

WYNDHAM COMMUNITY AND  
EDUCATION CENTRE PRESENTS:  
THE 2020 TRANSFORMATIVE  
EDUCATION SHOWCASE

# Learning Transitions: Blurring The Edges



**Wyndham**  
Community &  
Education Centre Inc.  
*Improving lives - Strengthening communities*

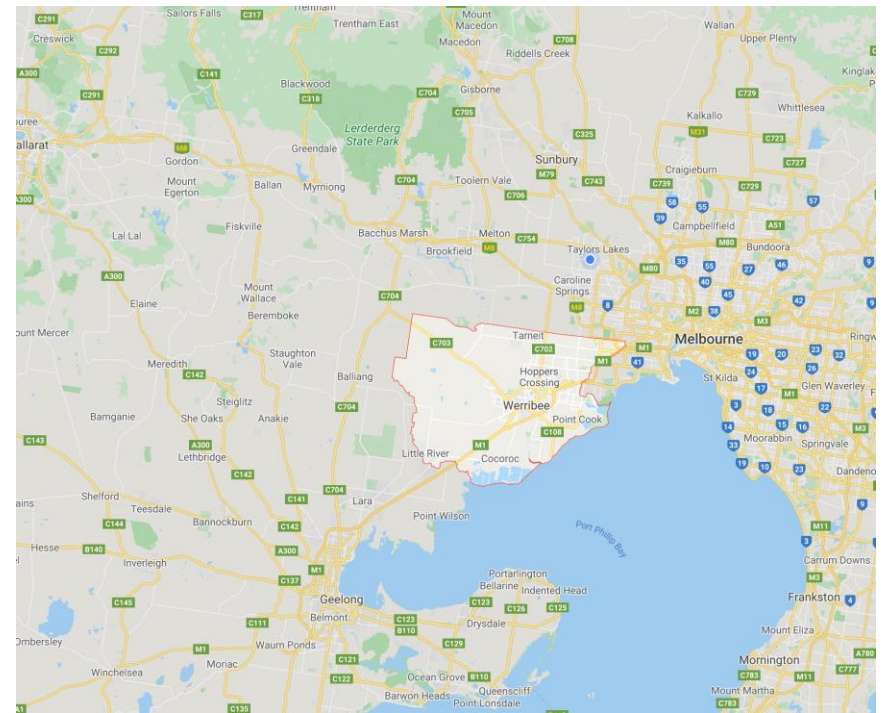
wyndhamcity



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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# WYNDHAM





# Learning Community Strategy

2018 - 2023



# PROGRAM

- **Welcome**
- **Speaker Presentations**
  - *Charlotte Bagnall*
  - *Casper Rongsted*
  - *Dr Santino Atem Deng*
  - *Alison McQuade, Yolette Dezilwa and Rennis Alias*
- **Q&A Panel**
- **Breakout Sessions**
  - *Solving Wyndham's Wicked Transition Problems*
- **Close**





Charlotte  
Bagnall

# TOO SOON, OR TOO LATE: WHEN IS THE 'OPTIMAL' TIME FOR SCHOOL TRANSITION?

Charlotte Bagnall

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# What is a transition period?

‘Any episode where children are having to cope with potentially challenging episodes of change, including progressing from one developmental stage to another’

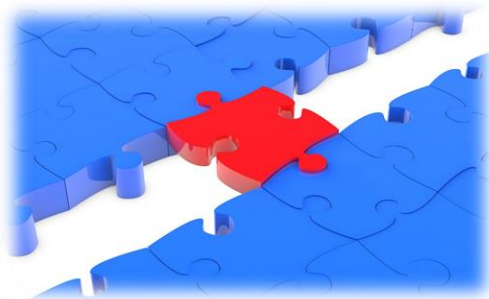
*(Newman & Blackburn, 2002, 1)*



## Significance of school transition

‘Transitional periods in the lives of children and young people are times of **threat** but also opportunity for **change**’

