



## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NETWORK (FACE N)

One of the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, which was signed by all Australian governments in December 2008, provides a clear expectation that schools will engage with their families and communities:

*All Australian schools engage children and young people, parents, carers, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community to support students' progress through schooling, and to provide them with rich learning, personal development and citizenship opportunities.*



Every school community has a range of ways of engaging with families and the wider school community. It is Good Shepherd's goal to develop and support a sustainable and effective partnership between all members of the school community, including teachers, families and students. Currently we are developing a Framework that will reflect the purpose of the FACE Network. A group of parents who have been participating in the workshops over the period of 2013 provided the following information:

- ❖ FACE gives families a voice
- ❖ FACE provides a welcoming spirit of involvement minus the obligation
- ❖ FACE is a shared responsibility and equity
- ❖ FACE provides opportunities to spread the word about the *Way of Being Community at Good Shepherd*
- ❖ FACE provides an open communication with the community
- ❖ FACE has a focus on Professional Development for parents
- ❖ FACE suggests that when parents are involved children are proud and they are learning. **Good Shepherd successful strategies include**
- ❖ mission statement explicitly refers to working in partnership with families
- ❖ school renewal goals refers to working in partnership with families
- ❖ canvassing families for suggestions on how the school can support them in helping their children learn



- ❖ holding professional development workshops related topics to assist families support their children's learning
- ❖ surveying families at the previous year and during the year for information about their children to help teachers tailor their programs to reflect family needs and priorities
- ❖ community contacts facilitating workshops to develop parents' skills



FACE is in the early days of creating its directions and Good Shepherd sincerely thanks our foundation families for supporting this new initiative which replaces the model of the Parents and Friends and School Boards.

The following is a Parent's summary of a FACE meeting.



At these meetings we have discussed what *Family and Community Engagement Network* (FACE) means to Good Shepherd. We are moving away from the traditional P&F committee and moving towards a less hierarchical structured group that encourages families to be engaged with the school and the children. The idea is to encourage new and old faces to attend each meeting and hope everyone feels comfortable to be involved.

The FACE group considered research that shows that a parent's involvement can truly improve a child's education. *'Research and common sense both indicate that increased parental involvement in school has a positive impact on student achievement'*.

Judith Seery – Principal has led the FACE Network through the processes which included the initial FACE meeting in March 2013 which focused on how, as a group, the network can start putting some actions into place regarding involving the community. Judith invited the Executive Director of the Queensland Parents and Friends Federation to be part of the conversation in regards to moving forward as a network. (See photo below: Carmel Nash second from the left).

Parents worked in groups and brain stormed ideas on how the FACE network can assist the community. Some of the suggestions were:

- Looking into a closed Facebook Group for the Good Shepherd parents and teachers to come together and share information on upcoming events, meeting notes and important dates. This is being considered and will be advised
- Looking at starting Mother/Father's day stalls and have parent volunteer's
- For open days, looking into more signage, parent involvement and welcome BBQ's
- Looking at inviting new families, relief teachers to be part of September's Blessing and Opening celebrations in 2013.
- Looking into social activities for parents to get to know each other

- Outreach to engage current families- phone tree contact?
- Creating a survey to be handed out to all families to gain feedback on how families would like to become involved and what activities they are interested in at Good Shepherd.
- Looking into creating welcome packs created by existing families for new families to help them to comfortably adjust to the school community.



Terese Shephard APRE, STIE, CST, Carmel Nash Executive Director, The Federation of Parents & Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Queensland, Laurie Nicholls Parent, Mr John Beaton, Executive Officer, The Federation of Parents & Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Queensland, Megan Alpe – Parents and parents