Network Principal . . .

As the semester draws to a close many staff will be busy completing their reports for parents/caregivers on student progress. At this time it is also very important for staff to reflect on their work and practice. Just as reports are an assessment of learning they are also an assessment of teaching. Special education to me is all about finding the way. All students can learn we just need to find the right way to teach them.

Reflection is an essential process for staff working in schools. Teaching can be a lonely profession and it is very important that we get feedback on how we are going individually, in teams and in schools.

To quote Dufour 2005 “If schools are to be significantly more effective, they must break from the industrial model upon which they were created and embrace a new model that enables them to function as learning organizations.”

The ESSN was set up to foster this model where collaboration and reciprocity are keys themes. We are a professional learning community with many interest groups. This is a bottom up model not a top down mandate. We have developed a number of ways where by our community can grow.

Teaching Staff via Hayley Ding, our teacher rep on the Strategic group, have their own e-mail distribution list and have been invited to participate and share their successes and or concerns.

The Collaborations Group has published our “Yellow Pages” or registrar of expertise. This is designed to be updated regularly. The idea is that staff seeking ideas can find it out at other schools in the network. Eventually we would like to link actual names of staff that are willing to assist their peers.

There is also a link on the website via the members section for an application for funds to further the work of the network. It is open to all to apply. We see them as a seeding type arrangement to get good ideas developing.

Finally I have been very pleased to be part of the ESSN –iPad project. The key teachers in this project are a true professional learning community who has worked together very collaboratively. There is a nice article from Pam Cave in the newsletter about the iPad celebration showcase hosted by Cannington Community ESC recently. Stay tuned for a School Matters article on the project.

I hope everyone has a well-deserved holiday break – enjoy yourself.

Andrew Wilson
Collaborations Group Update . . .

The Collaborations Group’s most recent task has been the production of the ‘ESSN Yellow Pages’ a register of the expertise in our member schools.

All schools were asked to inventory the programs and specialist areas in their school in terms of being able to in-service and/or inform other school staff. This project began some time ago and the Collaboration Group would like to thank Jessica Notarangelo from Kalamunda Education Support Centre who took on the task of initially surveying schools and presenting the information to the Principal group. From this information an Excel document has now been produced and is available on the website.

We hope that schools who are seeking information in a particular program/area can use the ‘Yellow Pages’ to get the information they need and perhaps even some professional learning in that area.

Sharing our knowledge and expertise is one of the main benefits of being part of the Network and is line with the Network’s strategic objective to create a sustainable culture of reciprocity and shared responsibility.

The ‘Yellow Pages’ will be regularly updated by the Collaboration Group so if you wish to add to the register or make suggestions regarding other collaborative programs we can establish please contact Pauline, at Pauline.Winrow@education.wa.edu.au.

Current members are Pauline Winrow (Chair), Merrilee Wright, Steve Hordacre, Steve Cannell, Bob Meenan and Natalie Hatton.

Pauline Winrow

Committee Update: Promotions

The Promotions Group would like to thank Mrs Kathy Britton for her hard work as Chairperson of the team. The Group continue to maintain and update information on the ESSN website. Our current goal is to encourage as many staff as possible to subscribe to the website. Currently we have 150 subscribers.

We have taken advantage of the new ESSN Teachers and Principal global distribution lists and emailed staff with specific instructions on how to subscribe. This way, staff can be informed with ‘what’s going on’ in our network. We would like thank all staff that have subscribed and look forward to sharing information through the website.
**Distinctive Schools**

Cloverdale Education Support Centre received an MSSD Expertise grant in Assistive Technology. Our school aims to share knowledge in curriculum understanding, modifications and delivery with staff in a mainstream setting of partner schools in the metropolitan and country areas. We are producing a Curriculum Support Product which addresses strategies on how to teach students with disability in Mathematics F – 2 through the use of iPads as a teaching tool.

In a needs analysis conducted with the 14 partner schools, it was indicated that Teachers have overwhelmingly indicated a need for Professional Learning related to iPad use in their classes. 85% have requested PL informing them of targeted apps for specific purposes, which is the purpose of our product. Considerable amount of time was spent this term on constructing a final product that allows students with disability to access the curriculum in Mathematics. This includes indicators of achievements of which teachers can use to gauge the level their student is accessing the Australian Curriculum. 71% have requested personalised input for specific students needs. This consultation method was planned for term three.

