Wadalba Community School

Learning for all is first and foremost

Context

Wadalba Community School was established in 2000 in the Wyong area on the central coast of NSW. It has a student population of 1,380 students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with 7 per cent of students identifying as Aboriginal. The school has a Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) rating of 115 (2014/15 average).

Enhancing community consultation

The school developed a range of strategies to enhance community consultation including the:

- attendance of two executive members at the Department’s professional learning course, Communicating and Engaging with your Community, a one day intensive course designed to increase knowledge and effective practice in communication and engagement
- active engagement of parents as members of the school’s seven governance committees
- use of innovative strategies to initiate discussions among parents and community members, such as Kitchen Table Conversation and Say it with photos
- organisation of Cuppa and Cake meetings to provide information and canvass a range of topics
- development of the school’s Facebook page to connect parents and the community to activities occurring across the school
- engagement of Aboriginal students by Aboriginal teachers and local Aboriginal Elders in creating a number of artworks as part of a Cultural Affirmation program
- employment of a community liaison officer to help families and community members become more engaged in the school.

Achievements

The achievements of the community consultation strategies included:

- a wider range of ideas from the Communicating and Engaging with your Community course to improve community consultative decision making and engagement
- greater engagement of parents in governance committees determining how the school uses its resources to best meet the needs of their students
- improved methods in seeking the opinions of parents, such as Kitchen Table Conversations and Say it with photos, leading to one of the school’s strategic directions
- greater consultation and engagement with the community in the Cuppa and Cake meetings
- improved consultation with the community resulting from the expanded use of technology
- greater consultation with local Aboriginal Elders and the local Aboriginal community as part of the Cultural Affirmation program
- improved communication and engagement with the community resulting from the community liaison officer uploading relevant and useful information on the school’s Facebook page.

Sustainability

The school plans to continue the focus on consultative decision making by sustaining its governance structure with parents participating in all governance committees. Parents of students participating in the student voice ambassador program will be invited to school planning events to identify school priorities. Other strategies include:

- professional learning for new staff members on working with parents and the community
- learning bees involving parents and their children rather than working bees
- filming students reading the newsletter and making the clip available on Facebook
- employing a graphic designer to develop engaging communications materials
- establishing a family breakfast club one day per fortnight as a way of engaging different families
- creating a directory of family skills.

For more information on Wadalba Community School visit their website.