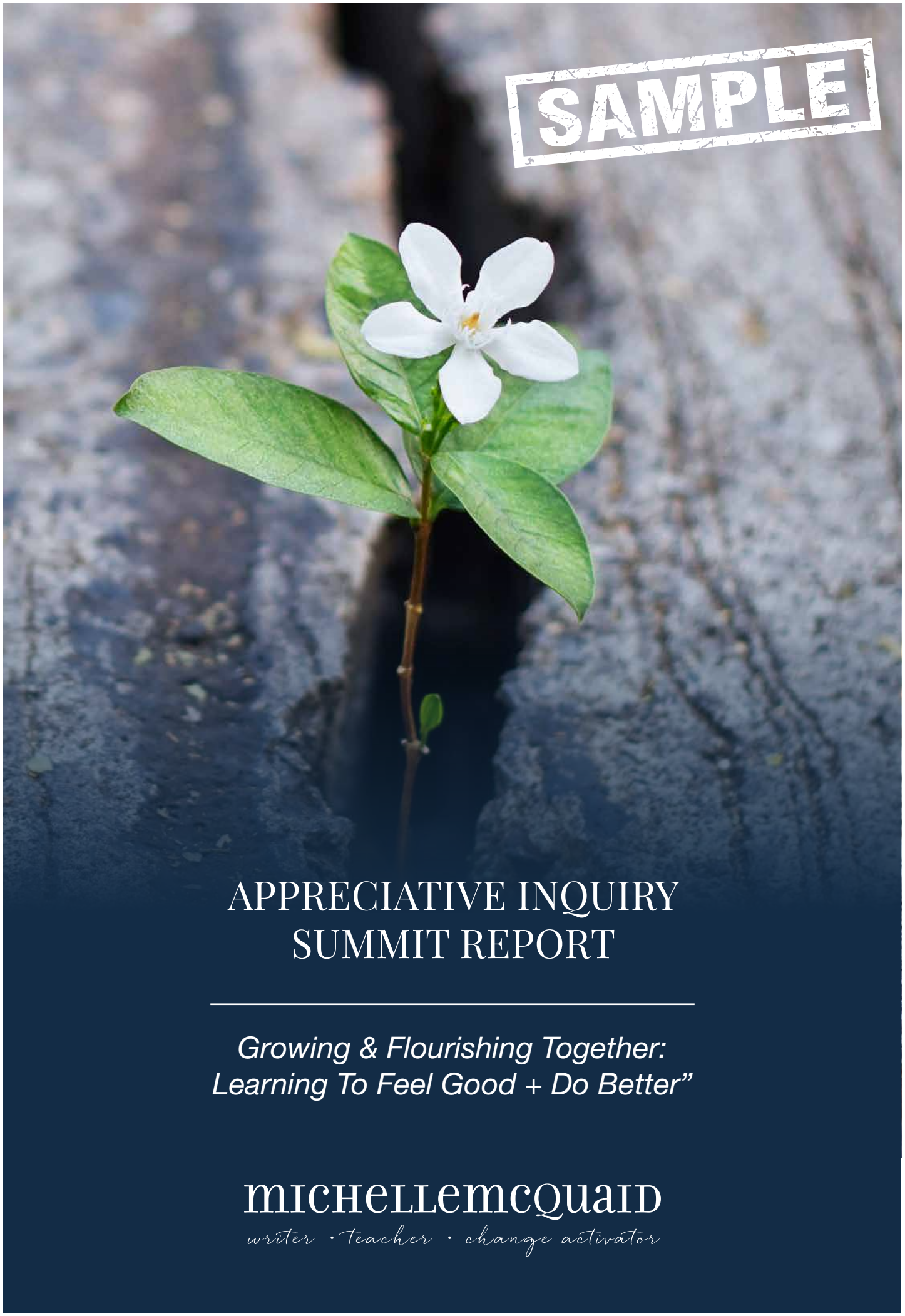


APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SUMMIT REPORT

Growing & Flourishing Together:
Learning To Feel Good + Do Better"

MICHELLEMCQUAID
writer · teacher · change activator

OVERVIEW

In January of 2018 more than 150 teachers, staff, parents, and students came together to explore how we could grow and flourish more consistently – individually and collectively - and help others do the same across our school.

Facilitated by Michelle McQuaid, our aim was to:

- **Discover** when, how, and why people grow and flourish in our school.
- **Dream** of how we can build on these strengths to help people learn to feel good and do better more consistently across our school so that we can grow and flourish together.
- **Design** pathways that utilize positive education approaches to help us grow and flourish across our school.
- Realize our **destiny** by taking self-organized actions individually and collectively to make our shared hopes a reality.

