St Augustine’s Strategic Plan 2014-2018

Updated: 21 October 2013
Version 9

Gateway to Greatness

"Are we ready to be Christians full-time, showing our commitment by word and deed?" Pope Francis
Mission Statement

As a Catholic school, within the parish community of St Augustine's, our core mission is to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the children in our care. With the Holy Family as our guide, we endeavour to nurture the development of our children in partnership with families in a safe and caring environment.

In an atmosphere of care and concern, where each child is valued for their uniqueness, we aim to provide an excellent education, so that all children can attain their full potential spiritually, academically, socially, culturally and physically.

Vision Statement

Embedded in a Catholic educational experience for all members of the school community, St. Augustine's strives to be an innovative learning community by providing diverse opportunities.
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From the Parish Priest
From the Principal

Welcome to St Augustine’s Primary School, a Catholic primary school in the parish of St Augustine’s and thank you for your interest in the future of our school. This Strategic Plan was endorsed by the visiting School Review and Development Panel in August 2013 and will serve as a guide through 2014 to 2018 and, along with our mission and vision statements, will be a focus for the delivery of learning.

For the past year, the school has taken a hard look at itself, assessing its strengths, its current realities, its core purpose and what will make it a great Catholic primary school.

The strategic planning process has reaffirmed the core values that make our school what it is – and what it will be. For the next five years and beyond, the school is focusing its energy and resources on three key areas: academic excellence, a student-focused community and fostering a strong Catholic identity. Together, these three intertwined themes represent the foundation and strength of our school as well as the vehicle for moving St Augustine’s toward greatness.

Annual action plans, using strategies identified in the planning process, will define each year’s actions to meet the plan’s priorities. The School’s Leadership Team will monitor and guide the year’s actions and develop action plans for the coming year, reflecting current strategic issues and problems.

To the best extent possible, this strategic plan has been developed with both an awareness of past achievements and with the goal of setting new targets for improved student performance. With the guidance of the Diocesan Contemporary Learning Framework and AITSL’s Australian Teachers Performance and Development Framework informing our strategic directions, our school is well placed to meet the challenges ahead and offer our children optimum learning opportunities. The 2014-2018 Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure that goals, strategies and actions are addressed as appropriate. The plan, in time, may be modified to reflect achievements and address new priorities.

Please take a moment to review the information shared in the following pages. It is with a sense of pride and optimism that I look forward to the coming years and substantial progress on this dynamic plan.
Introduction

St Augustine’s has a long, illustrious history of achieving excellence and providing benefit to the families in the Coffs Harbour region. However, the school finds itself, like all educational institutions, in challenging times. These challenges provide great opportunities. This strategic plan is designed to take advantage of these opportunities. The plan and the process would not have been possible without the support of our staff, parent community and the students.

We created our strategic plan in careful alignment with the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Lismore’s strategic directions, the Diocesan Foundational Beliefs Statement and the Diocesan Contemporary Learning Framework. Our 2014-2018 strategic plan enhances the effectiveness of our current learning framework.

This following document is designed to be the school’s operational plan for the next five years. It was created from the work of staff, students and parents who dedicated a tremendous amount of time and energy to its completion. The participation was exceptional, but perhaps more impressive is the genuine enthusiasm at all levels for moving the school forward. The school will now build on its rich 100-year history of leadership and accomplishment, and take its next great step.

An inclusive approach to the strategic planning process was used to ensure the plan was representative of the larger school community. While themes cover expansive areas the role of information technology, effective communication, staff training and fostering community partnerships remain as key fundamental elements to be addressed if the school is to move forward with enthusiasm in implementing this plan and meeting its stated goals.

First, the school’s current information technology organisational structure must be enhanced in a manner that is universally accessible and facilitates flexibility and innovation. In order to garner the maximum benefit from information technology, in both routine matters and in innovation, the school must make improvements to the organisational structure to develop a more unified approach that will allow for maximum utilisation and benefit across the school.

Second, effective two-way communication is a must in any successful organisation. St Augustine’s recognises the need to design open communication channels that disseminate and receive information. Items such as electronic newsletters, email announcements and the use of an electronic school calendar are examples of existing tools that can be leveraged to enhance communication. Effective communication strategies go hand-in-hand with enhanced information technology initiatives and both rely on open and collaborative participation to maximise impact and success.

