



“ACTIONING” in the IDEAS PROJECT: From professional designs to creative realities in IDEAS schools

IDEAS (Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools) is a school revitalisation process that engages school communities in five distinct phases of development – Initiating, Discovering, Envisioning, Actioning and Sustaining – over a two to five year period of time.

IDEAS is based on three highly innovative and home-grown educational concepts:

- parallel leadership;
- alignment of a school's most important leadership, managerial, resourcing and teaching/learning priorities; and
- development and implementation of a school's Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP – the school's distinctive approach to pedagogy).

This article features the ACTIONING Phase of the process and the achievements and outcomes of four IDEAS schools.

The IDEAS Vision:

To inspire IDEAS schools to engage in a journey of self-discovery which will ensure that they achieve sustainable excellence in teaching and learning.

In the ACTIONING Phase of the ideas process, IDEAS schools implement the plans of action that arise from their unique Vision, Values and Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP). “Parallel” leaders – meta-strategic principals and teacher leaders – guide this process through school-based professional conversation.

ACTIONING in IDEAS can take many forms – curriculum development, facilities modification, changes to timetabling and spatial arrangements, technological enhancements, exploration of teachers' personal pedagogies, community engagement, student leadership, specialist teaching strategies. In each case, the school's own Vision and Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP) provide the foundation for ACTIONING projects and sustained improvement.



A Research Alliance of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and the Leadership Research Institute, University of Southern Queensland

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Mornington Island State School

Vision:
“Thaldi Bana Merri (Come & Learn) Courage, Choice, Challenge”



Pedagogical Framework:

- Ngangkirr (Together)
- Wambuli (Work Hard)
- Kuba Bana Junka (Good and True)
- Yukurdi (Success)



“Education, work and life options go together like the turtle, beach and high tide. For the turtle to successfully lay her eggs, the timing must be right. The time is right for our students to come to school every day and to work hard. Thanks to a great team effort, our little turtles are making their way closer to the sea of opportunity!” (Principal Jo Townsend)

Our Actioning Strategies:

- Use of turtle ‘imagery’ in all that is done to create a common language and shared understanding around the Vision and Schoolwide Pedagogy
- Development of a School Code of Behaviour, explicitly linked to the Turtle Vision
- Celebration of improvement in overall Year 2 Net results, and participation in the Year 3/5/7 Tests
- Mornington Island's Mayor Susan Sewter's adoption of the IDEAS process in developing a Mornington Island Council Community Vision



Toowoomba State High School – Wilsonton Campus



Vision:
“Learning together: launching bright futures”

Pedagogical Framework:

- Relations are positive, resilient and arise from familiarity and respect
- Learning experiences are connected to students' current and future lives
- Teaching strategies are structured to improve learning through challenge, rigour and the explicit teaching of skills
- Individuals are supported to direct their own learning experiences
- The learning environment is focused, happy, active and enthusiastic
- Success is achievable and valued, affirmed and celebrated

“The campus now has a clear and unique identity, its vision for the future and sense of purpose understood and endorsed by the local community.” (Christina Rogers, Head of Campus)



“IDEAS has allowed us to determine what pedagogical practices provided the best opportunities for our specific student needs, whilst allowing us to effectively address the EQ Agenda”. (Dan Feehely, ISMT member)

Our Actioning Strategies:

- “Teaching Our Way For Our Kids”
 - New unit planning and assessment format focussed on SWP Statements
 - Teacher self and peer reflection through lesson observation
 - Focus on authentic assessment through involvement in the QCAR Trial
- Embedding our Vision and Values
 - Creation of visual cues, posters, banners, stickers, postcards
 - Artistic representations through sculpture, dance, song, drama, murals
- Building Positive Relations
 - Review of schoolwide support, SEU and Behaviour Management processes
- Values Project – involvement in the National Values Education Project funded through the Good Practice Schools Project Phase 2

Fairview Heights State School

Vision:
“Growing Together – Learning Forever”



Pedagogical Framework:

- Supporting Each Other
- The roots of the tree support it through life – we support our school community by
 - *cultivating individuality
 - *encouraging risk taking
 - *implementing our ‘Vision Program’
- Growing Together
- The trunk of the tree grows stronger each day – our relationships grow stronger through
 - *celebrating difference
 - *an explicit values program
 - *community cultural experiences
- Learning Forever
- Leaves, flowers and pods, “signs of a healthy tree” – we learn and display skills for the future by
 - *real life problem solving
 - *quality communication
 - *teaching strategies to deal with change

“There is such strength in Parallel Leadership within our school. Teachers, alongside Administrators, display high levels of engagement, collegiality and ownership of strategic decision making. They are focussed on pedagogy, and actively engaged in improvement which means we are continually evolving as a school”. (Lindy Abawi – ISMT Member)



Our Actioning Strategies:

- Fairview Heights Visioning Program – teaching social skills and values education through the Arts, along with self awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in learning styles and social behaviours
- Peer support programs – student mentoring activities
- Teachers experimenting with visual, tactile, aural and oral learning activities in order to cater for individual differences
- Development of a weekly Options Program that builds whole school group work strategies across year levels
- Facilitation of an organisational restructure based on the IDEAS Research Based Framework to action Parallel Leadership and create alignment of school processes

Caloundra State High School

Vision:
“Lighting the way to broad horizons and bright futures”



Pedagogical Framework:

- Catering for individual achievement
- Connecting to the world beyond the classroom
- Providing quality learning
- Establishing a supportive environment

Our Actioning Strategies:

- Creation of a Student Services Faculty to cater better for the needs of all students
- Faculty mapping of Teaching and Learning Principles (Schoolwide Pedagogy) within subjects, and cross faculty Professional Development promoting teacher sharing of ideas and strategies
- Development of a Lighthouse Centre (SEU), providing students with opportunities for success through an outdoor education program and community projects eg Crunch and Munch catering group
- Formation of Image and Pride, Environment, Technology and Innovation and Wellness Committees to ensure community input and a commitment to the school being the ‘best it can be’
- Offering a diverse range of curriculum - Rock and Water for Boys, Girls Personal Development, Cooling Conflict, Youth Employment Pathways and Create Expectations Programs, Surfing Excellence, and inclusion as an Aerospace School

“The vision is symbolised by the lighthouse, with a ray of light beaming out to guide the way. Just as a lighthouse guides sailors through unknown waters, the school is here to guide us in our secondary education, to help us broaden our horizons and support us in reaching our potential for brighter futures as adults”. (Middle School student – Christian)



“IDEAS has meant a lot to our school community, and our Vision and SWP is now deeply embedded across the school.” (Kerry Emery – Principal)