It was an incredible day that uncovered the school's strengths, demonstrated what we are capable of achieving, and the opportunities for us to grow and flourish together. It was also a lot of fun!

WHAT DID WE DISCOVER?

We heard stories of the small PERMAH-based actions people have been taking to help our students, teachers, and staff feel good and function better. These included:

- A coffee club that provides a positive platform to start the day and enables staff to connect with each other. It's a chance to talk, discuss things beyond the school, and share stresses. It's fun, fosters relationships, and the positivity ripples out to students.
- A teacher who took the time to recognize the emotional needs of their students and helped them settle into their place in the class, whether it be how they related to other students or how they connected with the curriculum. Through building relationships with the students, spending time getting to know their interests, and using humor to engage them, their students were more engaged and successful in their studies. This positivity rippled through the classroom.
- Staff members who have been able to model great health and wellbeing behaviors, inspiring others to do the same and advocating for it in areas such as class sizes. This commitment to wellbeing has attracted students to the school.
- How a teacher's dedication to providing truly inclusive education for vulnerable students by going above and beyond in the commitment of their time, energy, knowledge, patience, passion, and taking a playful and innovative approach enabled their students to flourish..
- A teacher who gave an unengaged student their first chance to flourish through engaging them in an interesting technical metalwork project. Students rallied around their peer and this became the first project the student had ever completed. The pride of seeing the courage, effort, commitment, and success of this one student radiated positivity to the rest of the class.
- How a diverse group of students who would not previously have been a part of the school musical were brought together to organize it. This was an exceptionally inclusive experience. Students took the lead on connecting with each other and created post-performance huddles where they provided positive feedback to each other. They all found it an overwhelmingly positive and meaningful experience and were sad to see it reach its natural conclusion.

- A student who stepped into a tutoring class and took over from a teacher to help a younger international student. The relationship they built improved the younger student's self-assurance and though they didn't previously connect well with others in the playground their new older connection with someone who would be seen as 'cool' gave them so much more confidence, they were happier and really grew. .
- A teacher offering to perform a handstand every time students got an answer write in class. This became a running game with the group and the teacher soon spent more time on hands than his feet, but everyone was engaged and learning.

Among all of these stories, we found these common success factors:



**In creating this word art common words were grouped to best show how often different themes were appearing.*



NURTURING AND BELIEVING IN OTHERS WITH COMPASSION, CARE, KINDNESS, AND GENEROSITY

- Caring
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Generosity
- Generosity of time
- Warmth
- Trust and kindness between teachers and students
- Nurturing
- Genuine care
- Empathy
- Gratitude
- Belief that teachers have in students and how they can have an impact
- Positive student role models
- Encourage students to overcome fear/negative mindset
- Support students to be uncomfortable in order to excel/achieve



CREATING SPACE FOR ACCEPTANCE, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, AND FREEDOM TO EXPRESS AND GROW OUR BEST SELVES

- Acceptance
- Welcoming
- Inclusiveness
- Embracing diversity
- Authentic
- Freedom to express interests, strengths, and talents
- Divergent thinker
- Curiosity



INVESTING IN AND BUILDING POSITIVE, SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS THAT GROWS A COMMUNITY OF BELONGING, COLLABORATION, AND RESPECT

- Positive relationships
- Community building
- Inclusivity in relationships
- Time for others
- Intercollegial support
- Sense of community
- Teamwork
- Belonging
- Loyalty
- Positive community investment and feedback cycle
- Gratitude from the community
- Collaboration
- Helping others
- Collaborative nature
- Supportive
- Passionate
- Support with action
- Encouraging
- Confidence building
- Respect
- Selflessness
- Positive meaning --> selfless act/act of kindness



LEADING WITH COMMITMENT, PERSEVERANCE AND INITIATIVE FOR POSITIVE GROWTH

- Commitment
- Investment
- Persistence
- Perseverance
- Focused/determined
- Problem solving
- Organized
- Accomplishment
- Self-regulation
- Initiative
- Leadership
- Maturity
- Grow accomplishments – challenge others
- Results
- Cultivating meaning
- Growth mindset



