

# Tarpeena Primary School

## Values education forum



## Profile

Tarpeena is a small rural township in the south east of South Australia. It is 25 km from Mount Gambier, a city of 23,000. Tarpeena has a large timber mill that processes pine from plantations within the region. Students at the school live within the township and most families have some connection with the timber industry.

Tarpeena Primary School is a small school with 51 students in three classes and an on-site Child Parent Centre that offers four sessions of pre-school that operates two days each week. The school is identified as a disadvantaged school within the South Australian system with a ranking of level 2 (level 1 is the most disadvantaged in a ten-scale identification system).

The school is a member of a multiple intelligence schools network with brain theory forming a cornerstone of education practice. Together with a focus on civics, citizenship, history, and values education, this forms a strong base of practice and allows the school to implement a student voice system that sees students organising and running most activities within the school. The Student Executive operates a daily well-being programme for the whole school, a community groups system, and coordinates regular celebrations of our success that include the whole community.

## Values forum

In November 2005, the school conducted a values forum involving students, parents, community members and staff. This forum was widely advertised within the local community. Twenty-six people joined together to review the existing values of the school and begin a process to integrate our school values and objectives with the Australian Government's *Values for Australian Schools*.

We conducted workshops that generated a great deal of information that we are now collating. Once this is done, we will meet again to look at the results and review current policy, procedures, values statements, codes of ethics and school vision statements and identify areas that need change.

Utilising brain theory and quality improvement tools, we:

- examined our mission statement and practice;
- reviewed our school organisation and structures;

- provided opportunities for students, parents and the community to participate in values related activities;
- reviewed codes of ethics for students, staff, parents and governing council members;
- examined values statements in *Values for Australian Schools* MYCEETYA document;
- examined how to build student resilience and self-esteem and reviewed current practices;
- explored student responsibilities within the school and within the community;
- brainstormed Values for Australian Schools using Y Charts;
- reviewed the expression and intention of values in curriculum documents;
- explored how values education could be articulated explicitly;
- reviewed how we integrate values education across the curriculum.

The values forum has been a starting point to review and reassess our current practice in a school where student voice, community involvement, celebrating success and striving to achieve best practice is important and giving every student the opportunity to achieve their potential is the core of educational practice. We have gathered a wide range of information and will continue with further forums in 2006. Our aim is to refine our policies and practice so as to reflect this information.

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