

EXCELLENCE IN EVERY CLASSROOM

Culture, Context and Community Engagement
Student Wellbeing System Of Care



Our Team

- ▶ Stuart Boyle - Principal
- ▶ Lynn Bok - Assistant Principal
- ▶ Carol Ould - Assistant Principal

Learning Intentions:

By the end of this session, participants will:

1. **Understand** the importance of integrating mental health and wellbeing services across the school.
2. **Identify** ways to expand and coordinate a multidisciplinary wellbeing team, including roles focused on families.
3. **Explore** strategies to strengthen family-school partnerships through co-designed, inclusive practices.
4. **Examine** how to leverage funding, roles, and partnerships to build sustainable wellbeing supports.
5. **Gain insight** into innovative practices like personalised SEL, parent workshops, and new case management tools.
6. **Reflect** on aligning wellbeing initiatives with school values and frameworks to strengthen whole-school culture.

Straight to work! Capturing Culture

Activity:

Thinking about your school values and your own values and beliefs, respond to the statement ‘It’s a given that we....’ on the coloured post-it notes to capture the actions you take and beliefs that you have in relation to staff, students and parents in your school.

What's Your Purpose?

- ▶ How would you define the philosophy of your school?
- ▶ Why does your school exist?
- ▶ What does your school want to achieve?
- ▶ What do you say you are to your community?
- ▶ What does your community value?


What's Your Purpose?

- ▶ What is your role in the achievement of this philosophy?
- ▶ How well do you do this?
- ▶ How do you know if you have been successful?
- ▶ Is there anything that you could do better?
- ▶ What would be the benefit of changing?
- ▶ What will be the cost of not changing anything?

Why Community Engagement?

Activity:

Take out your phone and find a photo that brings you joy. Share this with the person sitting next to you and explain what it is about this photo that brings you joy.



Larry
Ferlazzo,
author and
public school
teacher

“A school striving for **family involvement** often leads with its mouth—identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. A school striving for **[family] engagement**, on the other hand, tends to lead with its ears—listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about. The goal of family engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners.”

Family Involvement vs Family Engagement

- Focuses on individual responsibility
 - Communication to families is one-way
 - Space for listening is a low priority
 - Focuses on programming, not people
 - Relationship is transactional
- Focuses on collective responsibility and partnership
 - Communication with families is two-way and listening is prioritised
 - Family knowledge is valued and honoured
 - Focuses on collaborative practice
 - Relationship is transformative

What is Family Engagement?

Family Engagement is a ***full, equal, and equitable partnership*** among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development from birth through University and career.

Enhancing Engagement - Building Partnerships

- ▶ Engagement is enhanced through the establishment of relationships.
- ▶ Building relationships is crucial - being visible, present and available without an agenda or an issue to resolve.
- ▶ Communication in a partner relationship about challenging issues is not challenging if there is a relationship and the language used is 'right' for the relationship.
- ▶ If the first communication with a family is about bad news, you are done for the year ahead.

Enhancing Engagement - Building Partnerships

Process conditions

- Relational: built on mutual trust
- Linked to learning and development
- Asset-based
- Culturally responsive and respectful
- Collaborative
- Interactive

Organizational conditions

- Systemic: embraced by leadership across the organization
- Integrated: embedded in all strategies
- Sustained: with resources and infrastructure

Core Belief One

- ▶ All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them.
- ▶ *“...I believe that all parents hold big expectations for the role that schools will play in the life chances of their children. They all harbor a large wish list of dreams and aspirations for their youngsters. All families care deeply about their children’s education and hope that their progeny will be happier, more productive, and more successful than they have been in their lives.” (Lightfoot, 2003)*

Core Belief Two

- ▶ All families have the capacity to support their children's learning.

Core Belief Three

- ▶ Families and school staff should be equal partners.

Core Belief Four

- ▶ The responsibility for building and sustaining partnerships between school, home, and community rests primarily with school staff, especially school/program leaders.

Engagement through Practice: Our Context

What have we already implemented that creates opportunities to
enhance community engagement?

What opportunities do we have to enhance these?