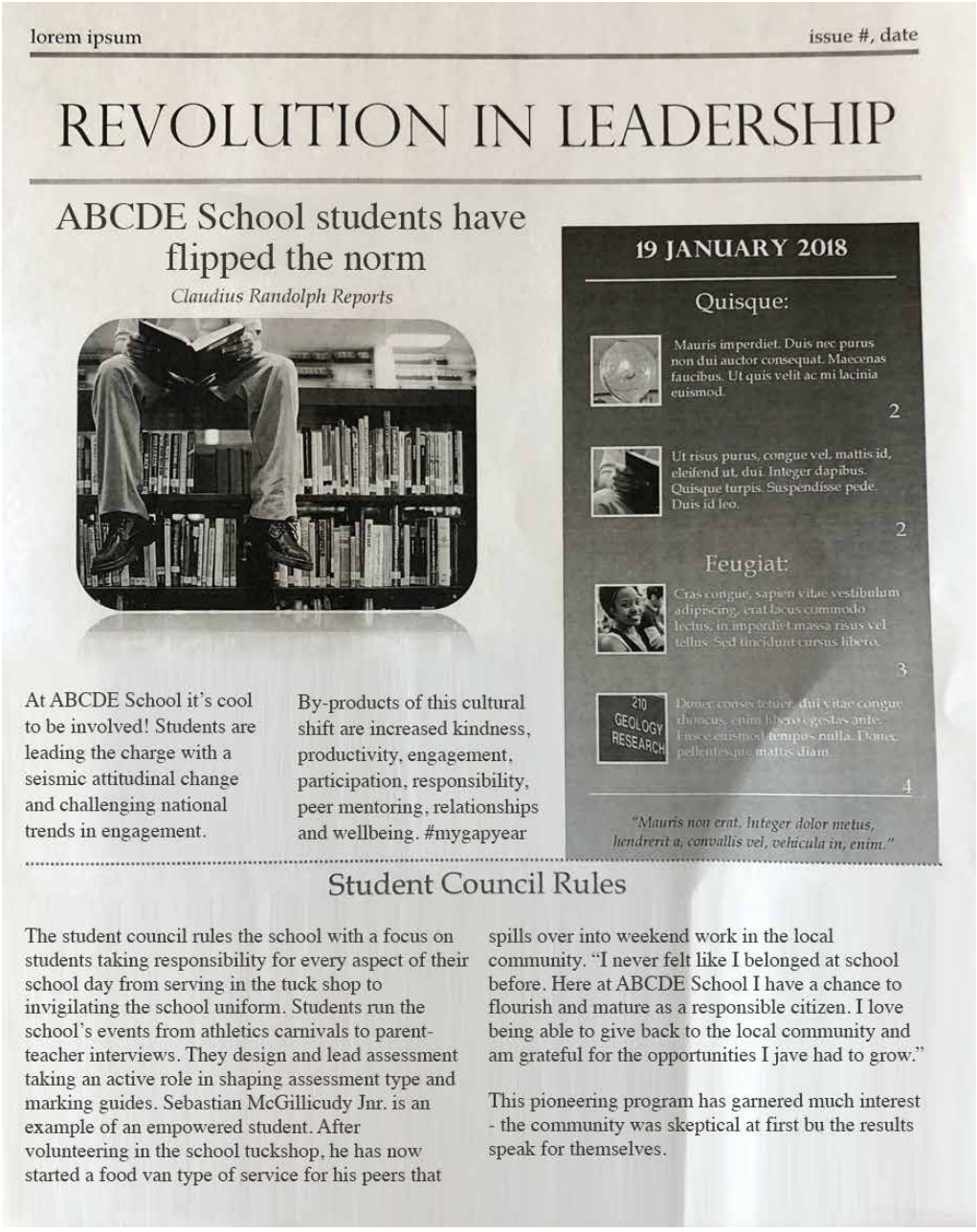
INSPIRING AND ENGAGING OTHERS WITH PASSION, ENERGY, AND POSITIVITY

- Energy
- Enthusiasm
- Enthusiastic staff
- Passion
- Positivity
- Initiative
- Inspiration
- Build engagement
- Engagement
- Motivation
- Positive engagement --> guiding to our potential --> using staff strengths
- Positive emotions
- Humor/fun
- Wellbeing of staff
- Positive health --> choosing activity without reward

WHAT DID WE DREAM OF CREATING?

As a group we put ourselves in the year 2020 and tried to visualize what might be possible if we consistently built upon our strengths to more consistently grow and flourish together across our school.

We dreamed our students would release a newsletter that said this:



lorem ipsum issue #, date

REVOLUTION IN LEADERSHIP

ABCDE School students have flipped the norm

Claudius Randolph Reports

At ABCDE School it's cool to be involved! Students are leading the charge with a seismic attitudinal change and challenging national trends in engagement.

By-products of this cultural shift are increased kindness, productivity, engagement, participation, responsibility, peer mentoring, relationships and wellbeing. #mygapyear

19 JANUARY 2018

Quisque:

Mauris imperdiet. Duis nec purus non dui auctor consequat. Maecenas faucibus. Ut quis velit ac mi lacinia euismod.

