

GROWING AND RESOURCING 'GREAT IDEAS' TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

Storied accounts of practice by the Tender Bridge

TENDER BRIDGE CASES OF SUCCESS: CASE 4

Padbury School Community Links Project: Padbury Primary School

Padbury Primary School is a Tender Bridge subscriber. This year they have found several funds and potential partners through Tender Bridge to assist them in developing a key school-community initiative: Padbury School Community Links Project.

In this Tender Bridge Case, Aaron Young (Principal of Padbury Primary School) explains where the idea for the Padbury School Community Links Project came from, and how they are going about growing their great educational project to improve outcomes for the children at Padbury.

About Padbury Primary school

Padbury is located in Western Australia in the Perth city council area of Joondalup. The school has about 200 students and shares its location with Padbury Senior High School, the West Coast Language Development Centre and the Padbury Early Childhood Centre. The school is taking advantage of this cluster, a 0-18 Years Learning Community on one site. Onsite Dental Therapy facility, School Nurse and School Psychologist services are also part of the education partnership.

A core driver for the school is our strong sense of community, which led to the school initiating the Padbury School Community Links Project.

Why develop Padbury School Community Links Project?

Parents with children at Padbury were telling us that they needed more information about how they can be playing a stronger role in their child's learning and development. We noticed a gap in the support parents could be receiving and thought the school could be playing a stronger role in bridging that gap.

Evidence

We drew on a range of informal and formal sources to inform us about the need and how we might go about addressing it.

We used informal feedback from staff. Parents were telling staff that they wished they'd had a greater level of involvement in their child's learning and development *before* their child started school. Parents could access Maternal and Child Health Nurses, but when the child turns about 18 months of age, that support finishes.

We did doorstep interviews with families as they dropped off and picked up their children from the kindergarten and school.

Padbury's annual parent survey confirmed what we were hearing from our informal conversations with parents. The survey responses indicated that parents wanted more information on child development matters including speech and language development, occupational therapy and healthy eating.

In addition, the latest Australian Early Childhood Development Index

About Padbury School Community Links Project

The purpose of the project is three-fold. We wish to:

- Improve the links with parents of 0-4 year old children through our Early Childhood Literacy Program;
- Coordinate a Childhood Development Guest Speaker Program to encourage intergenerational families and the wider community to become involved in the school community; and
- Provide an additional avenue for parents to access practical ideas and information on how to assist their children at home with child development matters and parenting skills through the employment of a School Based Community Liaison Officer.

The Early Childhood Literacy Program (ECLP)

The objective of the ECLP is to introduce young children (aged 0-4 years) to the inspirational world of books and reading. We created **Toddler Time**, an opportunity for preschool children and their parents or carers to share the joys of literature, language, rhythm and rhyme, as well as assisting in the development of fine motor skills. **Toddler Time** will be held regularly during the school term and each session consists of: songs and rhymes, stories read aloud, and a simple craft activity.

The Childhood Development Guest Speaker Program (CDGSP)

The objective of the CDGSP is to provide intergenerational families (extended family members) and the wider community within Padbury with information and practical ideas on a variety of child development topics.

The School Based Community Liaison Officer (SBCLLO)

The principle objective of the SBCLLO is to provide and promote a range of services and programs that help families and community members within Padbury.

(AEDI) report for Padbury Primary School showed us that 40% of our pre-compulsory children were developmentally vulnerable and/or at risk within the Language and Cognitive Skills domain and 37% were developmentally vulnerable and/or at risk within the Emotional Maturity domain.

For a number of families at Padbury Primary School, grandparents look after the children. So we knew that there was also going to be a need to create a space in the School Community Links Project where not only parents (working and non-working) but also grandparents could be supported.

We were asking ourselves, how could we better connect and develop stronger relationships with those in our community? We wondered whether our expectations of what children in Pre-primary and Year 1 could be achieving were high enough, and if not, how we could change this situation?

Growing and resourcing a great idea

Identifying a need, investigating that need and generating evidence of the issues and possible solutions were all important parts in getting the Padbury School Community Links Project started. But this was just the start. The project now needed to be fleshed out and people needed to engage with it, all of which takes planning and time.