Third, there is a distinct desire and need for more staff professional learning to support the school’s learning framework. To enable the school to meet the legislative requirements through agencies such as the Australian Institute of Teacher and School Leadership (AITSL) and NSW Institute of Teachers (NSWIT),
it is beneficial for the school’s learning program that a focus on quality professional learning is offered to not only to facilitate enhanced work performance and staff satisfaction but most importantly, meet the needs of our school community.

The plan that follows has goals and strategies under each theme. The strategies represent current best thinking for suggested approaches to achieve the goals.
Results of the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan

The launch of the “Personalising Learning ~ Pursuing Excellence” Strategic plan for 2009-2013, together with the support from our Parish and the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution program, paved the way for building a 21st century learning program to meet the needs of today's students.

As a result of that plan, St Augustine’s School has continued to establish strong partnerships among families and the community. Working together, we ensure every student has the 21st century skills/tools to excel and be a contributing member of the global society. We seek to educate the whole child not only with strong academics, but also in the areas of faith, physical and social education and creative arts. We engage students in learning, raising the aspirations of all by immersing them in a learning environment designed to meet their needs and connect classrooms with communities. We promote a positive, caring culture across the school that fosters a sense of belonging for all students, to ensure that they know they are active participants in the learning process and valued members of the community. Our school provides a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment that supports students’ social and emotional development and demonstrates acceptance and respect for the diversity of its students and all members of the school community.

We provide a comprehensive curriculum aligned with NSW Board of Studies National Curriculum that challenges and develops all learners from K to 6. The curriculum is research-based and consistently integrates best practice to provide a focus that is aligned horizontally and vertically across all cohorts and addresses the needs of all students. Student learning and access to the curriculum are supported in all learning spaces through the use of differentiated instructional tools, flexible grouping models and hands-on, inquiry-based learning, while encouraging innovation and creativity. We integrate technology into the curriculum and provide access to technology at all levels. Student learning needs and the curriculum, drive our decisions regarding technology and its infrastructure. Teachers and support staff use both formal and informal assessments to identify student progress, refine and implement instructional practices that target student needs. Professional development opportunities are used as part of a comprehensive curriculum plan.

St Augustine’s employs highly-qualified teachers and leadership team members who engage students in a positive and dynamic manner, are student-focused, work individually and collaboratively to effectively deliver instruction and advance student performance in all areas of learning. The school is committed to helping teachers develop and strengthen the necessary skills and knowledge to provide high-quality instruction. Teachers consistently work collegially within the school and community as leaders and partners in the education of students and maintain a culture where individual and group learning are valued and modeled. The school provides targeted, quality professional development that supports ongoing professional growth. Policies and procedures that ensure accountability and promote teacher growth support the retention of effective and highly-qualified staff.
In our efforts to support student learning, the staff work collaboratively to build a strong learning community. They advocate for and manage resources across the school in a fiscally responsible manner, while working to build community understanding of the school’s educational program and needs.

The school uses 21st century communication tools to disseminate accurate and timely information regarding school policies, programs, procedures, achievements, decisions and critical issues that impact families and the school. Respectful two-way communication with families is the norm. As the school engages parents, staff and community members in an ongoing discourse about education at St Augustine’s and how to best serve the needs of all learners, we work with the members of our educational community to provide opportunities for participation, communication and dialogue and seek opportunities for partnerships beyond the school.
The 2014-2018 Strategic Plan: A Summary

The vision of St Augustine’s Primary School is to be a student centred, high performing school where all students develop and become life long learners and leaders. Our school has laid the foundation for this vision with the completion of the 2009-2013 strategic plan and now builds upon that foundation with the 2014-2018 strategic plan.

In implementing the 2014-2018 strategic plan the three key aims are:

- Provide students a highly personalised education immersed in the Catholic faith and enhanced by opportunities for experiential learning.

- Provide students with the global and interdisciplinary perspectives necessary to address the educational, social, economic and environmental issues of the 21st century.

