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VISION, PURPOSE & STRATEGY BUILDING **BLUE SKY THINKING**

In schools, Blue Sky Thinking is particularly useful for developing vision and purpose statements, setting future goals and planning transformative strategic / improvement plans.

Blue Sky Thinking is a creative brainstorming approach that involves exploring ideas without limitations or constraints. It encourages open-mindedness, innovation, and the generation of ambitious, big-picture ideas.

The term is often associated with imagining possibilities free from practical concerns like budgets, policies, or feasibility, focusing instead on what could be. The goal is to inspire creativity and innovation that can later be refined into actionable plans.

EXCELLENT SCHOOLS 'BLUE SKY THINKING' PROCESS

FOR VISION AND PURPOSE BUILDING AND DEVELOPING STRATEGIC / IMPROVEMENT PLANS

1. Review / Define School Aspirations

Review the school's purpose, guiding statements, strategic initiatives and what success looks like in the long term, asking, "What do we stand for?" and "What impact do we want to create?"

Understand clearly the schools specific context and demographics for those involved.

2. Visualise the Ideal Future

Engage stakeholders to imagine the school 10 and 20 years from now, focusing on student outcomes, community impact, and innovation.

Use key questions, wonderings and thinking activities to brainstorm the school's future.

3. Explore Strengths and Opportunities

Assess the school's current strengths, unique offerings, and external opportunities to leverage for growth.

What might be the challenges and also the future and new opportunities.

4. Generate Bold Ideas

Look at 'school futures' data, educational reports, trends and media information.

Brainstorm transformative strategies and initiatives,

encouraging out-of-the-box thinking without constraints. Keep in mind the concept of 'points of difference' and the marketability of the schools.

5. Prioritise and Align

Select key focus areas that align with the school's values and aspirations, ensuring they address future challenges and opportunities.

Together as a community then rate, rank and prioritise the focusses to be undertaken.

6. Develop an Actionable Strategic / Improvement Plan

Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and update the school's guiding statement and vision / purpose documents to reflect the school's identity and aspirations.

Create a strategic / improvement plan with clear goals, actions / strategies, and measures of success to guide the school toward its envisioned future.

7. Engage, Refine, and Launch

Engage all stakeholders for feedback on the draft plan and refine it based on their input and communicate the finalised guiding statements and strategy through events, branding materials, social media and ongoing communication updates and forums etc.

BLUE SKY THINKING BRAINSTORMING & PLANNING CANVAS

	Demographics	Students / Staff / Community	Resources / Funding / Other
School Story / Context What is the significant background 'story' to the school and community			
	School Based	Local Community	City / State Wide / Other
Challenges / Blocks What internal or external obstacles would prevent the school from achieving its goals?			
	School Based	Local Community	City / State Wide / Other
Future / New Opportunities What emerging trends and innovations can the school leverage?			

BLUE SKY THINKING QUESTIONS / WONDERINGS / THINKING

Vision and Purpose

1. How does our current vision / purpose / values statements reflect the future of our school?
2. What is the core purpose of our school, and how does it align with the needs of our community and students?
3. What do we want our students to achieve personally and academically by the time they graduate?

Identity and Culture

4. What traditions, symbols, or practices set our school apart from others?
5. What key values define the culture of our school, and how do they shape our everyday practices?
6. How do we want our school to be perceived by students, staff, parents, and the broader community?

Focus and Priorities

7. What are our top three to five academic priorities, and how do they align with our long-term goals?
8. How does our curriculum, programs / pathways and pedagogy reflect a commitment to our school philosophy statements and the DfE Our Strategy?
9. What areas of student development (e.g., social-emotional learning / wellbeing, leadership, learner agency, digital literacy, other / etc.) should we prioritise in the coming years?

Points of Difference

10. What are the distinctive features of our school that make it stand out from other schools in the local area or city etc?
11. How do we incorporate unique programs (e.g., specialist areas / subjects, pathways, extracurricular activities etc.) to attract and retain students?
12. What innovative teaching and learning approaches or methodologies does our school implement to promote student engagement, achievement and success?

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

13. How do we effectively engage and communicate with students, parents, families, and the local community to foster a sense of belonging?
14. What strategies do we have in place to incorporate feedback from students, teachers, and parents into our improvement, change decision-making processes?

Improvement and Success

15. What are the biggest challenges our school faces, and how can we strategically address them over the next 3-5 years?
16. What metrics do we currently use to assess our success, and how might these be improved to better measure our outcomes?
17. How do we ensure continuous learning / professional development for staff to support their growth and our school vision?

Future and Sustainability

18. How do we ensure that our facilities and resources are aligned with the evolving needs of our students, curriculum and educational programs?
19. What specific goals do we have in terms of enrolment, resource allocation, infrastructure / facilities to ensure long-term sustainability?

Partners and Collaboration

20. How can we build partnerships with other schools, universities, and / or industry to enhance the learning experiences and opportunities for our students?