71% also requested iPad training for the EA’s working with students with disability in their classrooms. Professional learning has been offered to partner schools each term, following these sessions they are welcome to remain at the school for further consultation. For schools that cannot travel for face to face PL, we have constructed modules to be completed online which includes clips of student performance and instructions of customising applications. This allows staff to learn and develop their skills at their own pace.

**Kensington Secondary School MSSD Development Grant . . .**

**Development of Performance Profiles**

Our students and staff need more specific, hierarchically arranged profiles to determine exactly what each student can do, what should be taught next and which skills need further practise and generalisation. The MSSD Performance Profiles will:

- Be developed in consultation with class and specialist teachers (e.g. ‘What do you want to know about your students in more detail?’)
- Include the performance descriptors from the National Curriculum in order to comply with current expectations/requirements
- Include task analysis of skills essential to greater independence in adulthood (e.g. money handling, communication, etc)

The MSSD PP will include data being collected and entered on appropriate software to test the usefulness of the profiles and data in providing feedback to parents/carers, developing greater accuracy in determining the next educational step for each student.

*Judy Gardiner, Principal, Kensington Secondary School*
Coolbellup Learning Centre’s MSSD Grant

iPads for Parents

The Centre has received $8000.00 under the More Support for Students with Disabilities Grant. We will be using this money to further enhance our use of iPads within the school and in particular with our parents/carers.

Having been part of the ESSN iPad project and seeing the huge benefits this brought to our school we are keen to embed the use of iPads across learning areas. Using this grant we will be extending the existing iPad program with the assistance of Dawn Hallett and our therapists. Our aims are to:

1. Use interagency personnel (Speech therapists & other relevant stakeholders) to work with staff and students to further develop the use of iPad technologies in the area of communication with specific focus on non-verbal student needs – this will work in conjunction with student needs identified with the families in both IEP planning and the Therapists Family Needs Screening.

2. Use an iPad communication consultant and staff to develop and run parent/carer workshop sessions on iPad use with their child. This will include skilling parents/carers in the packages and programs used within the school/s with their child as well as up-skilling them in the use of technology – this will help to foster stronger relationships between home and school communities. Parents/Carers will also have access to the recently developed iPad Parent NING established by the ESSN iPad Project.

3. Share this package of information with other schools within the ESS Network and link it as a follow on to the current iPad Project of which this school is a partner.

iPad Workshops will be open to partner school parents/carers of students with disability on our site and from ESSN schools currently part of the iPad Project.

ESSN schools who have been a part of the iPad project and who wish to be included in the iPad for Parents programme can contact me for more information. Pauline.Winrow@education.wa.edu.au

Curriculum Development at Kensington Secondary School

Kensington Secondary School has formed an Australian Curriculum Team with three teachers, Gabriella Hissey, Simon Campbell and Natascha Gacia as well as the Principal Judy Gardner.

As a result of initial discussions, the team has decided to focus on identifying links between the Australian Curriculum Speaking strand and Communication programs already running successfully in the school. Key staff will act as mentors to work with remaining staff in the school and create links between the Australian Curriculum and ASDAN.

The Kensington Team is interested in visiting other ESSN schools to view programs in action. Judy Gardner canvassed “like” schools with a focus on English. Contact has been made with Rosalind Macpherson from the Career Enterprise Centre in Mandurah who has expressed interest for a Special Needs Australian Curriculum Professional Learning workshop to be run in the Metro Area.

Kensington will keep ESSN staff posted!

Mrs Natascha Gacia, English Teacher, Kensington Secondary School
The Cannington Community ESC MAP Project has three parts.

1. Staff Training
Staff will participate in workshops emphasizing the skills and techniques needed in “Personal Centered” transition planning. Staff will consult with a Speech Pathologist to develop visual aids to help students communicate their ideas during the Person Centered Planning process.

2. Student Involvement
Every senior student will take part in Making Action Plan process. This involves the student working with their support people to identify their short and long term goals. These goals will provide the basis for their education and transition plan.

3. Community Network Links
School staff will develop a transition planning scope and sequence. Community and parent links will be developed via school based workshops, information sessions and open days.
The school will liaise with all stakeholders and annually survey families to identify the community partners they are accessing.

More Support for Students with Disabilities Development Grant 2013
Making Dreams Happen Using the MAP Process

Priority Areas for the MSSD Grant
♦ Supporting transition needs of students.
♦ Case Management of students with complex needs including high health care needs.

What is mapping?
Mapping is a one person—centered planning tool that enables groups of people to gather, interpret and organise assessments and plan information using colour coded graphics and words.

