

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Community Connections - Growing Lachlan

Reference Type: NGO

State or territory: NSW

Serial Identification Number: 478596

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

It would be great to see this have flexibility that explores other ways to assess knowledge and learning that is not only in a written format. Where children could opt to have practical assessments/oral assessments or workplace assessments would open up opportunities for children outside of mainstream learning styles. For example: where a student wishes to peruse a career in trades - could they not be assessed in terms of application to interest - how many square metres to that wall - equals how many sheets of gyprock - and at what size? It requires almost a customised learning plan for students that actually plays to their strengths and interests rather than that of how we prefer to assess students.

Rating: 4

Teachers and teaching

Teachers and teaching are the critical link between a student and capacity. Students who feel a teacher is capable and has a demonstrated relationship with a student - keeps kids in their seat and pushing through the harder lessons/curriculum or discussions. Where teachers have the opportunity to customise that learning to match the students style or preferences then relationships are stronger and safer. Without strong teachers - in the room, working with kids, learning with kids and learning from kids - our remote schools struggle. Students have indicated that it is all about the relationship they have that matters. Do i want to learn, do i value this teacher, do they value me.....

incentives attract teachers to our regional area - however as the discussion paper highlights this doesn't guarantee quality. what we sometimes see is short term visits - with limited to no interest in student growth or development or community. Short term contracts do not support the theory of the above. we see many short term positions or limitations around employment which also see's those teachers move on for job security. That said - teachers require the same support as students. Who looks after them, their learning, their plans for the future and keeps them connected to industry and real world. Strong teacher mentors that are professional and potentially where the incentive based work might sit could demonstrate greater relationships and applications of learning that is placed based rather than session plans that have been handed down from teacher to teacher. Teacher placements that assess more than capacity to session plan, but to connect to re-direct and to find the transferability in learning for students has relevance. What is the place based response to this learning/question/assessment.

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

Leaders and Leadership:

Substantial energy and support is required to find and keep a skilled and motivated leader. In order for them to demonstrate good leadership they need to first be able to clearly identify what the broad goal is for the school - the teaching team - the student. do they all share that vision - why and how will they achieve it. Rotation has proven to be useful in our regional area - however with remoteness comes issues of access. we have limited internet and therefore options of alternate ways to connect just aren't there. Leadership teams need to continually remind themselves and each other about the broad goal and come up with strategies to include all members of the school team to come on board. the fit needs to be to the school - not the school fit to the leadership.

Rating: 6

School and Community

Community and Business in many instances is the future for our students. Many regional students dont necessarily aspire to attend university as it requires them to relocate and generally leave home. Without solid prep - do they survive the significant changes from home life - Not generally.

we need to find ways that see business and schools work closely more than just work placements - but industry knowledge and expertise - opportunities in how we extend subject options and link them with content experts in the community - they dont need to be the teacher but the linker between theory and practice.

How do we demonstrate that our young people have a role to play in the community future and viability - by showcasing them through local business. By finding a way that the school become a business player or a contributor to the business space - economic development/employment strategies that are place based and yet linked to curriculum outcomes.

I think we can become more complimentary in rural areas - we can join class groups (Catholic an Public) to explore areas of expertise like science/STEM/History - we can do shared assessments and experiments and we can find ways that utilise the best of both worlds for the benefits of all of our students. We can build challenges in to curriculum that see kids inviting community in - rather than locking them out. eg: work related challenges/science expos'/try it out days/localised excursions that introduce people and learning.

Rating: 6

Information and Communication Technology

Currently our technology although may match the city - our infrastructure does not.

if we dont see workable solutions around how we use technology and advancements in this space that see students and teaching staff feel more connected and relevant then options for learning are limited significantly.

currently we have students who need to be self motivated and highly organised to attend VC classes/study on line - the biggest frustration is not the different learning style but the failure of technology to keep up. VC's drop out/access to online course delivery is slow and clunky, there are limitations around student support in terms of computers/IT technology on offer to all students.

Rating: 6

Entrepreneurship and schools

this opportunity has potential to provide optimum opportunity and learning for students across our regional catchment.

to explore the use of seeing our community as a serviceable system that is lead through school relationships is exciting. The school is one of our largest employers, most readily available service and is well resourced to meet community needs through it's students learning. its the partnerships and relationships that take significant time and skill to be developed - however it totally doable to see kids want to live, study, contribute and thrive in our local communities. so much of what is needed is already known - SBAT's highlight what works and what isn't in terms of industry and opportunity - we need to highlight the strengths and build from there.

Rating: 7

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding
Enrolments are a tough factor when looking at teacher ratios.

in our region - where older students take up SBAT options - that see outside curriculum delivery such as TAFE - enrolments are altered and therefore teacher ratio's may also be affected. This in turn can limit options even though on paper - it seems limitless....

boarding school opportunity takes many kids out of our shire - the families who remain are either financially restricted - have kids who dont want to go - or have decided with their child that they plan to live and work locally (generally speaking).

how we compete with boarding school opportunities - not just in educational ways but sporting and community/social avenues is also difficult - to persue our own area of relevance and expertise however will build the capacity and faith and staying and living locally.

the enrolment line is also tough when it offers up subject selection, training options and how self determined a learner you are willing to be. for those that can focus and have good wrap around family support - they survive - for those that dont - they hang on/stay in the seat and struggle with future employment.

Rating for enrolments: 2

Rating for clusters: 3

Rating for distance education: 4

Rating for boarding: 3

Diversity

Diversity is critical.

there is no one size in education. there is core messaging and levels of learning that take place but where we can showcase diversity and freedom around learning - kids will see hope.

Rating: 5

Transitioning beyond school

We need to teach students about life after school.

it doesn't matter whether they study/work/stay at home - there are critical learnings that come with leaving school. Some consistency in how we approach this could see some small but significant changes for individuals and families who don't other wise have experience or access to that type of education or opportunity. For example: student ID, bank accounts, managing finances, what a wage

might look like, how we are expected to behave in the workplace, what are the expectations of my employee, what do I need? what are they looking for? what about a driving license?

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

In the Lachlan shire we are currently working with all partners around SBAT's and what's working well, what's not, addressing gaps and building on these opportunities in ways of future employment and long term community viability. It is certainly highlighting many of the issues raised in the discussion paper and we are not yet at the stage of addressing the change - however we would be happy to share our work with you should you be interested.

we are looking at how we build business and training models that reflect current student interest v's current employment gaps and how we best work with business to explore learning and employment options smarter for kids whilst at school and transitioning from school. We have completed the community health check in a report called Growing Lachlan which highlights the constraints attached to rural shires and/or catchments. We also have a large Aboriginal student population that aren't seeing the benefits of finishing school - let alone leave with aspirations or hope.

We are happy to support this review in any way we can.