



Parent Forum Summary Report 22nd March 2019

The Special Education Resource Unit and Fulham Gardens Primary Performing Arts Centre again was the venue for our first Parent Forum for 2019. About ninety participants including parents, carer's agencies and educators listened to presenters and attended workshops to listen and share information and ideas about the services and support available for children and young people with a disability.

Ann-Marie Hayes, Executive Director, Early Years and Child Development opened the forum, acknowledged country and welcomed the parents. She thanked the parents for participating in the day and having a voice for us to hear, commenting that inclusion for all has been our focus and the ongoing discussions in partnership was assisting us with our problem solving. Ann-Marie highlighted some of the new directions of the department including the Strategic Plan and the vision to build a stronger future for our children by making South Australia's education system world-class so there was "Growth for every child in every class in every school"; the draft Parent Engagement Framework; and the State Disability Inclusion Plan.

World Class education was the focus for the Director of Disability, Policy and Programs Ian May's introduction for the day. Our aspirational goal is to be first class and the forums are contributing by enabling ongoing discussions and doing the hard work of building networks. The forums have grown with new parents attending each event supporting our work for change. Connecting with the country families is still an area that requires some intensive work so they are able to share and contribute in the future.

Ian introduced Jenice Zerna the President of the South Australian Association of School Parent Communities a volunteer organisation that connects with parents in schools. Jenice visits sites throughout the state most recently in Mt Gambier offered her support to the parents. The association produces a Parent Say magazine that is sent to all preschools and schools. Jenice can be contacted at email: info@saaspc.org.au

Ian challenged the parents and asked them to "Tell us what world class means to you". They responded with energetic table talk and the diversity of their responses, the resultant recorded information is indicative of their depth of thought and the strong beliefs they have about an education system they want for their children. Some of the table summaries and key topics are recorded below and will be available on the SERU website web.seru.sa.edu.au

- Active participation of students so that ALL are involved with the whole class in the whole process and not relegated to the side with their special support.
- Bridging the gap – broadening so everyone is catered for, all fit in there is no "grey fit". Consistency across every campus doesn't matter what school you go to whether at Mt Gambier, Roxby Downs or the richest school
- Transparency – free full of ideas with support for the teachers
- My experience with a new preschool – they were proactive, positive, confident, very responsive to the needs, knowledge and expertise, culture of being willing to take on board – we can do this, we can make it work for this child
- Mainstream – great choice – special class limited – defined
- Valuing parent input – entire team approach, relationship, communication absolutely essential
- High expectations and ensuring the way children are taught and assessed are appropriate to their great diversity as well. Not done expecting the same standard and the same achievements in the same way. Open innovation, world research and study tours to see what the world is doing

TELL US
WHAT
WORLD
CLASS
MEANS
TO YOU



The keynote address was presented by Cathy Clark, Project Implementation Manager- Preschool and School on the newly released Inclusive Education Support Program (IESP). The funding model had been a hot topic at previous parent forums where the information parents provided was listened to and put into action and so contributed to the development of the new model. The funding model at this stage is for children and young people in mainstream preschool and school settings. Work around the funding model for special options (including special classes, schools and units) is in the early stages. The details of the (IESP) presentation and the summary of the table talk will be available on the SERU website.

The model is a “Reform agenda” not just a “process” change that reframes the way funding has previously been allocated from several sources and requiring a myriad of applications to one funding model that is transparent and covers the full needs of the child. The vision of the IESP is that ALL children/students in public preschools and schools receive the support they need to:

- Belong to their preschool community
- Engage purposefully in learning
- Experience academic success

Reform Agenda – Not Just a ‘process’ change

IESP reinforces the following



- *The IESP starts with the child, assesses their functional needs, *Looks at what adults are doing differently to, for and with that child in order to successfully engage them
- * Documents adjustments and implements immediately.
- *Completes and submits application for support
- *Central Panel reviews applications. Outcome & funding sent to site
- *We see growth in the learner as a result of the plan, targeted resources an intentional use of funding
- *Review the plan, is it meeting the needs, is less or more support required. Review the funding amount is it sufficient to meet the child’s needs