2

Ut risus purus, congue vel, mattis id, eleifend ut, dui. Integer dapibus. Quisque turpis. Suspendisse pede. Duis id leo.

2

Feugiat:

Cras congue, sapien vitae vestibulum adipiscing, erat lacus commodo lectus, in imperdiet massa risus vel tellus. Sed tincidunt cursus libero.

3

Donec consectetuer, dui vitae congue rhoncus, enim libero egestas ante. Fusce euismod tempus nulla. Donec pellentesque mattis diam.

4

"Mauris non erat. Integer dolor metus, hendrerit a, convallis vel, vehicula in, enim."

Student Council Rules

The student council rules the school with a focus on students taking responsibility for every aspect of their school day from serving in the tuck shop to invigilating the school uniform. Students run the school's events from athletics carnivals to parent-teacher interviews. They design and lead assessment taking an active role in shaping assessment type and marking guides. Sebastian McGillicudy Jnr. is an example of an empowered student. After volunteering in the school tuckshop, he has now started a food van type of service for his peers that spills over into weekend work in the local community. "I never felt like I belonged at school before. Here at ABCDE School I have a chance to flourish and mature as a responsible citizen. I love being able to give back to the local community and am grateful for the opportunities I jave had to grow."

This pioneering program has garnered much interest - the community was skeptical at first bu the results speak for themselves.

We dreamed of our teachers singing an original tune for their students:

We want students to feel engaged
We want students to find their place
Within these walls and beyond them
Meaningful connections

We want students to feel engaged
We want students to find their place.

ADDITIONAL DREAMS COVERED THESE KEY THEMES:



STUDENTS

- Students are making drastic changes in their lives to improve their wellbeing and form real relationships. They're throwing their phones away, getting enough sleep, and riding their bikes to school in the morning. Teachers are also doing their utmost to empower student wellbeing by allowing them to express themselves, rather than chastising them about their uniform, as well as being flexible in a way that meets the student where they're at, trust them and give them the space to grow.
- Student lessons are being held outside. They begin with meditation, where they tune into how they're feeling, feel calm and ready to learn. They are enthusiastic about their classes and when other students are disengaged they help them feel re-connected and get them back on track. Teachers rarely have to intervene as these students support each other and don't allow others to disrupt their learning. At lunchtime they enjoy the school ball pit where they get to know others they've never met before. Teachers hear stories from the community about the great interactions they have with students, such as helping people cross the road, or saying hello when they pass by. Students are genuinely helping the community flourish.
- Students take part in a transition ceremony where they pass that baton to the next year level. They share their words of wisdom with the students they mentor, what they loved about their year level, what they felt when they first started that year, and how proud they are of what they've done and their high school. They share rich stories of how much they loved their volunteering opportunities (locally and internationally) and the experiences their friends had too. The vertical school structure has enabled students to get to know students and make friends at all other year levels. Because of this they feel more comfortable on sports and carnival days and with their war cries, they feel safe and like they belong. The year 12 students who are moving on are excited to stay in touch and connected through the alumni network.

- New students are shocked when all the horrors they imagined of their first day at high school never come to pass, but rather they are greeted with a breakfast made by local chefs from the community, they meet up with students from higher year levels in their form class and make new friendships, they hear about the exciting activities coming up and they are eager to take part in, and are excited to hear, they can nominate those who made their first day so positive for a kindness award. In years to come these students take up opportunities to positively impact others. Some are tutoring younger students before school. Some are engaged in environmental passion groups committing their time and energy.
- Students are experiencing a culture where it's cool to be involved. This seismic attitude change has resulted in increased kindness, productivity, engagement, participation, responsibility, peer mentoring, relationships, and wellbeing. The student council rules the school with a focus of students taking responsibility for every aspect of their school day, from serving in the tuckshop to invigilating the school uniform. They run the school events from school carnivals to parent teacher days. They design assessments and marking guidelines. Students create their own innovative opportunities on campus and practice their entrepreneurial skills. The school now has gender equality and all students are fluent in Chinese. Students feel that they belong, they flourish, love giving back to the community and are grateful for all the opportunities they have had to grow.
- Staff are using innovative teaching practices to increase the wellbeing of students. Fostering positive relationships is prioritized and supported, this has enabled new friendships to be formed, group assignments are more enjoyable and international students are getting connected and receiving the support they need to succeed. The school's senior students are now teaching younger students goal setting, respectful relationships and other skills for success, whilst building relationships across the year levels that they take beyond the classroom and into the playground. Students are taking part in life changing volunteering opportunities that allow them to step outside themselves, start looking at other people and how they can help. They feel amazing about this. They're visiting nursing homes, homeless shelters, and going global to help with an orphanage. With all of this there has been a large decrease in anxiety and bullying and increase wellbeing. Students are taking great pride in school and their school grounds and encouraging each other to respect it as well.



