

Introduction

When Bluff Point Primary School became an Independent Public School, Barbara Dalgety led the AIEOs who became major promoters within the community. She continues to make a huge contribution to school attendance, student engagement, and community partnership.

- **Supporting Aboriginal students**

Barbara has successfully contributed to the education outcomes of Aboriginal students by making a significant difference several areas:

Attendance: Barbara has been the Attendance Officer for 29 years in a school with a high transiency rate. She monitors attendance, attends case conferences, conducts home visits, tracks non-attending children and intervenes with positive incentive programs and rewards. When the local breakfast club was run off site she targeted low attenders every morning by helping out with the breakfast. She now manages the program that has been relocated back to the school.

Late last year two members of the same family had attendance rates of 44 and 53 per cent. Owing to Barbara's intervention their respective attendance rates have climbed to 85 and 94 per cent, with absences due mainly to illness. They have learned the school culture and are now thriving through Barbara's ongoing support.

Teaching and Learning: When the school first implemented Synthetic Phonics, Barbara was keen to be part of the initiative. She prepared the teaching and learning program and resources for a fluid, small group which she taught. Whilst the school has moved away from streaming in the implementation phase, Barbara continues to teach small groups mostly in the Junior area. Over the past 5 years Progress and Achievement results from NAPLAN Spelling, Year 3-5, have risen from -22 to +11.

In her role as AIEO Barbara ensures every class room has an Aboriginal presence, not just those who may be struggling due to lack of engagement or motivation.

Barbara has integrated Aboriginal cultural perspectives into the junior primary area by providing rich culturally appropriate teaching and learning resources. A special favourite of the students and teacher alike has been the gathering mats depicting Aboriginal designs and incorporating colours of the earth.

She has implemented lunchtime programs such as was 'Dolls Yarning' for girls. Each girl makes a doll representing a significant woman in her life, and "yarns" about her. This has helped the children to open-up about issues that concern them or want to know in a non-threatening environment. The building of rapport during the sessions has seen students more willing to seek advice and support when needed, and demonstrating greater self-regulation and resilience.

Barbara is currently involved in developing the school Strategic response to the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework seeking input and advice from staff and local community members. Without her valuable input and support the task of implementation would be made much more difficult.

Behaviour Management: Through the consistency of all staff, including the AIEOs, the school has addressed behaviour issues significantly. Barbara is a major player on the Positive Behaviour Support Committee. Through her consistent efforts visitors to the school are always commenting on the respectfulness, care and responsible attitude of the students. Barbara can be seen correcting students and giving friendly reminders to students as she goes about her classroom and general school duties.

Barbara works with kids in a trauma-informed manner, often supporting children struggling with strong emotions. She reaches out the child, making herself available to listen until they feel safe. She looks at each student's needs and background to establish the best approach to take. She uses culturally appropriate approaches and maintains high expectations of behaviour. She sets an

example, helping the children and often other adults learn more appropriate ways to express their feelings.

Motivation and Performance: Realising school uniforms helped children feel connected to the school, Barbara has applied for outside funding to provide families with access to uniforms and school supplies. Families are often offered 'starting packs', collated by Barbara, when first enrolling at the school. She also monitors students who may be in need of morning tea and lunch ensuring all students are in the right frame of mind and physically ready to engage in learning.

Barbara motivates Aboriginal students with her view that they thrive on high expectations and she provides the necessary support for students to reach their potential. She also believes in using positive incentives and rewarding small steps to effect gradual change in each student. One measure of her success is improved attendance, behaviour and participation of the focus students.

- **Linking school to community**

Barbara was an active participant in an off-site breakfast program when the school partnered with the West Australian Centre for Rural Health. Together a research project, 'More Than Talk', Project was undertaken to determine what the community determined was hindering 'closing the gap' in educational outcomes for Aboriginal children. Attendance and the community's perspective were important determinants. Through the Project the idea grew that the school needed to have a centre where parents could come and access health services, early childhood groups, and where children could come together positively after school and during the holidays, this off-site hub would building a social bridge with the school. As a local community member, Barbara was a major contributing having the in-depth knowledge of both the community and the school. Barbara has been heavily involved her own time assisting holiday programs, the breakfast club and after school programs. Through further community partnerships a large network has been developed seeing a multitude of individuals and agencies being involved in important events such as NAIDOC and Reconciliation which are major projects that Barbara coordinates. The links that Barbara has nurtured are seeing greater community involvement in the school.