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Opinion Survey ⓘ



Percentage Endorsement in 2023(%) ⓘ



For Parent community engagement - Parent participation and involvement

91%

Your school

75%

Similar schools

79%

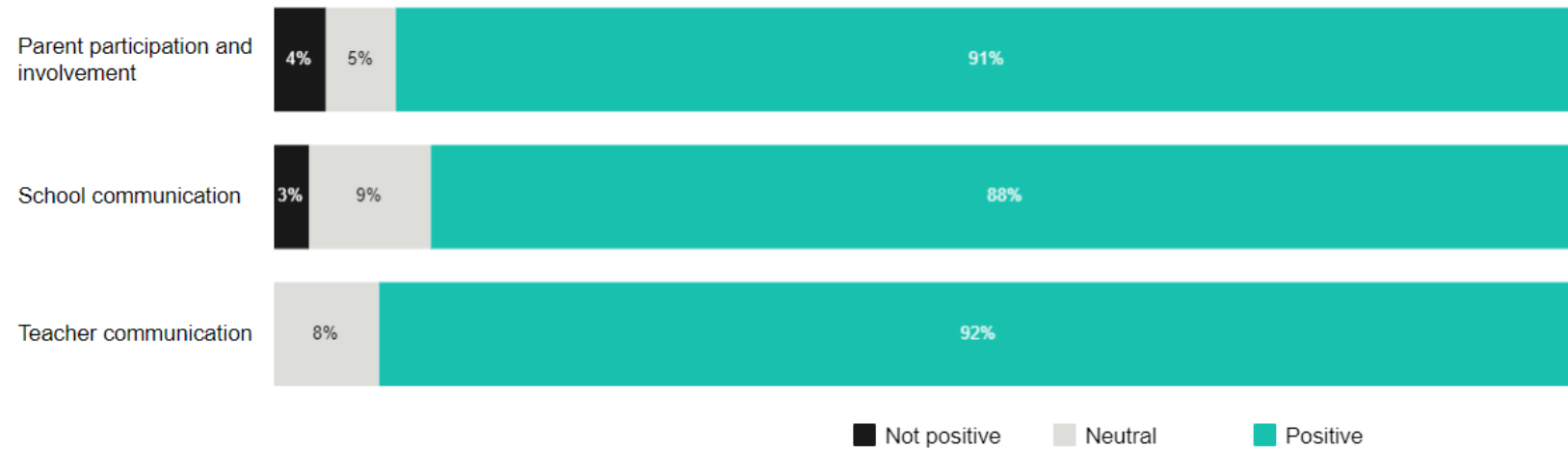
Network

78%

State

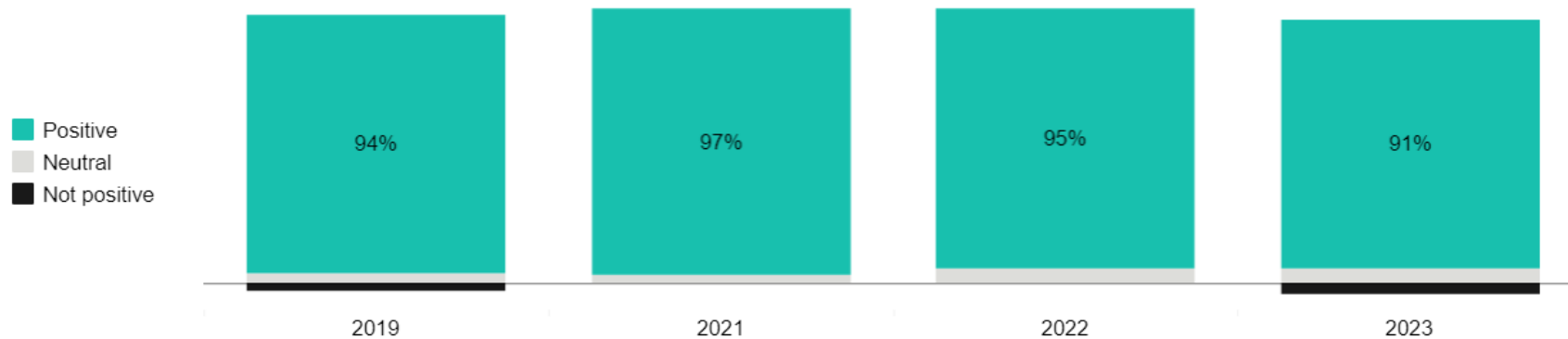
Percentage Endorsement in 2023 (%) ⓘ

For Parent community engagement



Percentage Endorsement over last 5 years (%) ⓘ

For Parent community engagement - Parent participation and involvement



Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Opinion Survey



Percentage Endorsement in 2023(%)



