

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst

Reference Type: Education authority

State or territory: NSW

Serial Identification Number: 479551

Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Access to curriculum and quality teaching and learning with formative that supports the learning journey. The Australian curriculum meets the learning needs and interest of our students - however the issue is with the capacity for us to resource and deliver this curriculum effectively in isolated areas - accessible quality PD; resources; access to specialists/experts. School based traineeships; are opportunities to support transition and engagement of students

Rating: 7

Teachers and teaching

Teachers in the Catholic sector are generally from the locality or have relationship/are married to others in the local community. Mathematics, science and English specialist teachers difficult to attract in rural communities and casual teachers in these areas are scarce. Development PD opportunities, peer coaching, facilitating best practice etc. is improving, but is often more costly financially and in time for teachers to attend. More recently teachers in schools have started to visit each other to share best practice - facilitated through Professional Learning Community (PLC) cluster group

Rating: 7

Leaders and leadership

It is more difficult to attract principals and middle leaders to schools as a relocation is influenced by the opportunity of employment for the partner, availability of quality accommodation, the implication of living 'in a fishbowl'. In smaller / remote schools the Principal cannot delegate these tasks administrative and financial aspect of the daily operation of a school. The professional development in leadership and the opportunity to mentor and support often requires significant travel and time.

Rating: 7

School and Community

Often schools have a link to aged care facilities within the town. Teachers often fill important roles cultural offerings in towns. There is a generally a disconnect between employers from the community and the school in explaining the importance of education. Many professionals and tradespeople are small business owners and indicate they don't have time to mentor and describe the importance of learning. Hence students can sometime not see a purpose for study. Curriculum can be designed to reflect the community context. For example a robotic spray machine was used to contextualise coding of a robot

Rating: 7

Information and Communication Technology

Capacity and resources need to match our city schools; including technical support and developing teacher expertise in ICT. ICT is implemented effectively is a learning tool to assist and enhance student learning. Teacher expertise and PD is imperative in developing the capacity for our schools. Access to video conferencing and experts through the use of the ICT platform are invaluable for our regional, rural and remote students and teachers, but the quality of bandwidth can vary. The technology that can reduce isolation is often expensive and unreliable in the more remote areas.

Rating: 7

Entrepreneurship and schools

Community engagement, mentoring and knowing how education can translate into post school life is often piecemeal and individual. Programs to provide mentoring from professionals and universities is often minimal.

Rating: 7

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

There is potential to provide clustering to allow for small cohort groups to establish peer learning options. Some students find the pedagogy of distance education means students. Some students find the pedagogy of distance education disorientating and will choose a lesser course with a teacher and class rather a distance education course. Cost, homesickness and the call of country can mean that boarding is not an option for families.

Rating for enrolments: 7

Rating for clusters: 7

Rating for distance education: 0

Rating for boarding: 7

Diversity

Education in rural communities needs to have purpose, value and impact on students and the wider community. School strategies need to support every learner regardless of their home background: ie - including access to breakfast club, homework centre, additional tutoring, targeted learning - particularly in the early years to allow all students to access literacy/numeracy skill development

Rating: 7

Transitioning beyond school

Giving our students access to travel away to experience workplaces in other areas; more opportunities for our students to visit universities for holiday programs; funding to facilitate local businesses to be able to take on students for work experience/holiday traineeships would be helpful.

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

Rural and remoteness is not in itself a precursor for non engagement and lower participation and achievement, each school community can provide opportunity. But parent expectation and aspiration, knowledge of pertinent career opportunities and confidence in capability can be lower in

rural areas. Best practice schools have strategic and explicit actions to address modelling, confidence and scaffolding of deep learning.