



Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation

What additional roles would the TCSPFF like to play in our Family / School / Parish communities?

International researchⁱ has found that student success is directly correlated to parent engagement in their children's learning. Traditionally, families supported the teachers, as they were the "professional educators". Research now finds and anecdotally what we have always known, is that parents & carers who directly "educate" their children social, intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually rather than "support" their children through the education process lead far more "balanced and fulfilled" lives. The Federation recognises that some families do not have the skills, knowledge or resources to help their children or grandchildren and that explicit support programs need to be put in place to help these families.

Current parental support practices in other Australian Catholic jurisdictions, as report in the 2010 St Paul's publication 'Bridging the Gaps between families and schools (Millar, N. 2010) are of particular interest to the Federation. The following are examples are from the above book and the Federation would be interested in implementing similar support, if demand was sufficient.

- A Diocesan Parent Liaison Officer who is a 'parent educator' and provides training for Parent Education Teams to work within schools. (page 50) This model was a "skills acquisition" model, to empower parents in their role as primary educator of their children. *"The current Parent Liaison Officer for the diocese has been employed for nine years, and comes with an extensive teaching and adult education background. She is employed three days a week and is part of the Educational Services Team within the CEO. In this way, the PLO links closely with other Education Officers in curriculum planning and development and pastoral care. (page 64)*
- Parent Education Teams provide a range of services to parents in both as individuals and a collective. This can range from advise on specialist education advisors services (disability, speech pathology etc), to how to support literacy and numeracy development through to how to effectively manage a P&F meeting. *"Approximately seven years ago the PLO presented a pilot proposal to the diocese to train and develop a team of Parent Educators to work with her on a casual basis. The role of the Parent Educators was to facilitate workshops for parents across communities, thus providing support for families within their local school and cluster level. (page 64)*
- Broken Bay Diocesan (NSW) The Diocesan Coordinator is a paid two day part time employee and three casual Cluster Coordinators who maintain support with a range of parent meetings and evening parent forums.
- Pastoral Parent Coordinator (page 97)
- Other activities that the Parent Liaison Officer are responsible for include;
- Hot Topic parent forums
 - Sexting,
 - Cyber Bullying,
 - Living with teenagers,
 - Body image
 - Mental health for youth
 - Family breakdowns
 - Literacy for beginners (aimed at Kindergarten parents),

- The parent factor in literacy development,
 - The parent factor in numeracy development,
 - Understanding the ages and stages of children including “Morning Madness”, Anxiety / Perfectionism”, Sibling Rivalry”, Who’s in charge at your place?”,
 - Faith development for adults,
 - Supporting faith development in your children,
 - Annual P&F leadership evenings,
 - Class parent program,
 - Parent volunteer workshops,
 - Welcoming parents to our school workshops,
 - Support for computer skills to develop and maintain P&F websites,
 - Online parenting newsletter – Parent2Parent,
 - Links to education websites, P&F 101 – tips to keep you P&F alive,
 - specific training as requested,
 - Building relationship workshops,
 - Effective communication workshops,
 - Build community workshops,
 - Parish / School / Family relationship building.
- Developing the capability of P&F and school board executive
 - Developing the capability of Parishioners to support schools and families (St Aloysius – Kingston)

Other observations written in the book include;

- *“The PLO would like to see greater use of schools as centres of learning and family support. Educational facilities are under-utilised in Australia and have the potential to be places for out-of-hours education and support.” (Page 71)*
- *“It seems that workshops need to run for 3 years before they gain credibility.” (Page 69)*
- *“The key to successful implementation is the principal”. (Page 70)*
- Clear strategic planning and policy directions that name parent partnerships as a priority are essential for all educational systems committed to the education of young people in a changing environment. Paid Parent Liaison Officer support is essential to ensure appropriate processes, protocols and relationships are maintained and developed. (page 71)
- Ideally, part-time Family Liaison Officers in every school would be a practical way to assist the ever increasing load on school principals and the intensifying needs of parents in a fast changing and economical challenging world. (page 72)

^{i i} <http://www.almaharris.co.uk/>

ⁱ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_Parent_Involvement_Fact_Sheet_14732_7.pdf

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm>

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ⁱ Alma Harris was the lead researcher for Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement: Do Parents Know They Matter? A research project commissioned by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust for the Department for Schools, Families and Children in the UK. She is also co-author of the recent book Do Parents Know they Matter? Raising Achievement through Parental Engagement (2009). <http://www.almaharris.co.uk/>

[Hattie, J. \(2003\)](#)

[Hattie, J \(2008\) Visible Learning](#)

‘Bridging the Gaps between families and schools (Millar, N. 2010) St Paul’s Publications