For **Parent community engagement - School communication**

88%
Your school

80%
Similar schools

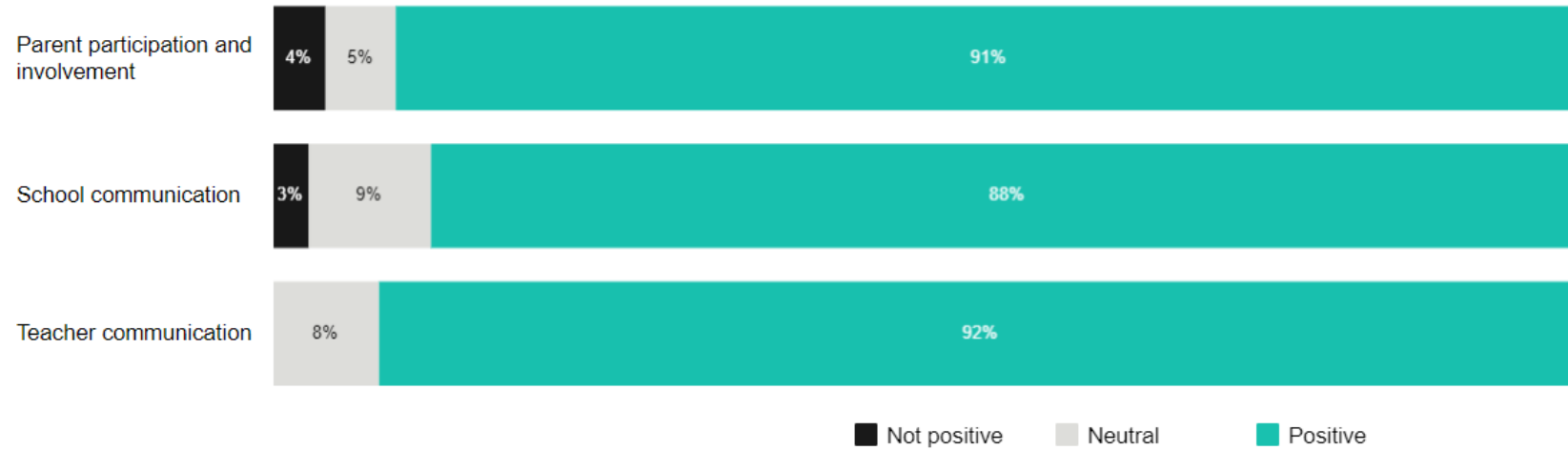
82%
Network

82%
State

Percentage Endorsement in 2023 (%)