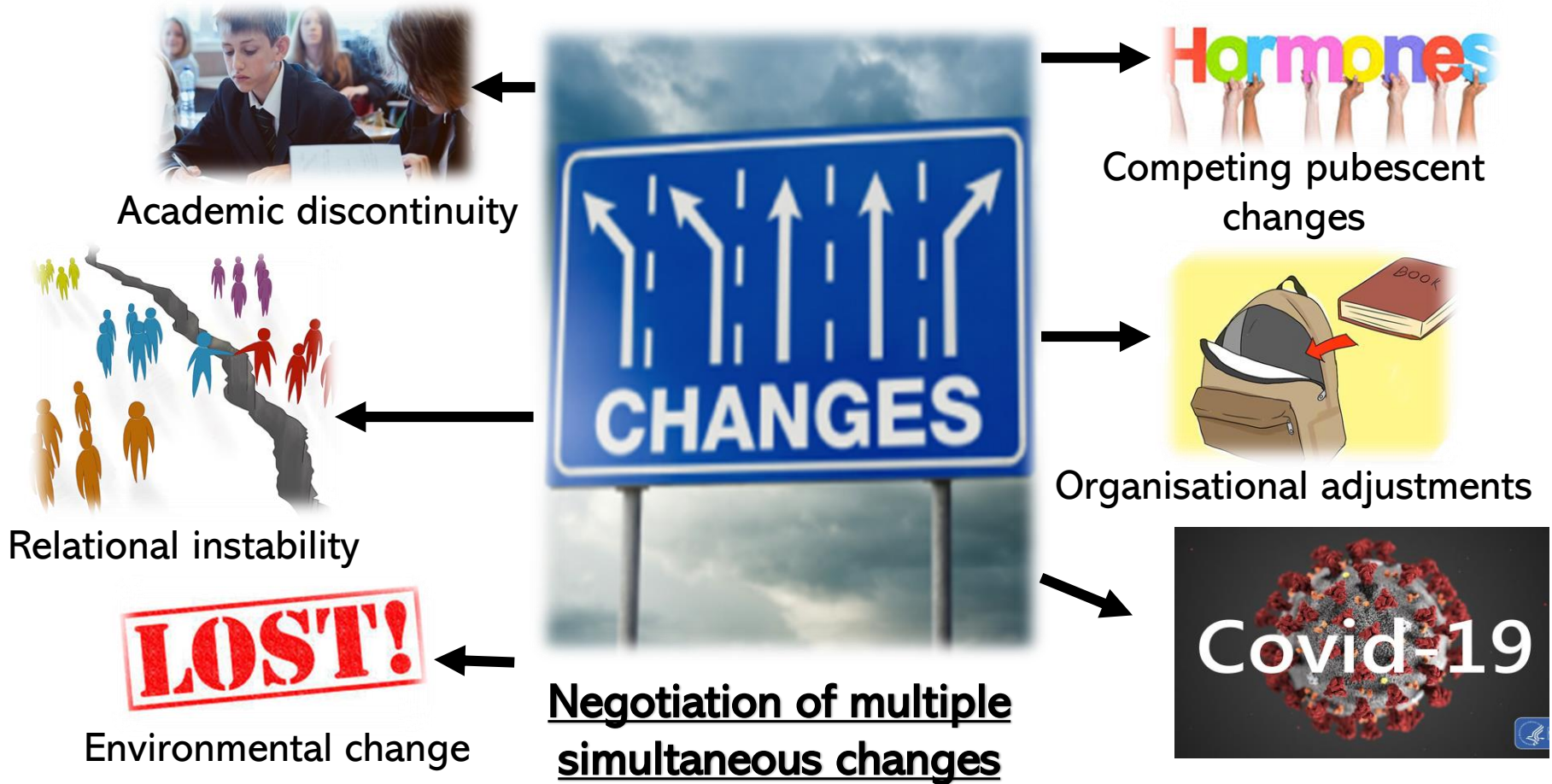
*(Newman & Blackburn, 2002, 17)*



**Primary-secondary school transition** is ‘one of the most difficult transitions in pupils’ educational careers’ *(Zeedyk et al., 2003)*

**Major life events vs. daily hassles** *(Hallinan & Hallinan, 1992)*

# Significance Of Primary-Secondary School Transition





# PhD Rationale

Talking about School Transition (TaST) was informed by **case study** and **focus group** research conducted with transfer students, parents and teachers in the **UK** and **USA**

## UK student, parent and teacher focus groups

Bagnall, Skipper & Fox (2019)



- Schools and stakeholders need to communicate more
- Need to manage children's emotions and expectations

## UK special school case study

Bagnall, Fox & Skipper (in preparation)



- Children need to feel safe and a sense of belonging
- Need to balance short and long term wellbeing

Bagnall, C. L. (2020). Talking about School Transition (TaST): an emotional centred intervention to support children over primary-secondary school transition. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-22.

