**Augusta State School and their growing communities**

This is a story about a futures built school in a growing community who are committed to meeting the needs of children and families.

Augusta State School is located in the Greater Springfield area, Australia’s largest master planned community, making it a futures built school. Since opening in 2011 Augusta has continued to experience significant growth and a changing community. With a philosophy of working in partnership with families to build a school for the community, the school leadership began to explore their AEDC data to sharpen their focus.

**Beginning to explore the data**

*Tracie Best, Deputy Principal at Augusta State School:*

The difficulty with having all the information in front of me that when I reflect on that was I had nothing to contextualise it with. I didn't understand where the data had come from and what it was collecting. I needed to first of all understand the process of the AEDC collection and what information it gave.

*Cheryl Mitchell , Prep teacher at Augusta State School:*

As a prep teacher, the AEDC data helps us plan for the needs of the children in the community, which is very helpful for when we're designing our program around the children.

*Tracie Best, Deputy Principal at Augusta State School:*

The vulnerable domains for us were very much aligned to what we believed we already knew about our students. That was an affirming process.

**Interpreting the data**

*Tammy Swane, Principal at Augusta State School:*

We had a good look at the data and realised we didn't have all the information. We could make lots of assumptions about the data and interpreting the data, but we needed to get a much clearer picture of everyone who contributed to, or who are a part of, or who provide a service to the community and it's fair to say that we didn't necessarily know that until we went out actively searching.I suppose what the data has told us is here's some data. To interpret it, we need to know the community better than we do now.Schools work hard to make a difference for children but the impact of the early years can shape children’s learning trajectories well before they reach school.Schools work hard to make a difference for children but the impact of the early years can shape children’s learning trajectories well before they reach school.

**Schools are not alone in their efforts to make a difference for children**

*Tammy Swane, Principal at Augusta State School:*

Schools are very busy places and looking at the data has, I think, made us consider not what else can we do, but who else can help us.

We can't do anymore ... We're doing everything we can. We don't have any more time. What we've learned from this is that the community is bigger than the school and we do need to reach out and see how other agencies can help us.

*Tracie Best, Deputy Principal at Augusta State School:*

When we started looking at the data and looking at the vulnerable domains and one was the language and cognitive, which we were quite aware of, of the children coming through our school. We identified community health as one stakeholder in that AEDC data and our community and we invited them into a meeting along with some ECEC service providers, and it was through that conversation with them that we were able then to identify other stakeholders and make connections with those as well.

What I did identify was that there were some small connections of one or two parties connected together, but not connected as a network. What has come out of that is that we had built quite a large network of people in our community who can provide some way of support and service to the children in our community.

*Tammy Swane, Principal at Augusta State School*

All we needed to do was invite those people to partner with us and the journey has begun.

Through conversations with partners, the school identified opportunities to make small changes that could have a big impact.

**Working smarter not harder**

*Tammy Swane, Principal at Augusta State School:*

What we're looking into is how much help can we get to prepare the kids in our community for a better transition to school. We can do our part and we're looking into how we can do that better.

The school is planning to start their current enrolment process earlier in the year, to better connect families to early years services in the community.

**Part of the strategy is to start the prep enrolment process earlier**

*Tammy Swane, Principal at Augusta State School:*

There are other support agencies that we can tap into or we can facilitate and help parents tap into before they come to prep and lining that up with what we know about kid's language development in the early years, that's where it needs to happen, in the early years. If we can provide a support network and facilitate a connection for a parent with the community agency that can help us do that, it's a win-win.

With their partners the school identified opportunities to better connect parents in the early years.

**Connecting the community – a partnership approach**

*Tammy Swane, Principal at Augusta State School:*

Because of the age, the youngness of our community and the youngness of the infrastructure in our community, that parents aren't necessarily connecting in the community with their neighbours. Of course, sometimes, but not always, and sometimes school is the first connection to the community.

*Tracie Best, Deputy Principal at Augusta State School:*

This is not just about our school, this is about the greater community, what we didn't want to do is take ownership of where we go from there.

What we're trying to do is connect with them in order to maybe create a play group that runs with the support of the City Council, they're very, very keen to build that support, and the universities and try and see if we can utilise those partners in forming something maybe like a play group.

To start exploring how you might use the AEDC in your planning visit

<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/aedcqueensland/>

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