



Family-School
& Community
Partnerships
Bureau



Family School Partners

August 2009

First Things

SCHOOLS FIRST – rewarding successful partnerships



If you are reading this on the 14th of August, then today is the **last day** on which you can apply to share in \$5 million funding from the NAB **Schools First** initiative for successful partnerships between schools, families and communities.

If you already have your application in, you might like to see what others are up to.

The **Schools First** website lists some very interesting case studies of innovative school-community partnerships, including some videos you can watch online.

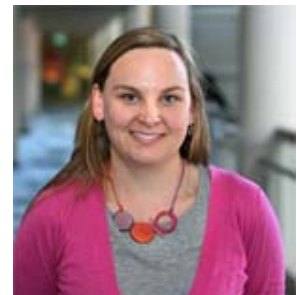
Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/omoqv>

The parent education revolution

In last month's newsletter, you may have read an article by **Danielle Cronin**, Executive Director of the Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT.

Since then, Ms Cronin has been a guest on ABC Radio National's Life Matters program, where she talked more about her views on parental involvement in schools: the search for **true engagement** where parents are partners in education, alongside teachers.

Listen online or download audio in MP3 format: <http://tinyurl.com/olw9ep>



Doing the Family-School Thing Well

Brekkie club is toast of town

It doesn't pay to miss breakfast, especially not for students at Yass High School.



The school's breakfast club has been drawing accolades and a growing crowd since it was formed three years ago.

Club coordinator, teacher Jennifer Rajchert said up to 150 students regularly turned up each Mon, Wed and Fri to wolf down toasted cheese sandwiches, hot milo, cereal or fruit.

With many of the school's farming families facing tough times because of the drought, Ms Rajchert said it was also important that no one felt singled out.

"In general people don't like asking for handouts," she said. "If you invite everyone no one feels like the finger is pointing at them."

Besides keeping hunger at bay, the breakfast club plays a practical role in school morale.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mvbyvt>

Helping your student at home

Family-School Partnerships and RTI

In the USA, there is a strong drive to better support the families of students with special needs, including learning disabilities.

Response to Intervention (RTI) refers to a process that emphasises how well students respond to changes in instruction, monitoring and measuring their progress in response to interventions.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities hosts online talks in which experts address various educational topics, including one late last year by Amy L. Reschly from the University of Georgia answering questions about creating positive, engaged relationships that center around supporting student learning, sharing of data and decision making, interventions, and collaborative problem-solving.



Dr. Reschly offered suggestions for numerous ways schools and families may work together within a multi-tiered model. Transcripts of the questions and answers make fascinating reading.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lhnr5x>

School Parents: Helping Mums and Dads with school life



Lively and visually appealing, this is a monthly online newsletter produced by the NSW Department of Education. Topics covered in the current issue include:

- Going Green: Tips to reduce your child's carbon footprint at school
- Starting high school
- Talking to your child about ethics
- Whooping cough
- In search of the Perfect Lunchbox
- Help your child with Public Speaking
- Homework for K-2: is it really necessary?

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/mlfhrn>

Research

Starting up

The latest issue of the Boys in Schools e-Bulletin, published by the Family Action Centre at the University of Newcastle, focuses on "family, community and school partnerships".

A list of the article section headings should convey the scope:

- A research perspective on school-community partnerships
- What do we mean by "family" and "community"?
- What are the benefits of family and community participation in schooling?
- What do schools have to do to for effective partnerships?
- So why are family-school partnerships important for boys?

There are some very good insights to be had in this e-Bulletin (and a great References list).

Incidentally, the Family Action Centre has developed a course on family-school-community partnerships (**School and Community Partnerships to Improve Boys' and Girls' Outcomes**) to be available as part of the Master of Educational Studies at Newcastle Uni.

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/maom3c>

Seeing is Believing

Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement spotlights how six school districts across the USA have used innovative strategies to create and sustain family engagement “systems at work”.

Their findings point to three core components of these successful systems:

- creating district-wide strategies
- building school capacity, and
- reaching out to and engaging families.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/nyzlm8>

Handbook of School-Family Partnerships

Amy Reschly, who gave the NCLD Talk referred to earlier, is also the co-author with Sandra L Christenson of this book, due for publication in October.

Family-school partnerships are increasingly touted as a means of improving both student and school improvement. This recognition has led to an increase in policies and initiatives that offer the following benefits:

1. improved communication between parents and educators
2. home and school goals that are mutually supportive and shared
3. better understanding of the complexities impinging on children’s development and
4. pooling of family and school resources to find and implement solutions to shared goals.

This will be the first comprehensive review of what is known about the effects of home-school partnerships on student and school achievement. It provides a brief history of home-school partnerships, presents evidence-based practices for working with families across developmental stages, and provides an agenda for future research and policy.

Read more, pre-order at: <http://tinyurl.com/mwoupo>

National Family-School Partnerships Framework



Has your school, or your P&C, received its copy of the **Guide to the National Family-School Partnerships Framework**?

You can download a copy from our website at <http://www.familyschool.org.au/pdf/framework.pdf> or email info@familyschool.org.au to have a hard copy mailed to you (make sure you include a mailing address).

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/np54x4>

Bits 'n' Pieces

Family-School Partnerships: Essential Elements of Literacy Instruction in the United States

It's always wise, and often illuminating, to get different perspectives on an issue. The US-based International Reading Association produced a brochure a few years ago that explains how mutually supportive relationships between families and school are essential for improving literacy, and why purpose-specific training is the key to making those relationships work.

"Because family involvement is a potentially powerful element of effective literacy instruction, the International Reading Association believes parents, family and community members, teachers, school administrators, researchers, and policymakers must be aware of its importance and must receive information and training that allows them to effectively execute their respective roles in establishing family involvement in literacy learning. Teachers and school personnel especially must receive appropriate training."

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/nnejex>



Tell us your story

The Bureau wants to build up a collection of video stories about schools that we can use to inspire other schools and their communities. Contact us at info@familyschool.org.au.

Please send your comments and suggestions to <mailto:info@familyschool.org.au>

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