## USA case study

Bagnall, Fox & Skipper (in press)



# When Is The Optimal Time For School Transition?

## Background

❖ Across countries, the age and timing of when children navigate school transition varies. Factors which can influence transitional adjustment and interact with transfer timing include:

1. **Competing Pressures (school level):**- Strength model of self-control (*Baumeister et al., 2007*)
2. **Puberty:**- 'Key rite of passages' (*Chedzoy & Burden, 2009*)
3. **Developmental Age and Maturation:**- Developmental Readiness Hypothesis (*Gee et al, 2000*)

❖ Limited cross-cultural comparative research contrasting adjustment outcomes across transition onset times



# Rationale

**Few efforts have been made to investigate the 'optimal time' for school transition.**

Children in the USA transition to High school later (**age 14**) than children in the UK (**age 11**) and Australia (**age 12**) and some also make one further transition before this move to Middle school (**age 11**) or Junior High school (**age 12**).

**Thus, by sampling schools in the USA can contrast:**

- ❖ How are educational transitions managed and supported in the USA?
- ❖ Do transition preparations differ across schools?
- ❖ Is school transition easier for children at a later rather than earlier age?
- ❖ Is High school transition easier when children have navigated a prior transition?



# Method

## Sample

- ❖ Seven schools-Elementary (1), Middle (2), Junior High (2) and High schools (2)
- ❖ Across four districts in Northern California
- ❖ Students (43), parents (2), teachers (6) and counsellors (5)
- ❖ Schools selected on an opportunistic and theoretical basis

## Design

- ❖ Qualitative research
- ❖ Case study design
- ❖ Data collection methodologies included ethnographic classroom observations, student focus groups and staff and parent interviews

## Analysis

- ❖ Thematic Analysis



Bagnall, C.L., Fox, C.L. & Skipper, Y. (in press). Does the timing of school transition impact adjustment? An insight into USA transition systems. *Pastoral Care in Education*.

# Findings

## 1. How are educational transitions managed and supported in the USA?

- **Choice:** parents select school **AND** a transfer system
- **Language:** promotion, progression and continuation **NOT LOSS**
- **Emotional centred support:** accessible specialist support within the school environment

## 2. Do transition preparations differ across schools?

- Middle and Junior High schools portrayed as 'mini-High schools' with more emphasis and support around High school transition: *'the Junior High school environment was closer to a High school environment than the K-8 so we just got even more prepared'* (Grade 9 student)
- K-8 Elementary schools are more nurturing, keeping children in a younger environment: *'during the time when they're in the most turmoil, they have more consistency in Elementary school with one teacher and people who know them'* (High School counsellor)

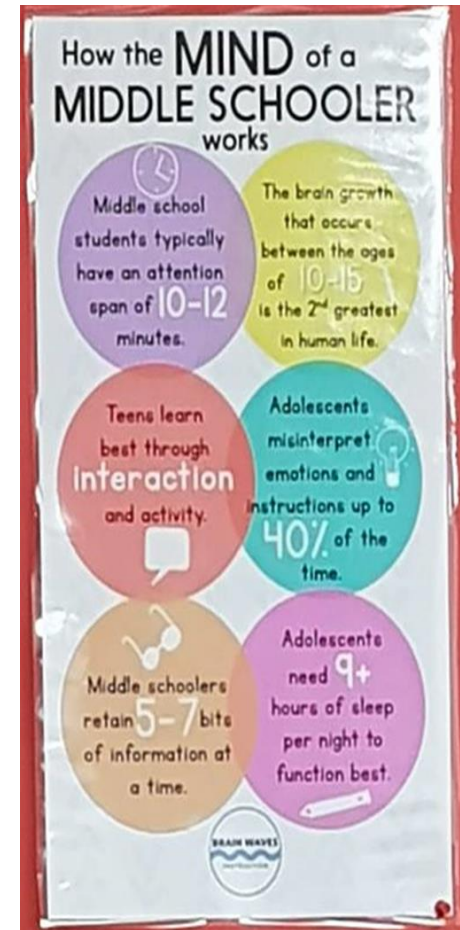
# Findings

## 3. Is school transition easier for children at a later rather than earlier age?

- **High school transition easier:** *'I think a bigger transition for kids is actually moving from Elementary school to Middle school'* (Counsellor)
- **Transition at age 12 easier than age 11:** *'I think one year makes a difference you know, they're like I say the maturity level and skill-set, I think one year can make a difference'* (Grade 6 and 7 teacher)

## 4. Is High school transition easier when children have navigated a prior transition?

- **Need for exposure:** *'something in between to test things'* (Grade 6 child)
- **Sense of reassurance:** *'Middle school can be overwhelming but is most definitely important for High school'* (Grade 7 child)
- **Individual differences:** dependent on children's maturity and coping skills at transition





# Recommendations For Practice, Policy And Further Research

## Practice

- School transition is easier when it matches children's individual needs
- School transition needs to be presented as a progression
- Specialised, emotional support within school is 'gold standard'
- Transition preparation must be gradual and sensitive

## Policy

- Consideration of delaying transition until most children are developmentally ready

## Research

- Further longitudinal and intervention comparative research is needed





[www.nordicschools.com](http://www.nordicschools.com)



Casper  
Rongsted





## THE AGENDA

- Introduction and a short presentation
- The Nordic Schools and our values
  - # 1: Trust
  - # 2: We don't compete
  - # 3: We minimize the distance
- Do you want more?