For **Parent community engagement**

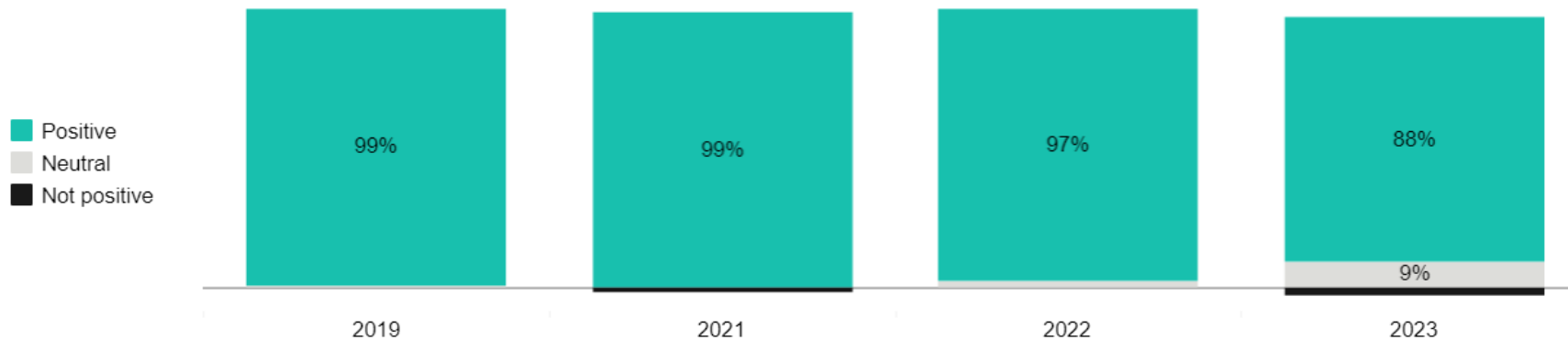


Not positive Neutral Positive

Percentage Endorsement over last 5 years (%)



