

Reflections on the Wellbeing and Inclusion forum June 25th 2021

Key themes from the day and considerations for next steps.

The importance of building educator capacity: Supporting staff to have the knowledge, skills and resources to do the best for the children and young people in their care is essential. This begins with quality induction programs and an understanding of the developmental needs of the employee. Ongoing professional learning is essential for the individual and the workforce in general as we continue to recruit new staff and as the functional needs of children and young people change. A differentiated approach to professional learning will ensure that the breadth of experience and knowledge across the system is accommodated. Professional learning should also build on equity principles, challenge the bigotry of low expectations and build understanding of the rights of the child. Questions/observations that emerged from table discussions included:

- *The cost implications of professional learning need to be clear, ie Boxall or ABELS.*
- *Is it for all staff, or for a specialist group?*
- *What is the role of Orbis in this space – or support services?*

The importance of quality resources at the point of need. In addition to professional learning, teachers would like easy access to quality resources that build their skills to differentiate learning and to effectively accommodate children with specific disabilities and need. The cost of these resources to schools needs to be considered.

The importance of networks and partnerships. Supporting children with a functional need is relational work: within schools, with students, with families and across schools and into the community. Partnerships and networks are key and provide opportunities for educators to learn from each other. These interactions should be planned rather than coincidental. A systemic approach is needed so that educators can be connected to learned colleagues, to share their successes, amplify good practice and to build their capacity at the local level. There is world class practice in evidence in sites. Teachers and leaders value the opportunities to learn from each other about what works for what student and in what contexts.

Could a member of Support Services or the Local Education team be tasked with the job of facilitating local networks of educators to share practice, ask questions and collaboratively find solutions. (Student wellbeing leaders, special educators, SSO...)?

What are the opportunities at Partnership meetings to share ideas and engage in problem solving and inquiry?

How might our experienced teachers provide mentoring, coaching and peer development?

How might we compile examples of quality practice and differentiation, and in what sites so that educators can build networks and connections beyond the local level?

The importance of maintaining a student centred focus: it is important that we keep what ‘this’ student needs at the centre of our thinking and planning. One child’s functional need is not another’s: they are the least homogenous group. How might student voice influence strategy at wave 1, 2 and 3? What resources are available in a school community? How might the school and family values influence the planning? *Being very aware that disabilities vs complex social emotional function needs can be very different pieces of work.*

The importance of quality intervention and planning: Intervening early, often, with clarity and inclusive of informed practise underpins quality intervention. How do we prioritise and ensure preschool and reception children are well serviced and accessing assessments in a timely manner? Time for planning with and between educators is important. How can we create time and space in schools and at the local level for the shared conversations that underpin intervention programs and practices? What does this look like at the different wave level? What does this look like for two children in a class or ten (or more)? What are the processes that support social skill development academic skills and life skills?

The importance of engaging parents: This engagement is vital at all three wave levels. It is also important that parents are sensitively and openly engaged as early as possible in learning, in developing strategies and solutions and in partnership with educators and community. Acknowledging this is complex work when parents in many low-SES sites have functional needs too. This is more work for schools.

The importance of co-design and co-development of policy and procedures. There is significant educator expertise across our system. Utilising this in the development of policy and resources will increase the effectiveness of the work / artefact produced and indicate faith and trust in the profession.