Kasper

Anders

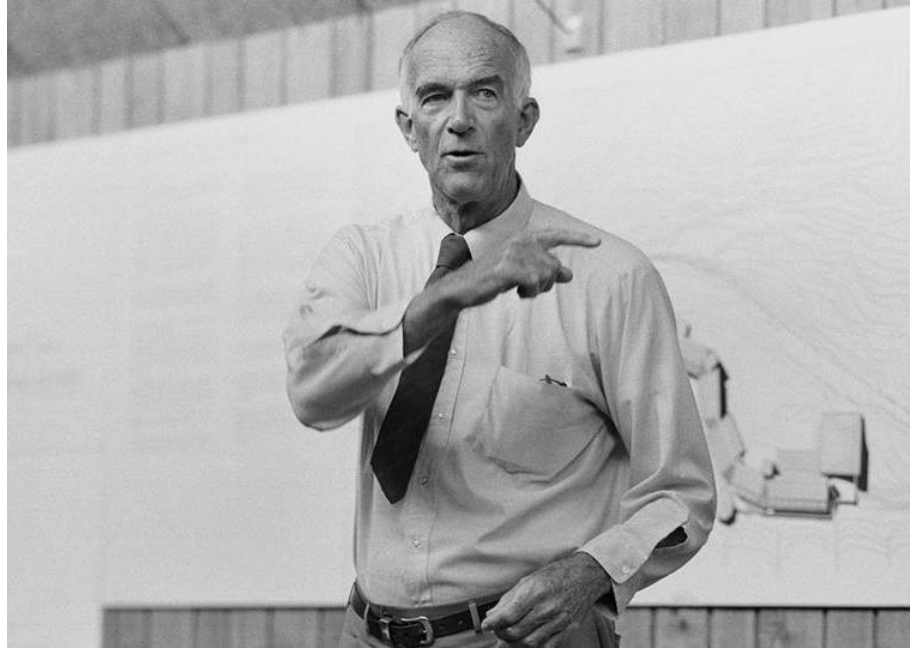
Casper



NORDIC SCHOOLS









# # 1: TRUST





Survey question:

**Do you agree  
that most people can be trusted?**

Nordic Countries

**76,3 %**

Brazil

**6,5 %**

Australia

**54,4 %**





**The teachers trust the students**  
They cultivate the students'  
independent thinking

They let them talk!





## Who's talking in the classroom?

### English schools

Teachers:

70-80 %

Students:

20-30 %

### Nordic Schools

Teachers:

40-50 %

Students:

50-60 %

*Source: John Hattie, Visible Learning, 2016*





**The state trust the schools**  
No curriculum - a general school  
law outlining competencies







## #2: We don't compete



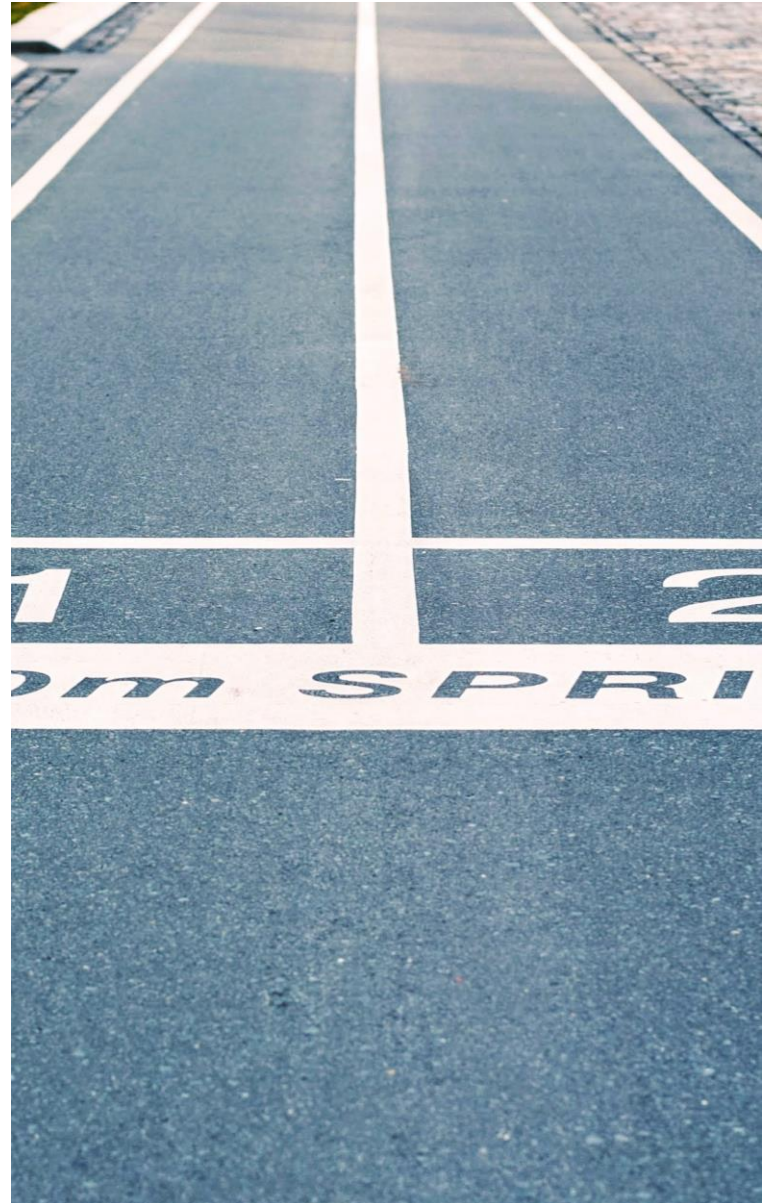


## #2: We don't compete

**We test to understand the whole person - not just to examine an Excel sheet**

**We test their readiness for transitions:**

**We test all students' academical skills AND all students' wellbeing and readiness for school and studying**





# The UPV

Assessment of the student's (aged 14-17) readiness for further studying

## Personal preconditions

## Social preconditions

## Practical subject skills

*Motivation*

*Accountability*

*Independency*

*Stability*

*Readiness to choose*

*Collaboration*

*Respect*

*Tolerance*

*Practical skills and creativity*

*Switching between part and whole*

*Workshop skills*

*Applying theory in practice*





## #3: We minimize the distance

*“In the Nordic schools we work hard to minimize the distance between the teacher and the student.*

*We systematically try to understand every person that we teach.  
And we ask the difficult personal questions.”*

*Per Fibæk Laursen, Danish professor in educational science  
Author of 45 books on schools and learning*





## #3: We minimize the distance

**We also ask the students:**

*How do you get friends?*

*How do you keep a friend?*

*What do you like about school?*

*What are you worried about in school?*





## 3 Basic Values in The Nordic Schools

#1: Trust

#2: We don't compete

#3: We minimize the distance





## Do you want more?

Send us a mail to [info@nordicschools.com](mailto:info@nordicschools.com)

We will send you:

- 39 questions about students' wellbeing (aged 6-10)
- The UPV - questions for students aged 14-17
- A link to a short video about how to use the UPV
- Our newsletter
- **See you next school year?**









Dr Santino  
Atem  
Deng



Dr Santino Atem Deng, PhD

[atemdeng@gmail.com](mailto:atemdeng@gmail.com)

*Transitional challenges facing newly arrived families in alternate education systems*

***Transformative Education Showcase - Learning Transitions: Blurring the Edges***

Date: 24/07/2020



# Understanding The Difference Between Refugees And Migrants

## **Migrants:**

- Chooses their destination country and find out all they can before they leave
- Plan their move
- Pack their belongings and choose what to take and what to leave behind
- Say goodbye to their love ones and friends
- Leave a forwarding address
- Maybe able to get home if things do not work out in the destination country

## **Refugees:**

- Take the quickest way out often without knowing their destination
- Leave hastily, often to escape from midnight raids and soldiers with gun
- Leave secretly with whatever they can carry
- Unable to let the love ones know where they are going for fear they will be harmed for information
- Are afraid to keep in touch with family or friends in their home country
- May never be able to return home



## CALD Communities In Victoria: Diversity In Religion, Culture, Language And Education

### **Religion:**

- Indication of religious affiliation to various group would suggest that the majority of Middle-Eastern, Afghani, and Somali refugees/migrants are Muslim, whereas Eastern, Southern and Central African are majority Christian with majority Muslim populations from Western and Northern Africa. While refugees/migrants from Burma are predominantly Buddhist with some Christian minorities.