For **Parent community engagement - School communication**



Positive
Neutral
Not positive

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Opinion Survey ⓘ



Percentage Endorsement in 2023(%) ⓘ

For Parent community engagement - Teacher communication

92%

Your school

66%

Similar schools

70%

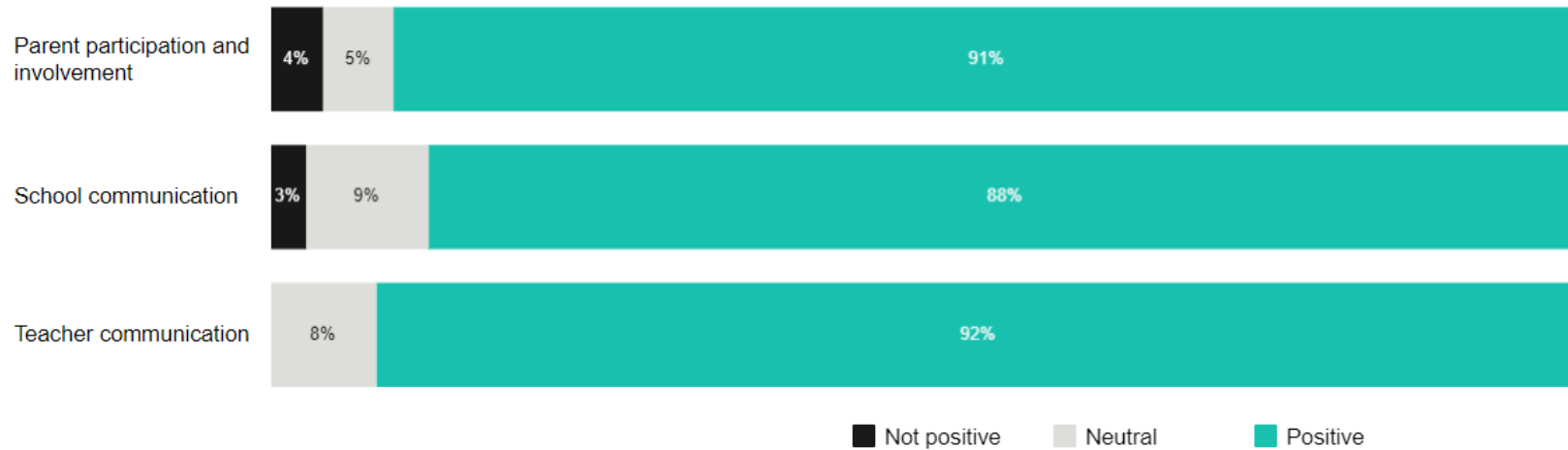
Network

72%

State

Percentage Endorsement in 2023 (%) ⓘ

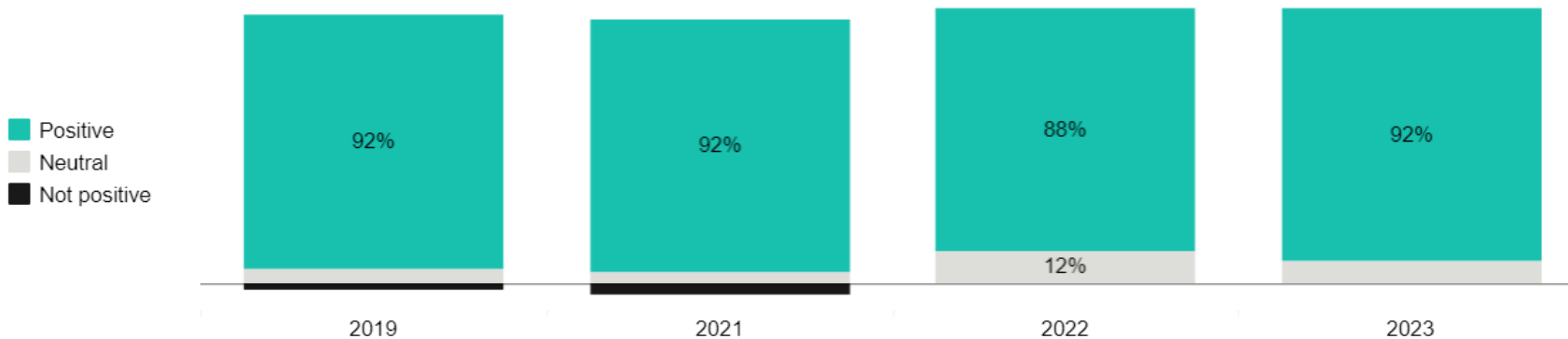
For Parent community engagement



Not positive Neutral Positive

Percentage Endorsement over last 5 years (%) ⓘ

For Parent community engagement - Teacher communication



Measuring Community Engagement

School Staff Survey - % Positive Endorsement: Survey Details

Belgrave South Primary School

Parent and community involvement for all respondents

Question Text	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Community involvement facilitates learning here.	87%	89%	68%	79%	94%
Parent involvement supports learning here.	87%	89%	79%	83%	94%
Staff in this school have frequent contact with parents.	100%	100%	89%	88%	94%
Staff work closely with parents to meet students' needs.	93%	100%	89%	92%	82%
This school regularly communicates with parents about how they can help their children learn.	100%	100%	95%	88%	82%
We encourage feedback from parents and the community.	100%	100%	95%	88%	94%
Factor Total	94%	96%	86%	86%	90%

How do we engage families?

Activity:

Community Engagement: Linked to Learning

Thinking about your program/position/team or role, list eight activities that you lead or are part of for families that *engage* the community?

What will we do differently?

Circle the activities which fit the following criteria:

- ▶ Families leave knowing more about what their child should know or be able to do (the learning/developmental goals) at that grade/age level
- ▶ They leave knowing *how* (through practice) to employ a new tool or activity at home to support those goals
- ▶ Families have had the opportunity to share learning strategies and knowledge about their child

Pick one activity from your list that did not meet the criteria.

How could it be changed to genuinely engage the community?

