



SLI podcast series discussion guide ep.17

Shaping school culture: enabling belonging

The School Leadership Institute's Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on school leaders and explores the key issues and challenges they face. In this episode, the principal of the newly-opened Melonba Public School, Larissa Maraga discusses how she collaborated with students and the community to help build a welcoming and inclusive school culture from day one.

Speakers

Larissa Maraga: Principal, Melonba Public School
Joanne Jarvis: SLI Director and host of the series

Discussion points

For individuals

“Community engagement is a two-way street where the school, families, and the community actively work together, creating networks of shared responsibility for student success. It is a tool that promotes civic well-being and that strengthens the capacity of schools, families, and communities to support young peoples’ full development.”

[Berg, A. C. et al. (2006) from the SLI's Leadership Learning Resource]

- Considering this quote and the ongoing nature of building genuine community engagement from participation through to genuine partnership, how would you describe the nature of community engagement at your school? What are the strengths of the current partnership and what opportunities are there to strengthen it?
- How can you further develop and support your staff in building strong, culturally responsive relationships with students' families and the broader community to drive positive impacts on student learning and wellbeing?
- The SLI Leadership Mindsets can significantly influence how a school community interacts, connects, and thrives together. How do school leaders demonstrate the mindsets of student-centred, courage, curiosity, collaborative, growth-oriented and efficacy, to foster a culture of belonging?



- A strengths-based approach aims to highlight and build upon what is working well in a community to foster growth, collaboration, and success. How can schools ensure that the focus on strengths translates into long-term positive outcomes for both students and the broader school community?
- In what ways does your school use the expertise and resources of the broader community to enhance learning opportunities for students? What actions could you or your staff take to increase these opportunities?

For teams

- How do we ensure that all in our community can feel they belong, are valued and are contributors to the daily culture and practices across our school? How will we know?
- In which areas of our school do we prominently encounter and promote diversity? Where might it be unconsciously overlooked or underrepresented?
- How might we capture all the voices in our school community and ensure this input is translated into meaningful actions reflecting the diverse perspectives?
- How can we effectively measure the ongoing impact of our engagement strategies, ensuring that they remain responsive to the needs of the school community?