- Establish and promote a vibrant school environment dedicated to education of the whole person through integration of curricular and extracurricular activities.
Diocesan Foundational Beliefs and Practices

Evangelisation
Engaging students in contemporary thinking requires a commitment to the connectedness of students and staff at all levels. Collaboration, differentiation, independence, and interdependence are skills necessary to enhance one’s capacity to connect with our faith community. The essence of Catholic education existing in a contemporary culture insists on a balanced context whereby continuous formation of all elements of the parish school community is embraced. In this way, the message of Christ is imparted in a reflective, relevant and holistic manner.

Worship
We are called to create a school in which Christ is the living centre and the teachings of the Catholic Church are instructed and affirmed. As a parish school we acknowledge the cultural and family diversity of our faith community, embracing all in the liturgical life of the school. We gather in prayer and reflection to worship God and continue, through a collective vision, to provide faith opportunities that outreach and nurture spiritual growth.

Witness
Witnessing our faith calls for our parish school to embed the love of Christ and the teachings of the church in all aspects of our learning framework. The promotion of a culture that leverages the strengths of our parish school and reinforces the desire for all to work with a commitment to sustaining and building upon a welcoming and loving community. With school policy in line with contemporary thinking we will be challenged to invest in the strengthening of a faith culture that celebrates our faith in God and our connection to the global faith community.

Community
Our Catholic community nurtures the character and faith of our students so they can contribute effectively to the life of the Church, society and culture.

Service
As a community we are building and reinforcing social and emotional competencies in our parish school that reflect our Catholic beliefs and attitudes toward others through service in action. We are called to serve and respond to our faith in a real and connected way. “Are we ready to be Christians full-time, showing our commitment by word and deed?” Pope Francis
School Review and Development Data Collection Processes

School Events
Feedback is always sought from the school community around various school events (eg sports days, parent information evenings and grade breakfasts) and provides staff with rich information.

Staff Meetings
During Term Two, staff meetings were held to attend to the SRD process. Staff, broke into small groups, shared and discussed the SRD work booklet. The group work was collated into a single staff booklet recording strengths and areas for development under each SRD category.

P&F Satisfaction Surveys
Information from the annual P&F Satisfaction Survey has fed into the data collection process and offered a year by year response rather than the SRD slice in time data collection process.

Parent Survey
The parent online SRD survey was conducted between Wednesday 12 June 2013 and Friday 21 June 2013.

Student Survey
The students in Year Five and Year Six were invited to participate in an online survey during Week 7 and Week 8, Term Two.
Timetable Overview

**Term Four, 2012**
- Participation in Diocesan SRD Certification Day
- Leadership Team meeting used to begin awareness raising and planning for 2013

**Term One, 2013**
- Staff issued SRD booklet to complete individually before the end of Term One.
- School Compliance Audit conducted on 14 March, 2013

**Term Two, 2013**
- Staff Meetings Wk 1-5 focused on unpacking the staff booklet and synthesising into a collective viewpoint
- Non teaching staff SRD meetings were held in Weeks 7 and 8
- Combined Leadership Team meeting with JPC and SAPS focused on the future of learning and the transition from primary school to high school.
- Parent and student online surveys were conducted
- Staff Development Day on Friday 28 June focused on the analysis of data and the initial drafting of future goals and directions.

**Term Three, 2013**
- SRD Committee in Week Three drafted the strategic plan
- Staff meetings held to review draft documents
- Review of the draft strategic plan discussed with P&F at August meeting
- SRD Panel visitation on 22 & 23 August.

**Term Four, 2013**
- Panel recommendations incorporated into the strategic plan
- Strategic Five Year Plan completed
- Leadership Team developed an implementation plan
- Strategic Plan formally presented at Diocesan SRD Certification Day
- Strategic Five Year Plan launched.
Strategic Plan Matrix

This strategy matrix is a visual tool illustrating how Saint Augustine's Primary School aligns its resources to achieve its mission to educate all students in the Catholic faith through the academic, spiritual and cultural programs.

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<td>The review of our whole school pastoral care programs</td>
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<td>Encouraging more active parent participation to support school endeavours</td>
<td>Providing support and learning opportunities for parents and the wider community to be more aware of and up to date with new and current technologies</td>
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**Theme One: Catholic Directions**

We are, as a Catholic school, commissioned with the responsibility of maintaining, promoting and witnessing to the Catholic faith and mission. Following on from the Diocesan event, Proclaim Lismore, we acknowledge the importance of the presence of God in the lives of our staff, students and parents. We also recognise that we are called to be authentic witnesses in our faith community, truly centering the life of the school around Catholic teachings and values. In providing our students with the foundations of a Christ-centred life we are preparing them for emotional and spiritual well-being within a vibrant, connected faith community.