Outline and give examples of how the nominee supports the school community to preserve culture and develop self-esteem: Over the years, Barbara has obtained funding and also had incorporated in school funding, opportunities to form dance groups, facilitate the "Dij Boys" group, plant bush tucker gardens, murals and many examples that establishes an environment that is welcoming to Aboriginal students and families.

When community opportunities present themselves, in particular the school was invited to host a whole of community Reconciliation event. Many agencies within the wider community are now looking to the school in providing the venue for cultural and community events and showcasing the school. This is due to networks and partnerships Barbara has helped develop.

Through her links with the Language Centre, we have been given consent to perform Yananyi, a welcome song in Wajarri. Through the partnership with the Language Centre students regularly write and perform songs for events such as Reconciliation and Harmony Day. Barbara tirelessly supports these initiatives and assists in implementation.

She fosters culture and self-esteem, within the students, through support, motivating and always being there. She is the 'nanna' encouraging boundaries as well as having the odd growl when necessary.

How has the nominee assisted in the development of a school and community partnership agreement? When the school developed the Community Partnership Agreement community ties were not as strong as today. Barbara led the AEIOs in gathering input from the community through home visits and asking the community opinion at every opportunity. She surveyed parents as they walked through the school. Barbara collated the feedback and presented to staff. From all

information gathered and collaboration, a long lasting, mutually accepted Agreement was developed which particularly sets the scene for new families coming into the school.

- **Providing whole-school support**

Whole school planning: Barbara has been a driver in implementing of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework (ACSF) and the Community Partnership Agreement.

In the beginning staff were very inward looking in trying to address the ACSF. Led by Barbara the AIEOs supported in developing an understanding of how to apply the descriptors in our school context. Staff perception of where we were along the continuum was workshopped, targets were set and the strategic direction was formulated by Aboriginal staff. Barbara is coordinating dissemination to staff and the community, and has reached out to local community members to provide Cultural Awareness training, to ensure a positive response to implementation and assuring the success in reaching our targets.

All staff are involved in whole school planning with Barbara supporting across Professional Learning teams (PLTs). She moves between groups at whole staff meetings and attends PLT meetings, providing the local Aboriginal perspective when developing strategic, whole school and phase of learning plans as well as, school specific, curriculum plans. When developing our Business Plan Barbara's input ensures local Aboriginal perspective and needs are foremost. Barbara has supported in developing targets through her knowledge of knowing where students are at and where we should move to, through learning to make decisions based on data as well as her indepth knowledge of the community.

While no targets mention Aboriginal students will the data indicates who they are. Barbara is hugely knowledgeable in interpreting attendance data. The biggest role she plays in the school is setting attendance targets strategies to address them. . She is the school's ear to the ground and visits the home if a child is not attending, but does not believe a home visit should only occur when something is wrong.

Outline and give examples of how the nominees contributed to promoting cultural awareness in the school: Barbara coordinates the school's NAIDOC, Sorry Day, Reconciliation and Harmony Day observances. This led role has been developed over time as Barbara has been supported through a gradual release process to build confidence and her capacity.

Our NAIDOC event is now one of the largest amongst the local schools through the links made with wider community agencies and organisations. When we ask for support and assistance the positive response has grown again, largely due to the links and partnerships developed through Barbara's work.

Outline and give examples of how the nominees contributed to the building and maintaining of an inclusive school curriculum: Barbara has driven the development of the school's ACSF and Aboriginal perspective across the curriculum. She offers offering guidance to teachers in appropriate cultural protocols. Barbara organised an opportunity where staff were taken to various sites around Geraldton, numerous sites of cultural and historical significance were pointed out and a recount of a snippet of local history was imparted. On returning to school PLTs worked to develop Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum that was drawn from the local area making the content specific and real for the students and an anchor on which to develop an understand of the wider Australia and World perspective. Through the year staff have worked on developing other plans across numerous curriculum areas. Barbara continues to provide valuable information as the plans are reviewed and revised.