REFLECT: Evaluation Processes

At a glance:

“To advance practice, we need to know where we stand now, what progress we are making and where best to focus our efforts.” - The Australasian Evaluation Society

Why Evaluation is Important?

Evaluation provides an opportunity to ‘check in’ on relationships, structure, processes, practices and outcomes. Ongoing and meaningful evaluation is vital to ensuring success and to strengthen the advisory body. It can also:

- Provide openings for debriefing and critical reflection;
- Identify issues which need to be addressed;
- Build transparency and accountability;
- Offer opportunities for ongoing learning;
- Acknowledge milestones and provide opportunities for celebration;
- Build a stronger sense of community;

Getting Started:

Evaluation can explore the work of advisory bodies with regards to:

- Leadership, relationships and working together
- Clarity of roles, expectations and objectives
- Processes – meetings, communication, discernment
- Continuous learning and improvement
- Culture – of the advisory body itself, meetings, the school and community
- Strategic plan, goals and outcomes
- Diversity of individual and collective skill sets and experience

What is effective evaluation?

There’s no ‘one size fits all’ approach to evaluating, however evaluation is effective when it is:

- Continual
- Purposeful
- Multi-faceted
- Responsive
- Reflective

Not sure where to start? Start with the Better Together Framework Matrix: Catholic, Engaging, Learning, Knowing, Responding. Start by exploring the characteristics of effective practice for each dimension. What are some of the indicators of effective practice? Use the reflection questions to start a discussion or self-reflection.
The Basic Process:

There are a range of tools and strategies you can use at each stage of the process. Some tools and strategies may be very structured and formal and others less so. When choosing an appropriate tool, you need to think about its purpose - Is it to take a quick and simple 'temperature reading'? If so, some of the quick group facilitation tools listed below would work very well. Or, are you needing a tool that will give you broader and deeper data to inform your school plan or school review and improvement process? In this case, surveys and situational analyses may be more appropriate. You'll also need to think about how you'll use the tool - in staff and parent meetings, workshops, focus groups, send-home forms etc. You will no doubt collect both quantitative and qualitative data throughout the process and the data you collect will be useful in informing subsequent steps in the process.

Remember to seek input from all members of the school community: families, teachers, support staff, school leadership, students (if appropriate), community members/agencies with whom the school has a relationship or wishes to... Bringing different perspectives into the process will enrich your data and provide you insights that you may have otherwise overlooked.

Tools and Techniques may include:

- ‘Dashboards’
- Surveys – verbal, paper and online
- Reflection activities
- Group processes – before, during and after meetings
- Checklists, audit tools, questionnaires
- Story-telling, anecdotal evidence, observation
- Community conversations, focus groups, interviews
- External Review and Evaluations

NB. Examples of these tools can be found on the Better Together site.

Key points for evaluation:

- Identify the purpose of the evaluation?
- Use a variety of methods and tools matched to the information required

Key questions that will guide the process and selection of most appropriate tool:

- What do you want to know?
- Why do you want to know it?
- How will you obtain it?
- What will you do with the information?
- How will the resulting information be communicated?
- How will we know when we are successful?
# EVALUATION PLAN

*Where are we? Where do we want to be? How are we going to get there?*

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| **IDENTIFY** | Consider:  
What do we want to know?  
Why do we want to know it?  
Who is involved? |                     |
| **EXPLORE**  
(Gather) | Consider:  
What information do we need  
How are we going to get it?  
When are we going to get it?  
Who is going to gather it? |                     |
| **REFLECT** | Consider:  
What has the information / data indicated? Do we need more?  
What are the implications?  
What we going to do now? |                     |
| **RESPOND**  
(Share) | Consider:  
Who needs to know?  
What needs to be communicated?  
(internally & externally?)  
How do we share it?  
(internally & externally?) |                     |
| **FOLLOW-UP** | What needs to happen next?  
Who is responsible?  
How do we know it is working? |                     |