

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association

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Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Rating: 0

Teachers and teaching

6.2.1 What key initiatives are helping to attract 'top teachers' to regional, rural and remote schools?

This is going to be an increasing issue going forward. Incentives such as subsidised housing, car allowances or extra pay have benefit in attracting teachers. Perhaps they could be combined with systems such as the old "points system" as used in the Public System or incentives such as teachers in rural and remote schools having extra support in place to assist them with post-grad study or higher levels of PD offered to advance their careers more quickly? Teachers need to be confident that moving to a regional/rural/remote school does not adversely impact on opportunities to move elsewhere in the future and in fact there should be advantages for future career prospects inherent in taking on these positions.

One NSW Catholic Schools Office (CSO) undertaken an initiative with one of the small rural schools in 2017 to support attracting a teacher to the school. The school did not have any applicants for a 0.6 position for the second half of the year therefore the CSO appointed a teacher for that school in a 0.6 capacity and she is first call casual for the schools in that area of the diocese for two days per week. They are paying the teacher as a full time employee. This initiative has provided the school with a needed teacher and also another much-needed casual teacher for that area.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

One of the biggest challenges for remote and rural principal's is that they often have a teaching load on top of their principal's time.

There is often a lot of travel for principal's due to the remote areas

Finding replacement staff can be difficult.

More Secretary time, less classroom teaching demands, etc.

Adequate staffing support provided to ensure that Principal's do not have all their time committed to a combination of teaching their own class as well as school administration. Time is better spent working with teachers as well as facilitating research and data based initiatives to improve student outcomes.

Leaders need to be confident that moving to a regional/rural/remote school does not adversely impact on opportunities to move elsewhere in the future and in fact there should be advantages for future career prospects inherent in taking on these positions.

Forcing teachers and principals to move to new schools on a regular basis would be helpful in tackling the problem of retaining and gaining experienced and quality teachers and principals. This can be a challenge for wages and relocation issues which would need to be addressed.

All schools need to attract and retain experienced educational leaders but schools also require a certain level of staff turn-over for renewal and reinvigoration (the staff themselves also experience this renewal and re-invigoration from changing positions).

teachers will not apply for rural/regional/remote positions as they feel they will then be “stuck” in those positions and not able to later move back to bigger schools or metropolitan settings.

Teacher swapping for periods of time. More PD for rural and remote staff and opportunities to visit larger schools.

This point addresses the attraction and retention of teachers and leaders in regional, rural and remote schools from a wellbeing perspective and refers to the dot points above.

It is crucial to offer initiatives to support staff wellbeing in all schools but particularly these schools where isolation can be a major negative factor

Establishing and encouraging networks of teachers and leaders within and outside regional, rural and remote school systems

Rating: 6

School and Community

6.4.1 What new and innovative approaches are you aware of that improve the connection between schools and the broader community?

6.4.2 What motivates regional, rural and remote students to succeed and how can they be supported to realise their aspirations?

Exposure to opportunities that exist in the wider world outside the community they live in. ICT helps with this as does connections schools can make with tertiary institutions or schools in larger centres.

Rating: 5

Information and Communication Technology

6.5.1 What has to be done to ensure ICT supports education in regional, rural and remote schools and communities like it does in the ‘best of the best’ city schools?

Ensuring adequate band-width at reasonable cost for all schools. Assistance for regional/rural/remote schools to have equitable access to latest ICT innovations and ensuring that staff at the schools are both aware of this technology, have access to it and are equipped properly to use it effectively with their students.

6.5.2 How could ICT be used to improve educational outcomes for regional, rural, remote students?

Greater use of Virtual Reality (VR) tech. For example we use it to provide musical instruction for our students when a music teacher is not available in person. It is also useful for some PD and/or

meetings that staff engage in. We have had students attend the “Centre For Effective Reading” in Sydney and this VR technology has been vital for follow up meetings and PD

One of the major issues we have is that to travel to any venue for excursions is becoming prohibitively expensive, providing the ability to experience the same end destination without leaving the school grounds, using technology that allows the student to wear headsets that and have an interactive experience.

6.5.3 What are the main barriers to regional, rural and remote schools realising the full potential benefits of ICT?

Lack of access to ICT resources. Inequitable funding/finances allowing all schools to access this ICT. Lack of staff/school knowledge of what is available to access and its full potential for use. Bandwidth and the cost of High Speed Internet via NBN both at school and home.

Rating: 7

Entrepreneurship and schools

Rating: 4

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding
More links with local industries and opportunities to experience local workplaces, eg farms

High Quality teachers are key. Many teachers remain in the same school and become stale....incentives to experience greater diversity.

Rating for enrolments: 5

Rating for clusters: 5

Rating for distance education: 0

Rating for boarding: 0

Diversity

As a matter of equity, rural students deserve the same quality educational opportunities as city students, without having to leave their communities (eg boarding school). Quality education in rural areas, assists not just the students but the communities as students may be less likely to leave their rural community for education and stay away as adults.

Educational success will be achieved when students in rural and remote communities are provided with the resources to achieve learning outcomes on par with their city counterparts.

This means-

-valuing rural students as equals to city students

-state and federal governments working together to provide the required financial resources

-funding for regular excursions to regional/city centres so all country students can have opportunities that city students have access to (not just the country students who can afford it)

- transport and accommodation for such excursions needs to be factored into funding for rural students' global funding

-technology funding for rural areas needs to be supported to an increased degree as quality technology access can bring opportunities to rural students, rather than the students travelling.

Rating: 6

Transitioning beyond school

Rating: 6

Additional Comments

What we see as vitally important from Catholic primary educators.

- Complexity of Catholic school being the only education option in some communities and therefore crucial to education improvement going forward.
- Recruitment of quality teachers and leaders (VITAL)
- Lack of availability of relief teachers
- IT connectivity/infrastructure (NAPLAN online)
- Wellbeing of leaders – networking/clusters
- Poverty of families in these communities – access to resources and allied health
- Professional development of staff – supported and financed

Other than the 9 themes...other areas to consider

- Access to allied professionals including counselling, educational psychologists, speech pathology, Occupational Therapy – how can this be improved?
- Lack of aspiration – ways to education/careers
- Accessing professional learning
- Uniqueness of each school recognised in their context
- Standing /respect of teachers in the community
- Access to early learning centres (VITAL)
- Power of media and ways to address its impact.
- Schools social core centre- health, mental health, agencies, parenting (HUB- interventions and supports in place

Comments in relation to “innovation and fresh approaches”

- Showcasing rural/remote schools when they experience success
- Building capacity - using ICT to connect with ease and purpose (VITAL)
- Online, virtual and augmented reality tools
- How to build relationships between schools/communities that transcends the transient nature of staff(coming/going)
- Providing a ‘leader of learning’ to each community (cross-sectoral)

- We see value in cross-sectoral initiatives - schools / leaders working together for their community
- Build aspirations in each community
- Every school should have video-conferencing facilities
- Tap into local resources instead of things being imposed from “outside”
- Audit and sharing of current good, innovative practice
- PCAP – priority country access program – (old program?) What’s next and of value?
- Parenting and carers programs