes of Anne discussing authentic evaluation strategies for our evaluation session at our upcoming National Symposium, Policy, Practice and Evaluation: Improving learning and well-being. The meeting also produced valuable future networking opportunities and collaboration.



From left Dianne Giblin FSCP B Manager, Anne Henderson Senior Consultant Community Involvement Program Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Margaret Hunter FSCP B Longitudinal study Project Officer and Donna Sirmais FSCP B Framework Project Officer

The Bureau at Harvard Graduate School of Education

Representatives from the Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau attended the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Programs in Professional Education course *Closing the Achievement Gap* held on 29 June to 3 July 2014.

The course brought together 99 participants over the five days with representatives from school communities, educational services, universities and family organisations throughout America, Australia and Canada.

The primary goal for participating in the course was to improve and build on our current understanding of how to raise achievement levels for all students while narrowing the gaps between groups and increasing teacher, student and family engagement.

The main presenter and facilitator over the five days was Ronald F Ferguson, Senior Lecturer in Education and Public Policy with a joint appointment between the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and Harvard Kennedy School (HKS). He is also Senior Research Associate for the Malcolm Wiener Centre for Social Policy at HKS. Ronald leads the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard and has written many publications with a focus on racial achievement gaps.

Each day had a theme:

- ❖ Framing the work
- ❖ Parent, family and community engagement
- ❖ Instructional leadership and teacher engagement
- ❖ Student engagement
- ❖ Taking action

There were plenty of opportunities for participants to network and share ideas particularly at the end of each day in their allocated group meetings.

Currently a presentation of learnings from Harvard is being prepared which will be placed on the Bureaus website shortly. Keep watch on this space, our facebook page and twitter account for its release



Harvard Australian representatives: Dianne Giblin FSCP B Manager & Australian Council of State Schools Organisation CEO, Ian Dalton Australian Parents Council CEO, Donna Sirmais FSCP B Framework Project Officer, Margaret Hunter FSCP B longitudinal study Project Officer, Danielle Cronin Deputy Director Catholic Schools, Carmel Nash Executive Director of Federation of Parents and Friends in Catholic Schools Queensland, SooJin Oh Group meeting facilitator and representatives from schools and districts across the United States.

Parent/ teacher conference video

Have you seen our short video designed to assist families in getting the most out of their short time at parent/teachers conferences. This short video is our video of the month for July and joins the ever increasing collection in our library videos. Current videos include, Illustrations of effective practice Family & Community Engagement, NAPLAN, Anne Henderson, Karen Mapp and more. Go to <http://www.familyschool.org.au/index.php/resources/videos-month/>



A family's socioeconomic background does not play a factor in the performance rating of a student who is read to.

Extract from Nadia Petrossi's article Pupils and schools thrive when parents become involved, March 10, 2014

An OECD study also found a strong correlation between test scores and parental involvement with students. It is called the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and is one of the most influential assessment tests given to 15-year-olds around the world in reading comprehension and problem-solving.

To understand the outcomes of the 2009 results, the Pisa team interviewed parents of 5,000 students on how they raised their children and set those answers against student test results. There were three profound discoveries.

The first was of the importance of early reading. Fifteen-year-olds whose parents often read books with them during their first year of primary school had higher scores than students whose parents did not. On average, the score difference was equivalent to well over half a school year.

The second finding was that a family's socioeconomic background did not play a factor in the performance rating of a student who was read to. Rich or not, children whose parents read to them at an early age consistently do better.

The last finding may be no surprise. The more involved parents were in their 15-year-olds' lives, the better their results. More specifically, when they discussed life and talked about learning regularly, test results were better.

So the research is clear. When parents are actively engaged in their child's learning, in how they learn, what they think about various topics and how they arrive at those conclusions, there is a tremendous impact on their achievement.

Read more: <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/pupils-and-schools-thrive-when-parents-become-involved#ixzz38p3hi5nc>

Have you seen our new QR code?

Our QR code is designed for faster and more convenient access to the Bureau's website. Just scan and go.



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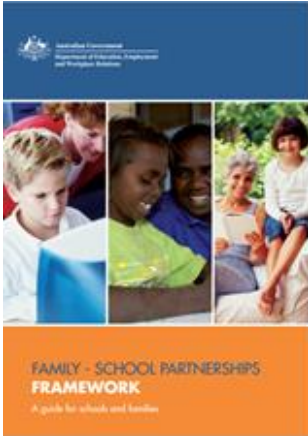
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Framework refinement project



Initial consultations have now concluded on the Framework refinement project and we have moved into the next phase of the project of developing an updated version of the framework built on information gathered through the consultation period. During our recent study trip to the United States, we were fortunate to meet with a member from the Family Engagement Outreach Team. We discussed the implementation process of the US Federal Department of Education's Dual Capacity Framework for family engagement, co-developed by Karen Mapp. This meeting provided opportunity to further explore and build on information gathered through the consultation here in Australia and will assist with the refinement of the Australian Family School Partnerships Framework.

We would like to thank all who participated at various levels. Without your support with consultation, we would not have been able to gather the rich information that we did. Anyone wishing to trial the new framework once developed please contact me at Framework@familyschool.org.au Keep watch on this space, our facebook page and twitter account for more information.

Donna Sirmais Project Officer

2 Year Longitudinal Study on the impact of parental engagement on improved student learning outcomes

The schools have changed since the beginning of the longitudinal study for various reasons. Because of the changes all participating schools are at different stages of their research.

The schools are now as follows:

- ❖ Coodanup Community College, Western Australia
- ❖ Glenroy College, Victoria
- ❖ Holy Cross College, New South Wales
- ❖ Killester College, Victoria
- ❖ Longford Primary School, Tasmania
- ❖ Maningrida College, Northern Territory
- ❖ Pimlico State High School, Queensland
- ❖ Sackville Street Public School, New South Wales

Each study school has had one or two visits. The first visit included an outline of the study as well as professional learning in the areas of action research and the Family-School Partnerships Framework.

The two main dimensions from the Family-School Partnerships Framework that schools identified as a guideline for their planning are **Communication and Connecting learning at home and at school** dimensions but you can see throughout their projects the other five dimensions.

The second visit was a planning day with the project team in the development of their action plan.

A SharePoint has been developed and is now live for all the study schools to share their progress. The SharePoint includes a Blog for schools to share information and ask questions of other study schools. Each school has their own section which includes their action plan and a journal that will show the journey the school has taken to achieve the answer to their research question. All materials and research papers are included in the SharePoint.