**Key Goals**

1. **Foster authentic witness by staff and students to embrace their faith**
   a. Implement the ‘Making Jesus Real’ program across the school
   b. Commitment to practice stewardship of God’s Creation through the development of a Green Philosophy and Sustainable Management Plan (eg inviting parishioners and families to be involved)
   c. Establish a student liturgy committee
e. Incorporate planning of liturgies into RE programs

2. **Achieve academic excellence in RE curriculum through relevant contemporary pedagogy**
   a. Quality professional development for staff to improve student outcomes in Religious Education
   b. Leader of Catechesis and Leader of Pedagogy working with teachers to implement a wide range of strategies
c. Maintain Catholic world view within the CLF when planning and programming

3. **Promote opportunities for the school to be an active member of the Parish**
   a. Develop strategies to encourage children and families to participate in the sacramental life of the church
   b. Promote CSO’s Parent Assembly and give it a higher profile in the school
   c. Foster opportunities for students to attend mass during school time.
d. Seek opportunities for students and staff to be involved in parish ministries including altar serving
e. Priests to be active in the school eg classroom visits, on the playground
f. Facilitate an information session in Term 4 delivered by the Parish Youth Co-ordinator to Year Six students and their parents

h. Implement “Conversations with Catholics” program for parents

i. Educating parents about correct church etiquette in a positive way

j. Identify components of the music programmes that can be fully utilised in the liturgical life of the school.

4. Increase awareness of social justice issues
   a. Staff and children more involved in community based activities (eg Mini Vinnies, Nursing home visits)
   b. Foster greater practical support for our partnership with St Joseph’s College, Hai’pai
   c. Promote diverse opportunities for Cohorts to support Caritas
   d. Awareness and support of local issues and be prepared to respond

5. Increase opportunities for staff and students to be engaged in faith formation
   a. Provide opportunities for staff prayer for special intentions
   b. Introduce D.E.A.P. (Drop everything and pray) across the school
   c. Consider additional staff participating in the Primary Reflection Training offered by the CSO with a view to running Student Retreats.
   d. On the value of staff contribution to Parish ministry all staff are encouraged to make an active personal commitment to the sacramental life of the parish.
Theme Two: Pastoral Care and Well Being

Students have a wide variety of needs that evolve over time. Each child maintains his or her own unique set of emotional, physical, and social needs that directly influence how he or she responds to life and to education. Therefore, to prepare students appropriately, contemporary trends in education must recognise and respond to these evolving individualised needs so that each child develops necessary competencies while also receiving the personal support they need.

The Pastoral Care of all students is a vital element of the respect and regard that everyone is called to take on. We are all members of an educational organisation that has committed itself to developing a genuine Catholic school community.

All staff, students and families have the personal and community responsibility to contribute in this mission by respectful and positive interactions with each other at all times. Achieving this demands that we all maintain this vision of responsibility and positivity as the basis of our attitudes, words and actions. In so doing we achieve personal growth and enhance the development of very child.

Engaged learning and the development of the whole person can only occur in an environment of respect, peace and mutual understanding. The personal needs of security, safety, physical and emotional health are prerequisites to a student's successful education.

1. **Build strong relationships with students, families, and the community to increase trust and shared responsibility.**
   a. Use appropriate methods of communication and engagement to reach all members of the school and wider community to gain meaningful input, participation, partnerships, and shared responsibilities for improving student learning.
   b. Use the school to promote stronger relationships between families and parish
   c. Implement an Action Research investigation into the
      i. Effectiveness of the current P and F structure, and
      ii. Possibility of implementing a Parent Forum structure or model

2. **To review and develop a series of Pastoral Care programs.**
   a. Maintain Catholic world view in pastoral care programs
   b. Establish a students' anti-bullying committee
   c. Review current behavioural management system including “yellow cards”
   d. Investigate programs to combat bullying, in particular cyber bullying
   e. Establish goals to prepare children to be healthy and fit