Our Challenge - Our Journey

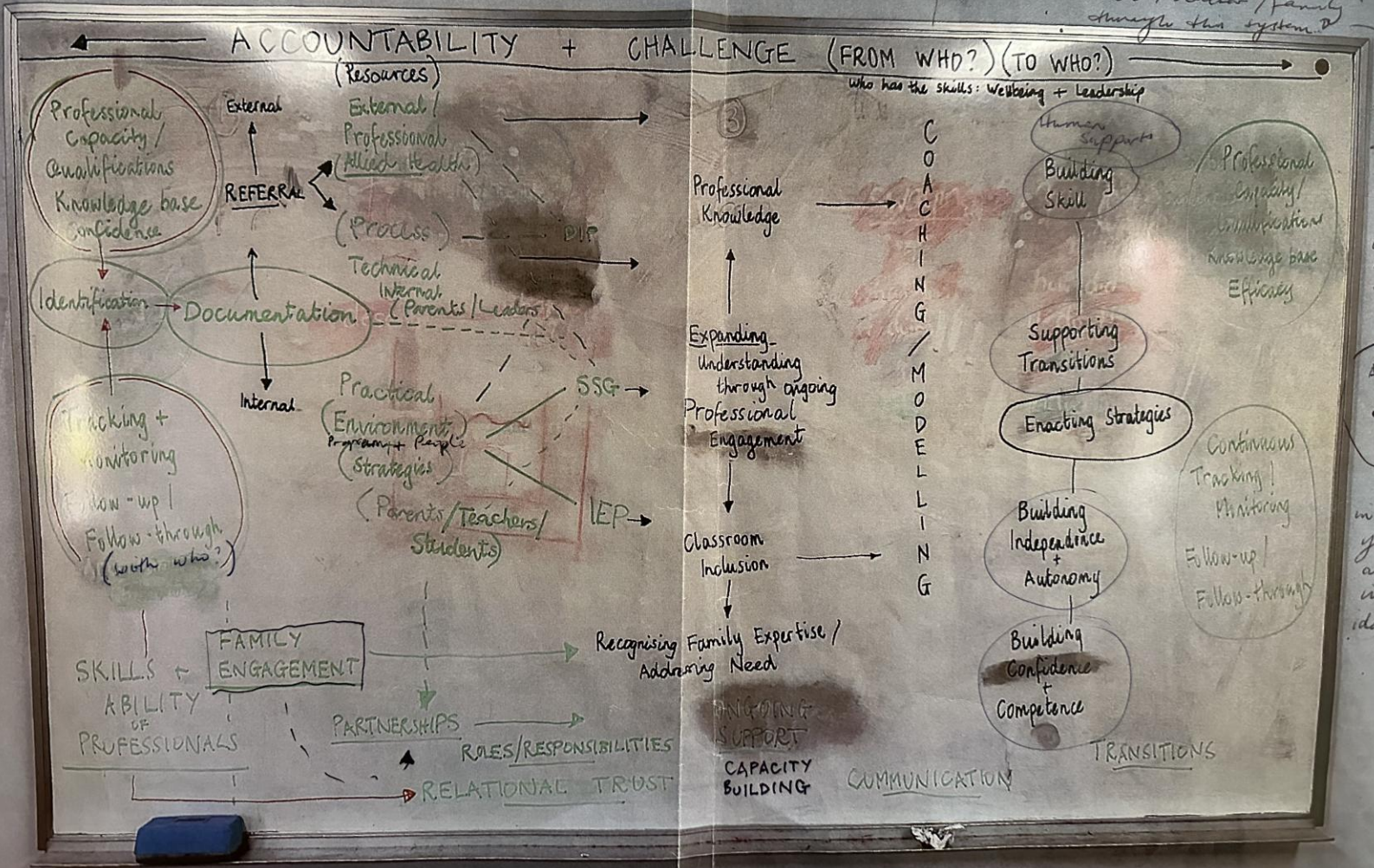
Student Wellbeing - Parent Involvement to Parent Engagement

Catalyst for Change

- ▶ Change of personnel changed the focus and dynamic of our wellbeing approach and program - strong shift back to transactional and procedural
- ▶ Implementation curve associated with the transition from PSDMS to DIP focused the process more on the paperwork rather than the people
- ▶ Core beliefs were no longer present in the approach to student and family support, shift in mindset underpinned by assumptions
- ▶ Compassion fatigue couple with the increase in mental health and wellbeing presentations of students, parents and staff post pandemic
- ▶ Increase in diagnosis of mild additional support needs and expectations of individual adjustments

Excellence In Every Classroom

Returning from the Harvard Principals Centre Program and frustrated by the number of families that were escalating their request for support and intervention, we mapped our intended approach to wellbeing to capture what should be happening to support student.



Relational Trust - How Do You Know?

Am I showing trustworthiness to this parent?

Am I seeking input and listening carefully, without bias, to what *all* families have to say? (Respect)

Am I demonstrating to families that I am competent *and* that I am honouring their role as valued and competent caregivers? (Competence)

Do I keep my word with families? (Integrity)

Do I show families that I value and care about them as people versus objects? (Personal regard)

