

TOPIC: IMPROVING SCHOOLS BY CULTURAL ALIGNMENT

DESCRIPTION

School cultures can mean many things. It's interpretation can sit within the various groups with a school i.e. teachers, parents, students; but it can also spread across those groups and the sub-cultures that exist within. As our schools become increasingly multi-cultural we often need time and expertise to find bridges that connect those cultures, as well as expertise to foster appropriate behaviours, actions, policies and procedures that unite rather than separate. A culture that promotes learning is more likely when all parts of the culture are moving in the same direction.

Improving Schools Australia can facilitate discussions, research and processes that can help the school to identify solutions for improved school cultures that promote learning.

AREAS OF FOCUS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURE

How are staff members introduced to the many cultural groups that may exist within the school? Do they all have to adapt to a rigid school policy, or does the policy of inclusion encourage cultural awareness training for staff. Such training, especially with local Indigenous communities, should be fundamental to a school's orientation program.

DIFFERENTIATION AND CULTURE

Differentiation is interpreted in many ways by stakeholders within the school. Educators will look for ways to differentiate strategies and materials to suit the various interests and skills of students from low to high ability. Differentiation can also be interpreted from the cultural and gender perspectives. Are the different cultural groups within the school having their needs met? Are the needs of girls and boys being addressed equally? Is resourcing considered from the various interpretations of differentiation?

CULTURE OF EXPERTISE AND PROFESSIONALISM

School communities want the best teaching teams possible. Whether it be within a learning area, within a section of the school or across the school, there is a societal expectation that teaching staff are doing their best, always trying to improve. Sometimes it takes an external stimulus to shine new light on old expertise. Sometimes it takes an external stimulus to shake, rattle and roll in alignment with the direction of the school's leadership team, to bring new thinking to the existing culture of expertise within the school.

OPTIONS

Improving Schools Australia offers support in this topic through:

- Staff professional development days/sessions; Leadership team workshops; Individual and group mentoring
- Cross faculty or faculty specific professional development
- Junior, middle or senior school specific professional development

FEE

Fees are determined based on preparation, travel, pre and post support involvement and resource provision. Indicative costs

- Afternoon workshop: Fee starts from \$1000; Full day workshop: Fee starts from \$3000