All Person-Centered planning approaches begin with the belief that all individuals, regardless of the type or severity of their disabilities, not only benefit from services provided by their community, but also offer their communities many gifts and capacities. It follows then that all people should live in, and be contributing members of, their communities.
The application of our MAP process allows teams to look ahead to what students want and need before, during and after the transition from high school to adult life.
MSSD Project 2013
Magic Carpet Ride

MORE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
DEVELOPMENT GRANT 2013

Project Title: Magic Carpet Ride

Focus area of school development
Assistive or augmentative technology or software that supports students’ access to the curriculum.

Project Overview
Kenwick School was only the second Australian school to acquire the innovative, inclusive Magic Carpet and Tobii Sensory Eye-Fx assistive technologies (AT) (http://www.sensoryguru.com). This project will upskill staff in their effective use for students with multiple disabilities and promote these within the educational and broader communities. This involves:

♦ training of key staff by ILC (Independent Living Centre) consultants for the effective use of these AT tools;
♦ teacher/EA staff mentoring (Train-the-Trainer model) in the effective use the above technologies, as well as tablet technologies, by key teachers to maximise outcomes for target students;
♦ conducting parent/community workshops in partnership with the ILC and Therapy Focus to promote the application of these ATs;
♦ the development of a bank of suitable objectives and a “How to” manual to embed understandings and promote innovative application of these AT tools; and
♦ the purchase of additional tools and resources to enable this project.

Please direct any enquiries to the School Principal, Mark Watson either by phoning 9459 1888 or via email at Mark.watson@education.wa.edu.au
Canning Vale College—Education Support Leap Program

Promoting independence and individual learning pathways for students with special education needs and disability using personal strengths to overcome challenges.

The LEAP (Learning Enrichment and Active Partnerships) Education Support program was developed to promote learning pathways for students with special education needs and intellectual disability within a local school setting. LEAP learning reflects a ‘skills for life’ focus and an integrated ‘hands on’ approach to promote the skills required to achieve personal independence and success.

Our students work within their LEAP groups led by qualified specialist teachers to develop individual functional literacy, numeracy and social skills. Students also undertake Community Access, Independent Living, Enterprise Learning, Work Readiness and Protective Behaviours Programs to develop skills to participate actively and safely at school, home and within the community.

LEAP students are active members of the college community and attend classes such as Health and Physical Education, Art, Drama, Circus and Home Economics alongside their mainstream peers with the support of dedicated Education Assistants.

Parent involvement is valued and the college has started a community Parent Network Group to support parents of children with disability. Parents from any school are welcome to attend.

Students gain accreditation for skills for life learning through ASDAN, WACE, Endorsed Programs and VET Certificates. Employability Skills development is encouraged through Enterprise activities and participation in Workplace Learning weekly community placements.

More information can be found on the TLS (Teaching and Learning Support) tab at www.cvc.wa.edu.au
Armadale Education Support Centre

Armadale Education Support Centre (AESC) is a public school for students with intellectual disabilities co-located at Armadale Senior High School site. Our two schools work collaboratively together and education support students and staff share equal citizenship of both schools. Students share the same uniform, school rules and are equal members of Armadale Learning Teams. Our school consists of middle school; years 8, 9, 10 and senior school for students in years 11, 12 and 13. The middle school program has a strong academic focus where students work in small groups with teachers and education assistants to improve their literacy, numeracy and social skills. In the middle school our students spend 25% of their class time in the mainstream classes working along side their peers. Senior school prepares students to confidently work toward their goals and become independent. Through this journey, students can gain Nationally recognized certificates and undertake Workplace Learning placements in chosen industry area.

SCHOOL VISION
At Armadale Education Support Centre every student in our community is known and valued for their individuality. Working together we create a safe, supportive and positive learning environment, where relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. Parents are our partners; together we share the responsibility for student learning so that Education for Life is put into operation.

ENROLMENT
Currently at Armadale Education Support Centre there has been an increase in our student numbers with 43 students at present ranging from Year 8 to 13.

COURSES OFFERED IN 2013

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<th>Senior School</th>
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<td>Option classes: Inclusive in ASHS</td>
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STAFFING

Armadale Education Support Centre is a Level 4 school and is part of the Armadale Cluster Network and Education Support South Network. We have 27 Staff, including 19 Support Staff.

CURRICULUM

Throughout 2012 there were a number of staff professional development days, weekly staff and teacher meetings continued to support the development of teaching strategies to address whole school priorities. These meetings were focused on curriculum improvement and assessment. The focus for 2012 and beyond is to create individual pathways for students focusing on vocational programs.