Elements of relational trust

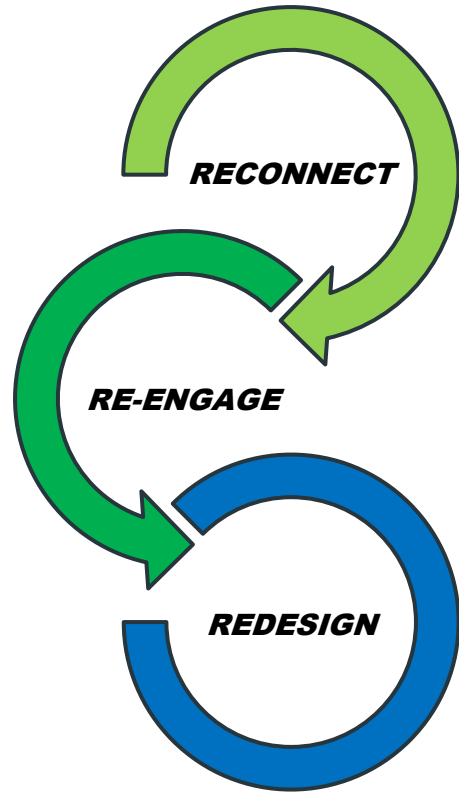
Respect

Competence

Integrity

Personal regard

Our Aim: Intent and Opportunity



*Re-establishing relationships.
Establishing a supportive and
responsive environment.*

*Develop Partnerships
Team approach to supporting
student growth and development*

*Re-designing programs, school
structures and cultural events to
strengthen our community.*

What Became Our ‘Givens’ - Underpinning the System Of Care

1. Whole-Child Focus

- ▶ The system of care recognises that students learn best when they feel safe, supported, and valued. It addresses not just academic needs but also wellbeing, behaviour, and engagement—ensuring no student is left behind.

2. Shared Responsibility

- ▶ Excellence is a team effort. Leaders, teachers, education support staff, families, and external agencies work together to ensure every student gets the support they need to thrive. This collaboration helps create consistent, high-quality learning experiences across every classroom.

What Became Our 'Givens' - Underpinning the System Of Care

3. Early Intervention and Support

By identifying challenges early—whether they're academic, behavioural, or emotional—the system of care puts the right supports in place before small issues become big ones. This keeps students on track and engaged in learning.

4. Equity and Inclusion

- ▶ A system of care ensures that all students, regardless of background, ability, or need, can access quality teaching and feel a sense of belonging. Tailored supports are provided so every student has the opportunity to succeed.

What Became Our ‘Givens’ - Underpinning the System Of Care

5. Professional Learning and Collaboration

Teachers are supported to grow professionally through coaching, data-informed practice, and shared expertise. A culture of collective efficacy—where educators believe they can make a difference together—raises the quality of teaching in every classroom.

6. Consistent Expectations and High Standards

- ▶ With a clear vision and aligned practices, the system of care promotes consistency across classrooms. Every student is held to high expectations, and every teacher is supported to deliver high-impact instruction.

Connected To Our Work

3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process

Graduate

Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.

Proficient

Plan for appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.

Highly Accomplished

Work with colleagues to provide appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.

Lead

Initiate contextually relevant processes to establish programs that involve parents/carers in the education of their children and broader school priorities and activities.

7.3 Engage with the parents/carers

Graduate

Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.

Proficient

Establish and maintain respectful collaborative relationships with parents/carers regarding their children's learning and wellbeing.

Highly Accomplished

Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/carers about their children's learning and wellbeing.

Lead

Identify, initiate and build on opportunities that engage parents/carers in both the progress of their children's learning and in the educational priorities of the school.

Connected To Our Work

Principals promote parental and career engagement as a key aspect of raising the achievement of all students. They support the development of a strong school governing body that is fully representative of the community. They lead an inclusive curriculum and school culture that promotes understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities. They build partnerships with the local community and external stakeholders so they are aware of the vision and values of the school and can contribute to its success.

Principals draw on expertise from other organisations to enhance and enrich the learning experience for students and their families. They encourage the community to use school facilities in order to strengthen community engagement with the school. They identify and implement strategies to meet the diverse needs of students and their families, challenge low expectations and close gaps in achievement for specific groups. They understand the strengths and needs of their communities, promoting high expectations and achievement for all.

Principals work with other agencies to support the health, wellbeing and safety of students and their families. They create specific strategies for hard-to-reach parents and carers, and explore the use of technology to deepen the engagement of parents and carers in student learning. They establish innovative processes to gather regular feedback from families and the local community that is systemically used to review school practices and inform decision-making.

