Embedding Excellence

12th February 2014
Vision, innovation and leadership are key features of how independent schools strive for excellence. These features are embedded in the process of school improvement and enhance student learning and wellbeing. Achieving excellence requires a focus on research, collaboration, creativity, commitment and a robust approach.

Embedding Excellence is an evidence-based approach to school improvement developed by the Association of Independent Schools of NSW to support independent schools through a collaborative process of self-evaluation that involves looking inward, looking outward and looking forward.

This approach traverses five phases: Engage, Explore, Plan, Enact and Refine. Three entry points are identified that enable schools to engage in the process at the most appropriate phase.

Embedding Excellence supports schools to develop and enact a comprehensive school plan which leads to meaningful action, innovation that transforms what we do and embedded excellence.

For more information about this program please contact:

Darryl Buchanan
Director of Professional Learning AIS

Please note: Resources used in the Embedding Excellence program are only available to participating schools. Staff in participating schools will need to login to the AIS website to access these resources. Interested schools are encouraged to watch the introductory videos or contact Darryl Buchanan, Director of Professional Learning AIS for more information.

This is a screen grab from the AIS Embedding Excellence page which can be found at: www.aisnsw.edu.au/Services/EmbeddingExcellence/Pages/default.aspx
ENGAGE
EXPLORE
PLAN
ENACT
REFINE

Improved School and Student Outcomes
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Expected Outcomes of the EE process

Framework of Strategic Intent

- A Statement of Intent
- Strategic Pillars
- Goals aligned to each Strategic Pillar
- Action Plans for each goal (with outcomes & success criteria)
Framework of Strategic Intent

Statement of Intent

Strategic Pillar

Goal 1
Action Plan

Goal 2
Action Plan

Strategic Pillar

Goal 1
Action Plan

Goal 2
Action Plan

Strategic Pillar

Goal 1
Action Plan

Goal 2
Action Plan

Reviewing & Embedding
Casuarina Steiner School

- What are our strengths?
- What are our weaknesses?
- What do we want to improve?
- What do we want to change?
- What is really important to keep?
Our Casuarina EE Team

- Sally Townley
- Elsbeth Haenggi
- Sharaine Johnson
- Don Chivers
- Jesse Taylor

- Toni Wright-Turner
- Taja Steinbeck
- Pairoj Prommar
- Linda Burke
- Christoph Steinbeck
We are all working together with these primary roles

- Looking Inward: Quantitative Data, Observations & Surveys - Sally, Toni & Taja
- Looking Outward: Networking – Toni, Jesse & Elsbeth
- Looking Outward: Benchmarking - Sharaine & Don
- Looking Outward: Research – Linda, Christoph & Pairoj
- Documenting the Journey: Class Movies – Christoph & Linda
The purpose of our EE team is to:

- Maintain a focus on the achievement of agreed goals
- Organise the gathering and collation of data from students, staff and parents.
- Analyse evidence of the school’s strengths and identify areas for development.
- Communicate the progress of the *Embedding Excellence* process to the school community.
- Develop an evidence based action plan for future school development.
- Regularly monitor the implementation of the action plan.
- Embed the achievements across the school.
Looking Inward

Evaluation of Quality

Direct Observation

Quantitative Data

People’s Views
Surveys

- Students
- Parents
- Teachers and support staff

- Former students - graduates
- Former parents – of graduates and also of those whose child left to attend other local schools
- Former teachers

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Summary of key survey words to describe Casuarina:

Casuarina
School
Beautiful
Steiner
Caring
Community
Nurturing
Educating-the-whole-child
Happy
Great-team
Heart
Idealistic
Talent
Lively
Children
Consistent
Whole
Inclusive
Steiner
Consistency
Coloursful
Hands
Innovative
Excellence
Holistic
Embracing-diversity
Consistency
Inappropriate-learning
Sick
World
Alternative
Creative
Last
Listening
Using-natural-resources
Creative
Disorganised
Learning-to
Disenfranchised
The whole-child
Summary of parents’ key survey words to describe Casuarina:
Looking Outward

- Research
- Networks - local and beyond
- Benchmarking – My School, NAPLAN, Student Wellbeing
LOOKING FORWARD

What is the world we are educating children for going to be like?

How does our education prepare them for this?

Are we preparing all our children in the best way for THEIR future?
Impacto — a tool for preparing the way
Purpose – why are we doing this?

- Casuarina is deeply committed to doing the best we can for our students and families.
- We have been offered a guided opportunity and resources to reflect, explore and improve our School.
- We are one of 5 schools selected for the pilot program, and as the only Steiner School involved, our participation is helping to develop the Embedding Excellence program for all schools across NSW as well as ensuring that Steiner Schools are represented in the mix.
Urgency – why now?

- There has been a period of changing leadership structures and leaders
- In times of change, when things are unsettled, we can find new ways to move ahead and to create breakthroughs not possible when everything is stable and routine
- Even when something is working well it is vital to be proactive towards the future – to not do so is to stagnate!
- Everybody is keen to lift their focus towards the future
Destination – where are we headed?

- What is our dream?
- Where do we want to be?
- What do we need to do to get there?
- How will we know we have arrived?
Success path

UPSIDE DOWN
Start with students
Make everything serve their needs
Listen to the School Community
Incorporate External Requirements

INSIDE OUT
Start with students
Identify our core purpose and values
Connect with the external content
Draw on Research
Commitment

- We are doing this for the most important people in your lives – your children, our students.
- We all need to be committed to making this work
- Let’s do this together!
“Vision without action is but a dream. Action without vision is a waste of energy. But a vision with action can move mountains.”

Lao-Tze