At Armadale ESC students participate in a range of learning programs including Courses of Study units, Endorsed Programs—Bushrangers and Keys for Life, ASDAN. Other programs focus on Literacy & Numeracy with the introduction of Direct Instruction which was implemented in Semester 2 2012 and is intensely practiced. Staff were providing training to develop and implement these programs for individual students in the priority areas. The curriculum being offered by teachers is a combination of academic and hands on life skills. The development of Individual Education Plans, with an emphasis on accurately defining a student’s entry skills helped teachers to become more skilful in assessing student needs and ultimately setting learning outcome targets.

Workshops on assessment and reporting have assisted staff identify the importance of gathering baseline data and how this can be used to plan for improved student performance. In 2012 there was ongoing support for teachers in the use of pedagogical practices consistent with current research in how to best improve outcomes for students with special needs. Added emphasis was being placed on developing small group functional literacy and numeracy programs designed to meet individual student needs. This includes an emphasis on developing the self esteem of all individuals at the Centre by improving student’s resilience to stress and anxiety, self-regulation skills and concepts, behaviour management and goal setting.

‘Cyber World’ has been prioritized as a key learning area for 2012. This publication of a Special Educational Needs specific Cyber Bullying Pack is made available on the website.
PASTORAL CARE
The centre has made strides towards developing a culture within the school based on respect. Parents are encouraged to actively engage in their child’s learning journey and access the support available from the support services available through the school, including school psychologist, speech therapist, Dolly Bhargava, social worker, nurse and the year coordinators and outside agencies. Values taught at school are being reinforced through reward and incentive programs.

SCHOOL DECISION MAKING/CONSULTATIVE PROCESSES
AESC has an active School Council which meets to review programs and make recommendations for future action. The Council is made up of staff, members of the community and parents from both our sites. Information has been gathered about parents’ perceptions of school operations, management and programs. The Council reviewed all school plans and policies as well as providing input in funding submissions. The school also regularly consults with parents and carers as part of the Individual Education Planning process and Workplace Learning programs.

POST SCHOOL OPTIONS MEETINGS
Information sessions were regularly held to facilitate parents with information to make informed decision for life after school. Vocational and Career Pathways was introduced in Semester 2 and the process was implemented for all students. The MAP process involves students and family members along with teaching staff and Local Area Coordinators developing an Action Plan that will assist students achieving their goals and outcomes for the future. The Action Plan becomes a working document which allows the students to regularly reflect upon and modify as required. This process is evolving and will make sure that students play an integral role in their future transition planning.

VET COURSES

CAMPS
Happiness

I learnt recently that an international conference on ‘Happiness and its Causes’ is scheduled to be held in Melbourne this year. In reading about this I am reminded that an essential part of our work with students with special needs is to increase their sense of happiness. Indeed many parents have often said to me, ‘I just want my child to be happy’.

Three major principles of ‘causing happiness’ provides a guide to what we give students at Castlereagh School. These principles are:

- Be an active participant in all opportunities presented
- Connect with people around you by building good relationships
- Keep learning

When I look over last year’s school calendar I see so many events that have contributed to the happiness of our students. Here are just a few of them:

- Harmony Day celebration
- A day at the zoo
- Pirate Day Circus performance by high school students
- The Elvis Show (by one of our grandparents)
- And the best of all our Australiana Concert.

At Castlereagh School we have put the principles of ‘causing happiness’ into practice for both students and staff.

What happens in our classrooms?

Every teacher plans learning activities that are worthwhile, fun, and that increase the independence of our students. These include functional academics, shopping and cooking, gardening, life skills, work skills, swimming, PE, computer assisted learning and special programs like TEACCH and ASDAN. Teachers with their education assistants have been creative, enthusiastic and energetic in providing a variety of learning opportunities.

The Director General of the Education Department, Sharyn O’Neil, has articulated this as policy through the Classroom First strategy. Therefore, at Castlereagh School, all decisions are tested by their positive impact on what happens in the classroom.

Currently the Federal government is ‘rolling out’ the National Curriculum in four subject areas. These are Mathematics, English, Science and History. My understanding is that some adaptation will be made to address the curriculum needs of students with special needs. Staff at Castlereagh School have been made aware of the guiding principles of this national curriculum and will seek to engage with it when material is relevant to our students.

Our curriculum is guided by specific special education documents published by the Education Department of WA, as well as other authors and authorities in the English speaking world. Teachers use their professional judgement to develop their teaching programs. We are all mindful of the evidence that shows what leads to the
success for our students when they leave school. Our students need direct teaching in the skills and knowledge that will allow them to function as independently as possible in their home, in their workplace and in their community.

