

Leadership is the key to improving all students' growth and achievement. Leaders and teachers in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's 'Leading Learning Collaborative', are working, thinking and learning together about how to continue to improve what they do by focusing on what is best for *all* students. They take responsibility for their own continued learning as they understand it will impact on all students across the diocese. Together this community of leaders, teachers and staff at all levels share responsibility and accountability for all learners in their care.

Leaders and teachers in the "Leading Learning Collaborative" who work alongside me are committed to my well-researched system and school improvement work. They commit to:

1. finding the best teaching practices to teach all students in every classroom;
2. learning from other teachers what successful practice looks like in every K-12 classroom;
3. taking risks to try new strategies;
4. engaging students in relevant, real-world activities that interest them;
5. celebrating the small wins that students make every day; and,
6. involving parents in the focus on learning taking place in every classroom.

These leaders and teachers understand that parents are our learners' first teachers. While it seems obvious, sometimes neither teachers nor parents are aware of just how much parents and caregivers can (and do) contribute to the learning of each student. Educators know and value the contributions of key stakeholders—teachers, students, parents and the broader community—who have important roles in improving student learning outcomes. By being open and attentive to the many voices of parents and community members, and by sharing what leaders and teachers are learning, all can become better advocates for learning and all learners.

Sometimes, parents don't know the questions to ask their children. Sometimes parents don't know what to ask teachers when they want to know more about how their child is doing and that makes them uncomfortable, so they don't ask. Thus, we give them a script: "questions to ask your children" that is a communication strategy for parents, teachers and leaders. The 5 Questions that parents can ask teachers are:

1. [What is my child learning?](#)

2. How is s/he doing?
3. How do you know (how s/he is doing)?
4. How can s/he improve?
5. What supports can I provide at home and can you provide if s/he is struggling? When will we check in again about his/her progress?

We then designed the following 5 Questions for parents to ask their children about their learning:

1. What did you learn today?
2. How did you do?
3. What did you do if you didn't understand?
4. How can you improve on your learning?
5. What are you most proud of?

Parents find that using these questions creates more opportunities for informative conversations with their children, promoting answers beyond “good”, “well” or “I don't remember”. As leaders, teachers and parents, we must find the many ways that students learn best and work together to ensure that we live the dream of every student succeeding.