TEACHERS & TEACHER AIDES

- Teachers are coming together to collaboratively plan and group teach. They have time to invest in their relationships with each other and their relationships with the students. They have gained the support needed to create truly great extra-curricular activities such as a film festival and film society. The innovative new Wellbeing program and relationship building program has enabled teachers to feel like they know their students better than they've known any students before. They are also enjoying the brand new learning center and common room.
- All teachers and staff enjoy starting their day and connecting with each other in their common room called 'The Green Room'. Here they quickly get across what excursions, camps, art shows, and other activities are coming up and take any opportunities to best support the students and staff involved in these activities. There has been a large increase in collaboration, which is modelled to students. Being able to see all staff from different areas interact with each other has helped students see them as a whole school that is multifaceted, and united. Students can see that their teachers are on the same page and they feel they know what they can expect from each classroom. Their subjects are complementary. They are working towards gaining their own senior common room.



STAFF

- Staff are supporting each other, checking in regularly and working hard on building strong relationships. Once this support is established there is really no limit as to what they are able to accomplish.
- Staff come together to build their relationships by getting to know one another and affirming each other, this enables them to safely share positive, meaningful, and multifaceted feedback with each other. Their positive interactions foster an environment of gratitude and kindness. The school are investing in an appreciative inquiry approach to change and it drives them forward.

COMMON THEMES ACROSS OUR DREAMS INCLUDED:



STUDENTS

- Are taking the lead on fostering relationships, building their wellbeing and have control and responsibility for designing many aspects of their educational experience.
- Are excited to learn, support each other in their learning, and reconnect disruptive and unengaged peers.
- Interact with the community in positive ways, have the opportunity to take up community focused passion projects and life changing volunteering opportunities.
- There are wellbeing activities taking place inside and outside of the classroom.
- There are opportunities and activities to connect students who have not met before and make friends across all year levels.
- Older students are mentoring and tutoring younger students both in academic and life skills.
- Have the opportunity to acknowledge the transition between year levels, hear of others' experiences with this and encourage the next year to continue their good work and traditions.
- Great alumni relationships keeping students connected after year 12?
- Experience greater inclusivity and equality where they have a strong sense of belonging.
- Have a senior common space to connect.
- Take pride in their school and encourage others to do the same.
- Students assisted to prioritize their relationships and build connection in groups before they tackle projects.



TEACHERS AND TEACHER AIDES

- Are being flexible in their approach with students to ensure they're putting their wellbeing first.
- Have time and a private space to invest in their relationships with each other and activities to help them connect and increase their health and wellbeing.
- Collaborate and model this behavior to students.
- Find it easy to be across all that is going on at the school week to week.
- Are supported in creating innovative extra-curricular activities for students.
- Have environments to teach and work from that are comfortable and allow them to be effective.
- Are able to get to know their students better and work with them in ways that best serve their needs and challenges.



STAFF

- Are building positive, safe, constructive relationships where they can share meaningful feedback and help each other.
- They work in an environment of gratitude and kindness.
- Are using an appreciative inquiry approach to drive change.
- Are enjoying connecting with teaching staff in their common space.

HOW COULD WE MAKE OUR DREAM A REALITY?

We brainstormed, prioritized, and prototyped possible pathways of how we might make these hopes a reality so that we can be of even more exceptional service to our students, staff, parents, and community.

Our recommended solutions included:

HOW MIGHT WE GROW THE WELLBEING OF OUR STUDENTS THROUGH THE PERMAH-BASED, POSITIVE EDUCATION CHOICES AND ACTIONS WE'VE BEEN TAKING?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:



Initiative Name: Student-Based-Uniform-Redesign

POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

- Students are proud to correctly wear a uniform they have created
- Students are more active within the school as the uniform allows for movement and Physical Activity



PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

The uniform is centrally located as it represents the student sense of belonging to our school.

The student figures surrounding the shirt are providing input into the uniform design. The different colored threads represent the contributions of our student body – gender, age, diversity etc.

The balloons are the ideas (thought bubbles) that the students are generating – showing their collaborative work that will result in wearing their uniform with pride. .