### **Education:**

- There is considerable variation in education levels amongst refugee/migrant population
- Generally speaking, children that have spent many years in refugee Camps, would not have been exposed to an educational experience within a school setting with set school routines

## Culture & Tradition: Family Structure

- Many families from CALD comes from generally patriarchal structure: a father is often the head of the family and breadwinner
- Every family member has specific roles and responsibilities according to their gender and age group
- Children are taught their distinctive roles within the family and society by parents and relatives
- Teaching children's responsibilities are divided between a father and mother with the support of relatives, friends and neighbours or wider community
- Female activities include household chores, while boys are encouraged to socialise with their peers and look after domestic animals or other assigned duties, which vary from different cultures.

## The Immediate Transitional Challenge In The New Environment (Australia)

- Transitional challenges and changes in parenting practices, and in legal, social and culture
- Difficulties in applying and preserving traditional parenting practices in Australia
- Transition into a new social and cultural environment
- Parents versus children on transitional power structures: intergenerational conflict
- Transition into new parenting - childrearing and disciplining in traditional setting was a collective practice
- Transition in traditional customary laws, marital and gender roles
- Transitional hindrances: racism, discrimination and bullying

## Changes And Challenges Within CALD: Family And Parenting Support Services

- Many refugee/migrant have experienced a range of changes and pressures to and within families due to forced migration, displacement and various other forms of injustice
- Many spent years in refugee camps or transit countries before getting resettled in Australia
- Coming to a new environment mean that refugee/migrant family members must re-negotiate changes in their parenting practices, family structures and relationships (e.g. among parents/children, husbands/wives, etc).



## Continue...

- The influence of acculturation including adaptation to new laws and customs relating to parenting and family relationships in Australia can create confusion and sense of powerlessness or loss (mostly parents/caregivers)
- Changes within family can spark conflict and struggles between parents and their children - intergenerational conflict/gaps and different parental expectations
- Difficulties understanding and adapting to their new environment (e.g. parents), language and cultural barriers top the list of immediate issues upon arriving in Australia
- Changes in gender roles within families can sometimes lead to feelings of status loss, particularly for men

# Youth Challenges

- Youth identity, culture and perspectives on parenting and being parented
- Intergenerational conflict: experiences of growing up between differing cultures
- Intergenerational/transgenerational trauma
- Parental control versus young people's new freedom and independence
- Physical discipline (not applicable within the new environment)
- Parental expectations of their children (*education and behaviour wise*)

## Parents Involvement In Their Children Education - Improving Communication Between School

- Cultural awareness on the challenges/issues CALD parents and their children are facing while transitioning from their understanding of the education system from the perspectives of the country of origin and Australian context
- Appropriate communication with parents who are not literate in English and sometimes in their own languages
- Using school Cultural Liaison Officers to help link the parents and school to improve understanding and communication
- Cultural exchange activities at schools to help facilitate a better relationship with CALD parents and schools.



Thank you



Please  
standby. We  
will be back  
in ten  
minutes

Grab a cuppa, and stretch your legs..



Alison McQuade, Yolette Dezilwa  
& Rennis Alias

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# TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION SHOWCASE

TO PRESENT SUCCESS STORIES FOR THE 12-20 AGE GROUP LOCALLY &  
GLOBALLY AND INVESTIGATE THE POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION



## WELS MAP LEGEND



**A Western English language School Location**



**Primary  
For students aged 5 to 12 years**



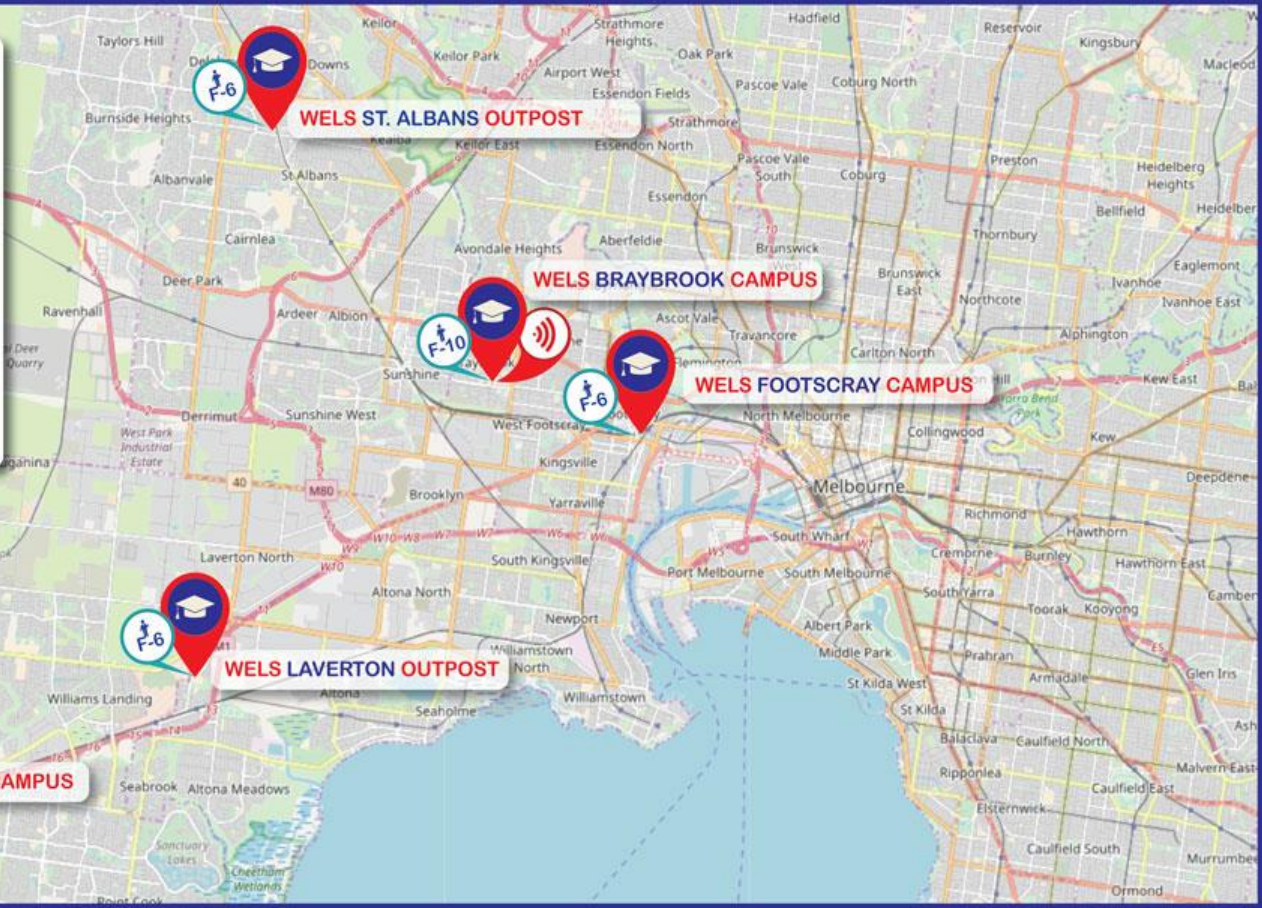
**Primary & Secondary  
For students aged 5 to 18 years**



**Secondary  
For students aged 12 to 18 years**



**Virtual Classroom Hub  
servicing regional areas**



**WELS ST. ALBANS OUTPOST**



**WELS BRAYBROOK CAMPUS**



**WELS FOOTSCRAY CAMPUS**



**WELS MANOR LAKES CAMPUS**



**WELS WYNDHAM CAMPUS**



**WELS LAVERTON OUTPOST**



# STUDENT BACKGROUNDS

## Countries of origin:

550 students across 6 sites from Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Burundi, Malawi, Egypt, Mozambique, Burma (Chin, Karenni, Karen), Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Lebanon, Italy, Greece, Samoa

## Schooling background

A range of schooling backgrounds, from **preliterate** (having not had access to previous schooling), **interruption of two years or more** (due to displacement, war or health issues) to students who have access to **equivalent years of schooling** in their own countries.

# WHAT STRONG CONNECTIONS DO NEWLY ARRIVED STUDENTS AND FAMILIES HAVE TO THE WESTERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL?