The model is one that focusses on the child /student’s functional needs in their learning context and the personalised accommodations and adjustments the adults who support the child/student put in place. The significant points that Cathy presented included:

- that from the end of 2018 all students who were accessing the Disability Support Program (DSP) were translated into the new IESP and allocated a category 1-9 funding level and a review date
- a use of common language
- the IESP process aligns with the documentation of the personalised learning plans eg One Plan or equivalent into which the parents have the opportunity to develop with the preschool/school

- a review date set by the IESP Panel and will ensure all plans and funding allocations are reviewed when a review of services and funding is required
- a transparent, accountable process.

There will be no reduction in money or support while the new process is being put in place.

Cathy and her team asked the parents to provide feedback at their table about the positive elements of the IESP among the responses they acknowledged the cultural and philosophical change, the streamlined approach and that children will get the support they need in class to be successful. They also recorded a range of questions for the team to follow up including on the following topics, verification, application, reviews, funding, adjustments, school and parent involvement. These can be accessed on web.seru.sa.edu.au

The afternoon was a time for parents to choose from eight different workshops two of their choice to attend and covered the following topics:

Bullying a whole school approach – Karen Robinson, Student Wellbeing Leader, Port Elliot Primary School. Parents heard the strategies one school uses to provide a whole school team approach to address bullying and look after the wellbeing of all the children in their care.

First time attendees; working through the maze – Kerry Parker, Assistant Director, Disability and Learning. Parents attending their first Parent Forum had the opportunity to hear about the background of the forums and ask questions talk about topics they would like to know about.

Interoception – Kelly Vincent, Senior Advisor Neurodiversity, Kelly filled in at the last minute to present more about interoception a lesser known sense that helps you understand and feel what is going on inside your body. She gave strategies so the parent could support interoception with their child.

A visit to the Special Education Resource Unit - Anne Arnold, Senior Advisor Teaching and Learning Provided the opportunity for the parents to browse through the resource unit, become a member and find out what SERU offers and then borrow resources that they can share with their child.

Anxiety and mental health – Kelly Vincent, Senior Advisor Neurodiversity, again Kelly came to the fore and presented this workshop in place of another presenter. The parents listened to a brief introduction to and discussion about anxiety and mental health difficulties. They were able to share their experiences and what works for them. They also looked at new strategies that could be helpful.

Post School Options – hot topics – Sharon Jackson, Manager Transition Centres. Sharon facilitated the discussion welcoming diverse views and open sharing. A detailed report will be posted on the website. The general views on current transition planning in schools were that families need to advocate for their own child. The parents agreed that schools needed a clear resource and guidance in this area. To help themselves they needed to go prepared to meetings, seek own solutions for transport issues- more complex in country locations, be proactive in working with the school and other services and maintain high expectations for their child due to limited choice compared to mainstream students. Ensure they have a copy of One Plan as it is relevant for post school planning.

Deaf Culture – Donovan Cresdee, Sign Language Australia. Donovan presented a power point about Deaf culture

Social Skills strategies – Libby Brown, Manager, Special Education Resource Unit Libby is an educational psychologist and the manager of SERU. Her session looked at the hierarchy of social skills and look at why a child might behave the way they do, then she explored how as a parent they could support their child to develop the skills they need.

A Survey monkey was distributed to all participants to collect feedback particularly on the key notes and the workshops. This data is being analysed and presented to the new Parent Forum Reference Group in Term 2.

At the end of the day parents were asked if they were interested in being a member of the Parent Forum Reference Group in 2019, a nomination form was provided for them to complete.

The day closed with Ian May summarising the key points that parent's had raised in their table talk about what they believed was World Class.

The next forum is in week 8 of term 2 on Friday 21st June 2019 at SERU and Fulham Gardens, the conference is in term 3 week 10 on Wednesday 25th September 2019 at the Adelaide Hilton

If you want to see more about the Parent Forums or upcoming events regularly check the SERU website web.seru.sa.edu.au and the Parent Forum section or follow them on Facebook