Keep ideas 'alive'

In a principal's day-to-day work, a reactive mode of thinking and behaving could dominate. You are always being called upon to make many decisions, and often quickly. To ensure that the School Community Links Project did not get overrun by other demands, I would keep jotting down ideas, connections and tasks about the project on a whiteboard in my office. I really wanted to get stuck into the project, but knew that growing and resourcing the idea was going to take time.

Articulate and document the project

Current and potential stakeholders cannot engage with something they do not understand. Once we were able to articulate what we were trying to achieve and by when, then and only then were we in position to seek potential partners and funders. This phase was about making sure we had, ready to go, an overview of the project, aims, outcomes and 'the case' for why the project was needed. We accompanied this information with a Gantt chart that clearly showed a timeline for implementation and key milestones. At the ready were other documents that we could use as supporting evidence (minutes of parent council meetings that showed they were actively involved in the project).

Find the right match

School leaders are not exposed to how to network effectively or 'sell' great ideas. It's more a case of putting toes in the water and seeing what happens. How to partner is a big challenge.

I attended a Tender Bridge seminar in Perth. We were not eligible to apply directly to two of the philanthropic foundations showcased at the seminar, but there was another foundation mentioned that peaked our interest. It is because of Tender Bridge that we even considered philanthropic foundations or trusts as potential partners or funders of our project. As a subscriber we get a Tender Bridge Weekly email alert of new funds added or new funding rounds added to the database over the previous week. It was through the seminar material and the Weekly Alert that we found out about the Myer Foundation/Sydney Myer Fund.

Before putting in an application to Myer, we investigated other projects they had funded. We used that information to get to know better the Foundation's interests and objectives. We wanted to capture their imagination with our project, but this was going to be futile if the goals of our project did not match with the goals (and eligibility requirements) of the Foundation.

Partner and funding support

Every piece of professional advice, expertise or funding is important to us, no matter the amount provided. Through The Myer Foundation/Sydney Myer Fund's \$10,000 small grants program, we have been able to shore up the School Based Community Liaison Officer part of the School Community Links Project. To date, a number of other partners and funders have also supported us. Joondalup Council has contributed \$1,900. Once I had made contact with the right person in the Council, they were happy to come out and meet, discuss the application and then identify additional areas of support that could contribute to the project.

Relationships Australia has offered to run some programs as part of our Child Development Guest Speaker Program.

Lessons learned

Build momentum: The smaller projects within the larger School Community Links Project were easier to get started on.

Communication: Keep partners fully informed. We built into the project plan the development of progress reports that we email to our partners and other key stakeholders (e.g. the P&C).

Write a project plan: If we had not written a project plan then we would have missed including what we needed to consider in terms of evaluating the project's success.

Partnering takes time and patience: Be open to exploring new connections; you do not know where these might lead. Only recently, we heard back from a group we had spoken with some time ago and now we are forging ahead with an area of support within the project.

Parent connections: Consider what connections your parents or ex-students have (banks, mining companies, the arts). Get a group of people from your school to develop an alumni database.

Develop a list of potential partners: Everyone is busy and we have the best of intentions of seeking potential support, but often we don't go any further. The email alerts from Tender Bridge hit us every week so we can use Tender Bridge's database and our own networks to identify a number of potential partners and funders that we will follow-up.

Keep a project file: We have set up a folder of ideas and information. As things come up, we add the information into it. This way, we are ready to act when an opportunity comes along.

Padbury Primary School's Project Folder Content

- Tax information (P&C's Certificate of Incorporation)
- School bank details
- Community needs (AEDI data, ABS data, City of Joondalup data, school parent and student survey reports)
- Sample project plans (in various states of 'readiness')
- Community database list (who is in our community)



From left: Padbury Pre-Primary teacher and literature coordinator Jane White with Loretto Ocariz and son Kiarn Mawford. Picture by Emma Reeves, Joondalup Times.

Postscript:

With the assistance of Tender Bridge, Researchers from The University of Western Australia have been in contact with Padbury Primary School to discuss possible connections. One of the foundations that presented at the Tender Bridge seminar has also been in contact with the school about setting up a meeting to discuss the project.