Principals lead the school as an inclusive outward-facing organisation. They link with and provide support to other schools in effective community and family engagement. They draw on best practice nationally and internationally to embed a culture of inclusion and high expectations for all and take steps to tackle the effects of disadvantage on learning. They develop a mutually supportive, collaborative and trusting relationship with the community to ensure engagement in the life of the school. They collaborate effectively with other schools and agencies to promote an excellent education system in which all young people can thrive.

Developmental pathway: a principal's increasing proficiency

Redesigning Our Team - Rationale

- ▶ What roles do we need?
- ▶ Why?
- ▶ What was our main aims?

Redesigning Our Team - Building Expertise



Our Approach to Integrating Health and Wellbeing Across the School:

- Expanded the team that work across the health and wellbeing portfolio to include roles specifically connected to parents and families
- Established spaces where therapeutic interventions can occur at the school level
- Standardised school based observations by allied health practitioners for identified students

Our Approach to Integrating Health and Wellbeing Across the School:

- Ensured input of external therapists to the targeted care team
- Strategically deployed resources to support greatest needs across the school (professional learning through coaching, focus on self-care and time for research/resource material to build understanding)
- Redesigned case management tools to capture the journey of students with an identified need rather than just focus on documentation

Our Approach to Integrating Health and Wellbeing Across the School:

- Established partnerships with professional bodies and settings to leverage growth in capacity building (eg. Giant Steps)
- Developed parent support programs and workshops (for parents, designed by parents, based on parents input (ASD Parent Support Groups, Reading Support Training)
- Using parents as mentors and advocates for other parents as they begin their journey

Our Approach to Integrating Health and Wellbeing Across the School:

- Adjusted school programs and events to better engage parents at their point of need
- Adjusted school programs to meet the needs of the target group
- Redesign of SEL curriculum to personalise the learning to cohorts and needs of individuals

How We Strengthened Family-School Partnerships:

- Aligning with our Reggio philosophy – child centred approach
- Events centred on family – through the learning and development of their children
- Collaborative events with focus on engagement: agenda and presentation driven by parent questions and requests, expansion of parent committees to hear voice and perspective, parents as participants and learners

How We Strengthened Family-School Partnerships:

- Adjusting process for any student support journey to begin with a parent support and strength-based conversation to determine what support the family will need as they move forward
- Well supported parents well supporting parents - Parents as advocates to ensure connection (help seeking behaviour)

How We Strengthened Family-School Partnerships:

- Connection to school through relationships (home schooling parents/families retaining a connection for support/resource and community)
- Partnerships across the community (play-dates and fostering parent connections)

Leveraging Resources Across the System

- Creative use of Mental Health Menu funding to support role expansion to focus on capacity building to reach a greater number of students and families
- Establishment of partnerships with specialist settings to share resources
- Utilising collective capacity of people within and across the system (joint professional learning, former employees (DH) and clinicians (VR) to ensure expertise and impact is not lost

Leveraging Resources Across the System

- Shaping of new roles and initiatives to meet context and school priorities: focussing the role of the MHaWL
- Creative implementation of VGSA to provide direct connection to areas of craft and practice (Investigation hour, PLC's L/N/I/W + PLT Tracking and Monitoring Needs Identification)

Whole School Wellbeing Initiatives

- School of Play: Leadership Development to Impact of Health and Wellbeing of Students
- Senior School Student Leadership Portfolios (Inclusion, Wellbeing, Community engagement, Cultural Identity.....)
- Buddy Program (K/Grade 4, F/Grade 5 + 1/Grade 6)
- CASEL5 Curriculum Redesign to emphasise SEL and self-care for students
- Reggio Emilia Philosophy : Parent Involvement
- Staff Training – Berry Street, MSFL, Trauma Informed Practice, Protective Practice Training, SWPBS, Restorative Practices
- Targeted Training and Mentoring: ASD, ADHD, RAD, FAS, Challenging Behaviour
- In-classroom coaching and mentoring: classroom environment and design and relationship management strategies

What Worked? ...What Next?

- ▶ What has resulted from our change.
- ▶ What has now emerged as 'next' work.

Where do you start?

- ▶ Go back to your 'givens'. These underpin the core beliefs that are necessary to begin to strengthen your approach to supporting student health and wellbeing.

Thinking about the core -

- ▶ Where is your 'system' stuck?
- ▶ What will you change?