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE GROW THE WELLBEING OF OUR STAFF THROUGH THE PERMAH-BASED, POSITIVE EDUCATION CHOICES AND ACTIONS WE'VE BEEN TAKING?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:



Initiative Name: Common Room



POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

- PERMAH

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

- Comfortable seating
- Coffee machine
- Kitchenette
- TV
- Spa
- Student Free Zone

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE BUILD A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY THAT HELPS US GROW THE WELLBEING OR OUR STUDENTS?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:



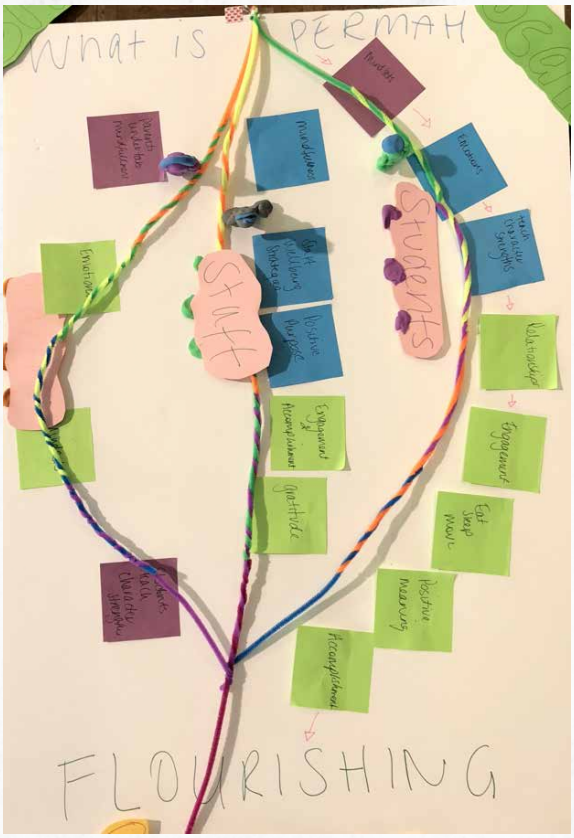
Initiative Name: Positive Education courses for parents, students, and staff

POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

Staff buy-in a simple, effective and non-invasive way

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

Offering educational courses (online, podcasts, and face to face) in a planned sequential manner



DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE USE DATA TO TRACK, SEE AND BUILD UPON OUR POSITIVE-EDUCATION CHOICES AND ACTIONS TO GROW STUDENT, TEACHER, AND STAFF WELLBEING?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:



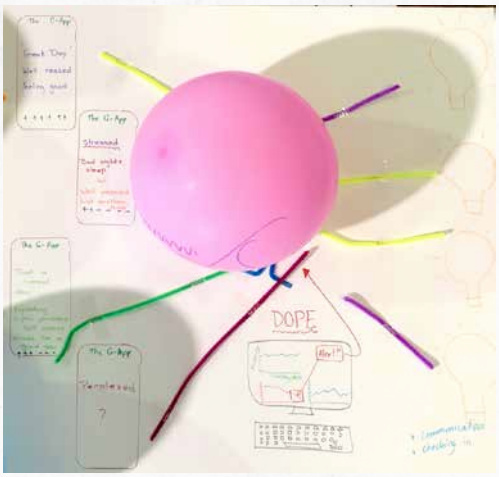
Initiative Name: The "G" App

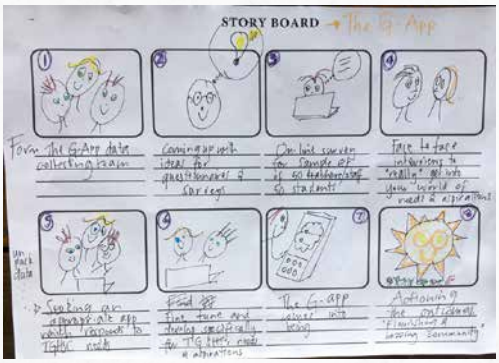
POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

To track the wellbeing of our staff

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

- App requires staff to respond to wellbeing
- Responses are collated
- This allows for immediate support and action





DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

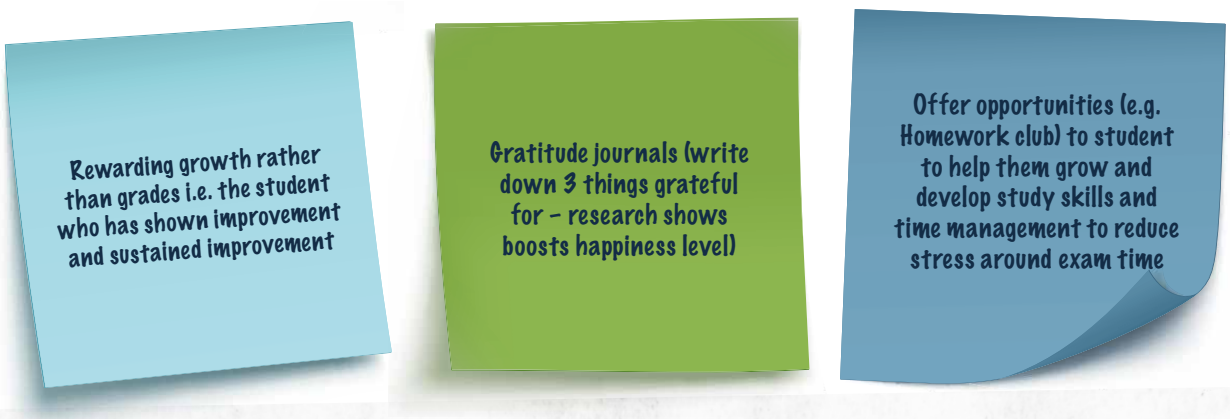
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PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE CONTINUE TO EMBED POSITIVE EDUCATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR CURRICULUM?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:



Initiative Name: Radiating PERMAH Throughout the Curriculum - 'The Radiance'

POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:



PERMAH at the core of all curriculum.

- 100% student involvement
- Improved engagement and growth
- Better academic, social, and emotional outcomes

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

- Articulate the elements of positive education
- Map those elements over the curriculum
- Look for gaps in curriculum

The aspects of PERMAH radiate to all areas of the curriculum.
How will your curriculum documents reflect this?

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

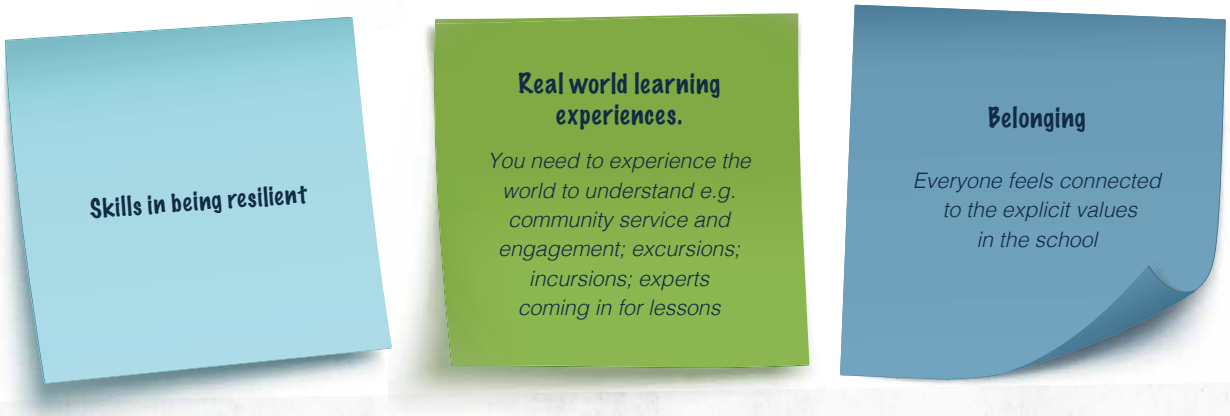
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PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

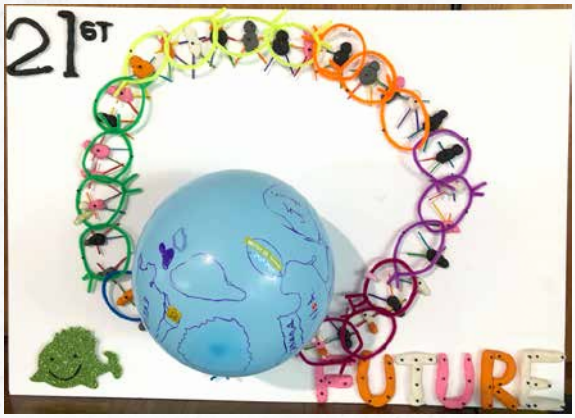
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HOW MIGHT WE EQUIP OUR STUDENTS WITH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS THAT HELP THEM TO FLOURISH?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:



Initiative Name: 21st Century Skills to help students flourish – resilience, real world learning and belonging



POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

Together students form a resilient barrier and connectivity is the key

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

Our utopian 21st century students are linked in strength and positivity. They are connected to the world and value their role at both the school and their wider global reality. Together they can survive the challenges of the 21st century.

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE GROW THE WELLBEING AND INCLUSION OF ALL STUDENTS?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:

Create a student leadership position for inclusion

Educate students but have them lead

Admin initiative with student support

Host lunchtime games or events to include all students and create fun/safe environment

A lunch time club where 'buddies' can support vulnerable students

Gender neutral uniforms and bathrooms – easy to implement now

Celebrate/embed Indigenous culture and other cultures

Initiative Name: We're all in this together!

POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

- Buy-in from students --> not being told by teachers, but other students
- Student-driven activities
- Celebrated by students
- True enjoyment of difference – reflects real world!
- Feeling safe for vulnerable students





PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

Setting – the assembly is a safe place and easily accessible for all students
Everyone is involved – inclusion is about EVERYONE!
Each character represents a difference.
All appearance/age/faith/race/culture/gender/ability/sexuality/health

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE EMBED THE LEARNINGS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY TO ENHANCE THE WELLBEING OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:

Not listed

Initiative Name: The Activities Flower

POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

The intersection of extra-curricular activities and house points will encourage teambuilding, house pride and participation.



PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

Le Fleur d'Active (The Flower of Activates)

- Many extra-curricular activities are available at TGSHS
- Linking these together and then with the house system is a way to encourage participation and engagement
- Allow for recognition and reward through the house points system encourages involvement
- Allow for diverse interests and abilities of students to contribute to school experience
- Build on all 6 PERMAH elements

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO GROW THEIR WELLBEING THROUGH GAINING A MORE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:



Initiative Name: Student run international passion projects

POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:



Students follow their passion and run:

- **International volunteering:** students, guided by teachers, to host a multi-cultural day where students perform cultural dances, possibly cultural cooking etc - expose how multicultural our school is.
- **Aged care engagement:** organize volunteer student groups to donate their time in the local aged care facility near health club (possibly one in Kaperra as well).
- **International days:** organize a fundraising campaign (student directed) focusing on students who possibly come from a third world country - we could organize to help provide them with school supplies etc. Possibly a more personal touch and organize a Skype conversation so students can see where their fundraising efforts are going.

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

Students follow their passion and run

- International volunteering
- Aged care engagement
- International days

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

HOW MIGHT WE SUPPORT STUDENTS MENTORING OTHER STUDENTS?

TOP THREE GROUP PRIORITIES:

Peer to peer tutoring

Tutorials held in Library before/after school by paid group tutors from uni students doing teaching

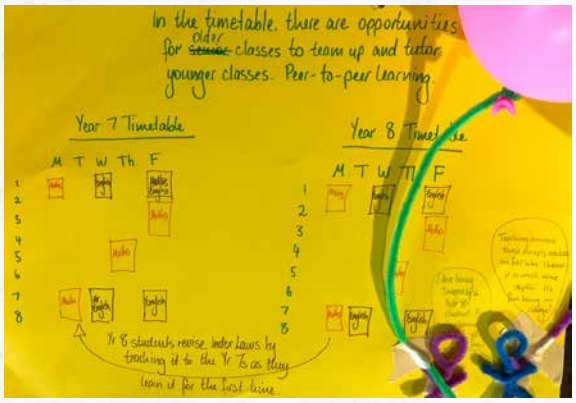
Use an online system for students to match with a tutor or book a subject/time

Multi-grade vertical form classes increases opportunity for mentoring relationships to grow

Initiative Name: TGSHS "Mentor Matcha"

POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT:

- Engagement
- Lower anxiety
- Raise relationships across school
- Acquiring skills --> rise employment
- Raise confidence
- Raise results/success
- Commitment and responsibility
- Community strengthening



PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION:

What? This amazing new program has been designed to bring the GSHS students together, to all of the above to improve student results and ultimately students' overall wellbeing. Building flourishing communities.

Where? Library/classrooms (timetable correlation)

When? During lessons

DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

PROTOTYPE VOLUNTEERS:

[Names have been removed from this example report]

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The AI Summit was an incredible opportunity to connect and gain commitment for helping to grow the wellbeing of our students, teachers, and staff.

It is essential now that we find ways to maintain the interest and momentum now generated for this group. As we shared in the final moments of the Summit:

> *Stop walking through the world looking for confirmation that you don't belong. You will always find it because you've made that your mission. Stop scouring people's faces for evidence that you're not enough. You will always find it because you've made that your goal.*
>
> *True belonging and self-worth are not goods; we don't negotiate their value with the world. The truth about who we are lives in our hearts.*
>
> *Our call to courage is to protect our wild heart against constant evaluation, especially our own. No one belongs here more than you.*
>
> - Brene Brown – Braving The Wilderness

We recommend that within the next two weeks:

- A version of this report is shared with all participants.
- Those who have volunteered to explore prototypes are brought together in the coming weeks to agree how these ideas could be made to happen.
- Existing teams in the school follow up with participants about the small actions we're each choosing to take to make our hopes a reality. Remember if we each choose to do just one small thing consistently that moves us towards being more exceptional, we can move an entire school.

We would also suggest that the school continue communicating the progress being made on any of these prototypes over the coming months so people feel their commitment and effort in the Summit was respected, valued, and appreciated.