Priorities include: communication skills; social skills; behavioural skills; functional academics; community based life skills; workplace learning; TEACCH and ASDAN. Computer Assistant Learning and the use of iPads continue to be used creatively to support these priorities. These priorities are reported on each semester. These reports also give visual evidence, viz. lots of photographs, of the student’s participation in a rich variety of learning activities.

**Some comments on our staff and students**

They have been a minimal turnover of staff in recent. All teachers are very experienced and have post graduate qualifications in special education. Last year we merit selected several education assistants to join our experienced team. Staff have received professional development particular in the relevant training of Manutention.

Ten students graduated in 2012. All of these students had participated in the Post School Option program supported by the Disability Service Commission. Some students gained places in supported employment programs and others received funding for alternative to employment programs. Enrolments have been very encouraging leading to an overall increase in student enrolment. As well as students enrolling from local primary schools we have enrolled students from interstate and overseas. The good reputation of Castlereagh School has resulted in many enquiries leading to enrolments.

**A few of the last year’s highlights**

Western Australia Day Early Settlers activities
Chinese New Year celebration
Chicken hatching program
Fit for Life School assemblies
Olympic themed assemblies
Parent bus tour for Post School Options
Spring Ball at the Hyatt
Book Week with story readings
Circus performance by Canning Vale College
Banksia Park Primary School Band
Willetton Senior High School Life Care Program
Graduation Ceremony at East Fremantle Yacht Club
Participation in Burrendah Primary School sports day
Water Ski Days on the Canning
Long Tan Awards
Scream for your Aussie Team
Bush cleared, landscaped and gated rear access installed
Major power, heating and cooling upgrade
Establishment of a chicken run

**Come and visit us sometime for a ‘Cook’s Tour’. Just ring me.**

*Bob Meenan 9332 3000 Principal of Castlereagh School since 2010*
Cannington Community ESC. . .

ESSN iPad Project Celebration Showcase

On Thursday 6 June Cannington Community ESC hosted principals, key teachers, students and parents at the Cannington Leisureplex to celebrate the conclusion of the ESSN iPad Project. Network Principal, Andrew Wilson, welcomed guests and acknowledged the Department of Education, who provided the funding for the ESSN iPad project through an Innovation Grant. Dawn Hallett, the Project Coach, presented a brief overview of the project. Sarah Thomas, the key teacher from Wirrabirra ESC and Pam Cave, project coordinator at Cannington Community ESC talked about project highlights and achievements in their schools. The audience was then invited to look around the showcase area to see students working with their teachers using a variety of iPad apps. Some senior students from Cannington Community ESC took photographs throughout the session and created an iMovie for people to view at the event.

Maria D’Agostino, the PR and Communications Co-ordinator with DoE, attended and is preparing an article for School Matters that should be published soon.

Congratulations to all the participants in Thursday’s event, especially the students, who made their teachers very proud.

The following link http://essnipadproject.ning.com is the wiki used throughout the project to record activities and achievements, as well as to provide an excellent resource for teachers. All members of the ESSN are welcome to join the Ning. Create a login and you will receive an email advising you that you have been accepted as a member. Features you may find useful are the Ideas and Support tab, where key teachers have created an app database they have found useful and the Forum tab where you can ask questions of other members.

A parent Ning was also created. http://essnipadproject-parents.ning.com

Parents can access information on apps and have any questions answered. Currently no parents have joined this Ning. Please pass on this link to any interested parents. The ESSN funds both these Nings, which incur a monthly fee.

What next? The project provided a great beginning for ESSN schools in the use of iPads with students with special needs. The key teachers now need to consult within their schools and across the network to decide the future direction of their role within the school, management of iPads and the management of the Nings. Do we continue to fund the Nings or move to a different format? Are schools happy to host key teacher meetings? Please contact pamela.cave@education.wa.edu.au with your ideas by Friday July 5. Suggestions will be discussed at the first key teacher meeting which will be hosted by Cannington Community ESC on Tuesday 6 August from 3pm – 4pm. Details of this meeting will be posted on the Ning.
Handy Hints

Internal File Transfer
Useful for sending large documents to colleagues in the Department, which wouldn’t otherwise go through the usual email system.


1. enter your email address
2. enter the recipient’s address
3. add a comment
4. attach the document
5. click send file

Note: You can send multiple documents, up to a maximum of 150Mb. The maximum file size for an individual document is 25Mb.