3. **To build social capital amongst staff through the development and implementation of a Well Being Framework.**
   a. Promote the formation of a school Well Being Team
b. Review and improve current Well Being Policy to encompass all members of the school community

c. Continue to look for opportunities for staff to worship together through D.E.A.P, time, prayer and Mass

d. Design a space (eg Knet, staffroom,) with a well-being focus on staff news (eg births, illness, travel).
Theme Three: Technology/E-Learning/Globalisation

Globalisation is a process in which the people and countries of the world are being brought closer and closer together, economically and culturally, through trade, information technology, travel, cultural exchanges, the mass media and mass entertainment. The impacts of these have been so rapid due to the increase in access and opportunity of the internet and technology advances.

This rapidly evolving nature of technology and the ease of access to all students to internet driven programs have seen a major shift in the way schools engage students in learning. The development of our e-learning framework provides support for our school. e-Learning is learning and teaching that is facilitated by or supported through the appropriate use of information and communication technologies. Consequently, we are now living in a networked world.

Our vision is one where technology is a natural and essential part of everyday school life for both teacher and student. St Augustine’s acknowledges the value of eLearning in providing better opportunities for teaching, learning and its management in ways not otherwise available. Furthermore, these opportunities will offer substantial improvement in access, experience, achievement, scope and quality of the learning experience. Technology is not an end in itself but a tool that can make enormous advances in the quality of teaching and learning for all.

Key Goals

1. To improve effectiveness of curriculum delivery (and the administration of the school) through the inclusive use of learning technologies and eLearning.
   a. Formulate a strategic plan for resourcing devices and developing strategies for their effective use in the learning program
   b. Encourage all students to develop their eLearning and digital literacy skills and in turn to use these skills to augment the learning process.
   c. To develop and use an e-Learning school based scope and sequence
   d. To investigate equitable access to technology especially in outside school situations

2. To encourage all staff to develop their eLearning and digital literacy skills.
   a. To participate in just in time ICT professional development in order to confidently integrate pedagogically appropriate eLearning objectives and tasks.
   b. To explicitly integrate pedagogically appropriate eLearning goals and tasks in our Learning Modules.
   c. To draw on appropriate digital resources to engage students in contemporary pedagogy in all KLA’s including RE
   d. Further develop the ICT skills of the staff through in-school collaboration and outside providers.
3. **Build on the current opportunities that technology provides to communicate with the wider school community.**
   a. Develop an efficient protocol for storing and accessing digital resources
   b. Trial, and if appropriate, implement the “School Stream App” as a means to expand communication opportunities.

4. **Regular and varied opportunities for parents to be informed of cyber safety and digital citizenship.**
   a. Provide opportunities for parents to bring own devices and have staff and other “experts” give advice
   b. Reinforce our acceptable use agreement and cyber safety programs through K-6
Theme Four: Facilities

Students are individuals with unique learning requirements. To facilitate more effective, accelerated rates of learning, contemporary education must respond to students’ individual learning needs.

Students’ needs vary greatly and they have varying skill and interest levels. Some students work best as independent learners, while others prefer one-on-one or group arrangements. Providing flexible learning spaces to facilitate the school’s contemporary learning model will empower each student by optimising learning potential through personalised, differentiated instruction. These will be enhanced through:

1. **Flexible Learning Environments**: To accommodate the wide array of learning styles at St Augustine’s students and staff need to adapt to different spatial and furniture arrangements, both inside and outside the educational arena. Contemporary education is evolving beyond the traditional classroom configuration and the provision of a relevant learning space is required. These learning spaces need to cater for a variety of concurrent instructional activities that include small, whole group sessions, individual learning and peer presentations.

2. **Multidisciplinary Teaching**: Teaching across disciplines supports the concept of differentiated learning while being directly supported by multiple modalities. It connects students to, and provides students with, ways to approach new learning within the context of familiar learning strategies. It can enhance each student’s access to and interest in learning.

