**Context**
Islington Public School is located in Newcastle, NSW and has an enrolment of 121 students. Forty-five percent of students arrived as refugees and eight percent of students identify as Aboriginal. The school has a Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) rating of 131 (2015/16 average). The school sought to build stronger relationships with its diverse community through a culture of collaboration, communication and empowered leadership.

**Enhancing community consultation**
Since 2014, the school has undertaken four major community consultation strategies:
1. It established focus group meetings to consult with the community in the development of the school plan. Facilitated by the principal, parents were encouraged to discuss what they wanted for the school.
2. Community forums were used to gather information to support the formation of the future directions of the school. The forums were promoted to parents by staff who explained that all ideas and comments would be considered. Emails, phone calls and newsletter articles were utilised to inform parents of the forum.
3. Parent café meetings provided an informal meeting space for resettled refugees. They were attended by representatives of all cultural groups in the community and community agencies. The principal led discussions with parents to identify areas in which they needed support which included financial literacy and work placements. Different community organisations were invited to present at the meetings on these topics. The parent cafés became highly successful forums for helping to alleviate fears and address issues of refugee families.
4. Pedagogy discussions between teachers and parents were established following a request from parents to hear more about teaching practices. The discussions allowed teachers to explain their teaching practices to parents.

Other strategies included the multicultural homework centre, the Parents as Teachers and Classroom Helpers (PaTCH) course and a wide range of programs delivered by community agencies, the University of Newcastle and local businesses.

**Achievements**
In partnership with the wider community, Islington Public School:
- built trust by providing increased opportunities for the school to engage with the community on future directions and policies
- enhanced community consultation which supported increased enrolments from 75 students in 2011 to 121 in 2016
- provided further opportunities for parents to meet other families in a welcoming environment and connect with the wider community
- provided opportunities, through the parent cafes, for refugee families to participate in discussions on schooling, their rights and issues affecting the learning outcomes of their children
- enhanced teacher reflection on their pedagogy through the professional discussions, which required teachers to analyse their pedagogy and clarify their practices
- built the capacity of the school to engage with an increased number of service providers
- developed leadership density within the school by providing teachers with school-based professional learning on leadership, community relations and communication
- enhanced learning opportunities and outcomes for students, families and community members by connecting parents and community members to a range of available support services, including NAVITAS, a federally funded organisation which provides services and courses to improve language skills and assist with settlement and employment.

**Sustainability**
Opportunities for continued improvements have been identified and prioritised for the future, including greater engagement in decision making by refugee families. The parent café, community forums and the multicultural homework centre are continuing. Parents and teachers will collaborate further in the development of a student voice initiative and a school sustainability policy.

For more information on Islington Public School visit their website.