

Thoughts on the MALEH School Dropout Prevention Program

Mildura Primary School case study

Mildura Primary School No. 2915 is one of four large primary schools in the Mildura Rural City Council local government area. The school currently serves a student enrolment of about 340.

The School was first established in 1988. From the beginning of the 2012 school year Mildura Primary will be located on the one site for the first time in more than 50 years, thanks largely to two BER template buildings.

Interactive whole school activities, shared specialist programs, regular whole school meetings, buddy grade activities all contribute to a strong feeling of school unity.

Mildura Primary has a unique multi-cultural mix of students including a significant Koorie, and Pacifica population as well as the rich culturally diverse environment in such a multicultural town.

The Student Family Occupation (SFO) index in 2012 is 0.87 which is the highest in the state for a Primary school. This index rates the financial disadvantage the families within the school come from. This year, the school has 202 families, 184 whom are eligible the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Mildura Primary School has a firm focus on student outcomes and is committed to preparing students for further education and life. The school provides a quality teaching program catering for the needs of the individual by mapping students learning in an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) evaluated and developed every 5 school weeks. This process known as ADI (Assessment Driving Instructions) allows teachers to plan for the very next learning need of the child.

The school's mantra, 'Kids First @ Mildura Primary', guides the decision making process at the school. Accelerated literacy and numeracy environments cater for the developmental needs of the student cohort. SELLs Programming (Literacy) and Emu (Maths) are both programs the teachers have at their disposal to lift / accelerate the learning of students.

A genuine focus on student learning needs and a high expectations culture for all students provide the basis for success at our school. Mildura Primary's focus is on developing a 'Stronger', 'Smarter' student and community member by expecting all students to perform to their best!

Despite these efforts, 8-10 students consistently 'fail to progress', achieve and learn to their potential, in part because of the deep hurts they have experienced in their young lives.

Dennis Mitchell, Principal of Mildura Primary, was one of the exchange participants who visited MALEH in Israel in February 2012. He believes that MALEH will enable these students to deal with their deep hurt, and re-learn to trust others and themselves. Through this process, he hopes they will regain their ability to focus on learning.