Key Goals

1. **Continue to develop and review cohort learning inside and outside the classroom**.
   a. Continue to develop both our cohort learning spaces and the LARC as places of innovation and learning.
   b. Explore ways to establish more flexible teaching and learning spaces within the school to enhance collaborative learning strategies

2. **Develop a master plan for rejuvenating the school oval and playground facilities**.
   a. Engage parents and the wider school community in discussion on improving the school oval and playground facilities.
   b. Establish a school facilities committee to facilitate planning on improving school grounds

3. **Develop a series of dedicated prayer spaces**
   a. Review the design of the Sustainable Garden to include prayer space
   b. Create a prayer garden outside the new student amenities focused on Mary Mackillop
   c. Exchange dialogue between staff about other spaces to be developed
   d. Refer to the names of school spaces such as the Lisa Burley Garden
Theme Five: Contemporary Learning Framework

Research shows that encouraging students to adopt a deep approach to learning, results in improved student outcomes. Students who engage in a contemporary approach to learning are more likely to be successful global citizens. Paramount to learning is the manner in which schools design their curricula and the learning experiences to engage students’ curiosity and interest. Effective teaching focuses on, and has a clear expectation that, students will achieve learning outcomes at a higher level.

The Diocesan Contemporary Learning Framework is clear on the expectation of improving the practice of all staff to engage in contemporary teaching and learning.

Teachers co-construct learning experiences through professional collaboration using data to inform practice.

Learning environments must provide access to hands-on instruction, purposeful problem solving and opportunities for students to apply their knowledge while still providing a rigorous focus on core curricular competencies.

1. Provide high-quality, well-rounded educational experiences to all students that are rigorous, culturally relevant and engaging.
   a. Adopt policies that articulate the school’s framework for teaching and learning, reflecting high expectations and ensuring alignments with all educational plans and initiatives.
   b. Continue to embed the Diocesan Contemporary Learning Framework to ensure rigor at each year level, clear expectations for teaching and learning and provide instructional support to meet the needs of all students.
   c. Define the purpose, parameters and effective use of assessments; and improve the content, quality and use of assessments including more authentic student evidence.
   d. Maintain strong core academic programs with focus on literacy and numeracy
   e. Examine Special Needs programs and delivery to ensure adequate support to teachers and students, and develop clear parameters for allocation of staff and resources.
   f. Continue to provide assistance with IEP writing and subsequent planning
   g. To introduce a tracking system for children with any additional educational needs
   h. Ensure enrichment programs are embedded in curriculum
   i. For children to be given the opportunity to negotiate aspects of their learning

2. Ensure educational excellence and equity for every student in learning
   a. Challenge and support each student by providing equitable access to a rigorous and relevant curriculum guided by the Diocesan
Contemporary Learning Framework and aligned to NSW BOS National Curriculum
b. Elevate professional practice by engaging in effective professional development for teachers, staff and leaders aligned to the AITSL standards.

3. To fully implement the Australian Curriculum into the School.
   a. To review all educational programs within the School to ensure the delivery of challenging, relevant and contemporary education in a seamless manner for students from K-6
   b. To continue to foster individual student learner profiles including information obtained through school based testing, NAPLAN reports and other internal and external benchmark testing and assessments.
   c. To provide consistency in programming across K-6 using the Diocesan Program Builder tool.

4. Ensure that every cohort has high-quality, effective teachers supported by high-quality support staff.
   a. Enhance quality and access to professional learning in using data and feedback to inform instruction and to meet the needs of all students.
   b. Continue to encourage and support staff to undertake postgraduate studies.
   c. Strengthen the practice of the Learning Walks and the Diocesan Peer to Peer Program.
   d. Engage staff with the AITSL standards as a foundation to creating staff learning goals
   e. Provide professional development on data analysis
   f. Develop teachers as researchers, developing their capabilities to lead school improvement
   g. Regular negotiations of norms for PLT’s and establish processes for mediation when necessary
   h. Engage staff in adult faith formation and build capacity as teachers of Religious Education
   i. Engage in professional school based learning processes focusing on effective pedagogy, goal setting and teacher reflective practice
   j. Professional development provided for support staff
   k. Develop consistent protocols and expectations of role of Teachers Assistants

5. Strengthen partnerships that connect, challenge and collaborate.
   a. In being creative in approaches to our school events, constantly use evaluations and best practice models to innovate. (eg Learning Journeys, carnivals, liturgies, visitors,
   b. Develop a process to share and celebrate educational experiences. (ie Change of mind set and day–to–day practices of teachers to record events to the community)