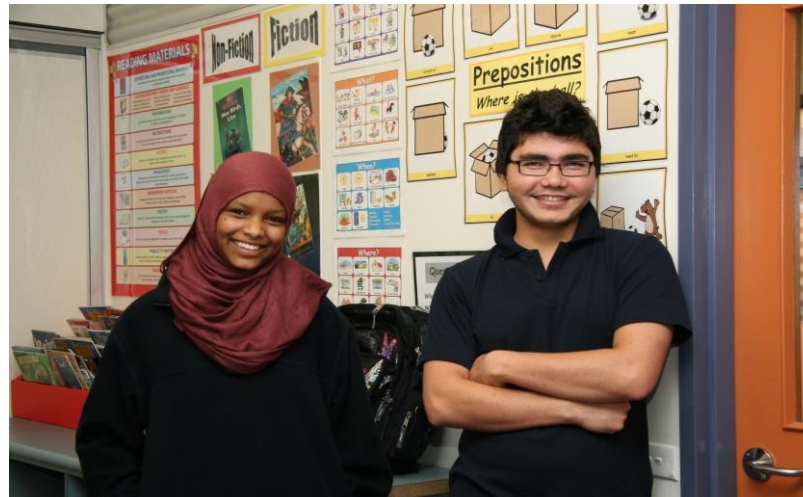
## WHAT MAKES STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY?

Attendance rates at WELS are extremely high – 96% attendance

- Staff who understand and learn about their backgrounds and experiences
- Strong and ongoing connections with families
- Teachers, bilingual aides and connected community members who can speak students' first languages
- A clear and scaffolded EAL curriculum
- Daily feedback to students on their progress
- Whole school, ongoing, professional learning for curriculum and wellbeing & cultural awareness
- Feedback from students that WELS provides a safe, welcoming and kind learning environment

# Length of Stay

- Interrupted learning – 40 weeks
- Equivalently-schooled – 20 weeks
- Special circumstances: age and exit to TAFE, rapid progress at WELS or moving to other regions



# TRANSITION INTO WESTERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

- **First, a welcome and transition *into* WELS** for students and parents – school tours, parent information sessions, students buddying with current students, bilingual aides connecting with families to convey and receive information about housing, health, financial assistance available for education (CSEF), schooling expectations, initial interviews with parents about backgrounds and prior experiences, legislation around child safety
- Daily phone calls to follow up student absence, folios of student work sent home to parents, parent teacher sessions every term





# IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WHO ARE GOING TO EXIT/TRANSIT FROM WELS

- Identify students who need an Extension of Stay (EOS) based on English language levels and other factors
- Identify students who are ready for high school
- Identify students for whom TAFE is an option or pathway of choice

# TRANSITION

- Managed by Transition Coordinators at each WELS site
- Secondary Transition Coordinators have training as Careers Counsellors

# TRANSITION PROCESS

- Consult all the students' classroom teachers and then
- Present options to student
  - School – usually closest school, schools zoned
  - TAFE – 16 years and older; students who would have difficulty coping with high school
  - Year level – usually one year below age cohort based on age and schooling background
  - Explain that schools are not willing to accept students 18 and over.
  - If the student is 16 and older they must exit to Year 10

# EXPLAINING TRANSITION TO PARENTS

- Consult parents and guardians via letter and phone calls
- Recommendation to parents via letter
- Parents agree/disagree with recommendation
- If parents disagree – meet with parents and student to discuss and follow up



# CONTACTING SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND TAFES

- Contact schools, to seek a place, usually in Week 4 of a school term
- Contact TAFEs before the end of each semester (terms 2 & 4)

# ARRANGING ENROLMENT VISITS

- Inform parents/guardians by letter about date and time of enrolment visit to new school
- Advise that parents or guardians must attend
- Notify parents of documentation needed for enrolment (passport, immi card, Medicare card/health insurance details & health care card)
- Advise the school that an interpreter should be provided

# TRANSITION - THE ENROLMENT VISIT

- The WELS Transition coordinator accompanies the student and parent
- The interview usually takes 1 - 1½ hours
- The student and parent/guardian complete enrolment forms
- The student completes subject selection
- It's a good opportunity for the student and parent or guardian to ask questions

# TRANSITION

## STUDENT VISIT TO NEW SCHOOL, TAFE OR OTHER PATHWAYS

- The student visits the school or TAFE for the day
- Parent/guardian is informed by letter of the date of the visit
- The student returns to WELS and gives feedback on the visit
- The student now has an overview of the school: what to expect, introduction to some staff and other information about the school

# FOLLOW UP VISITS

- Transition coordinators follow up exited students to check on their progress and to follow up queries
- WELS staff (Transition Coordinator, Teachers or Education Support staff contact mainstream schools to see how students are going and also arrange visits to see the children, especially students for whom transition may be difficult.
- Mainstream teachers & exited students complete transition surveys to provide feedback which allows WELS to review practices to refine our processes to better support our students during their stay at WELS and beyond.



# EXIT DATA

- 99% of students remain in their chosen pathway 12 months after exiting WELS
- 1% of students leave Victoria or find employment.





PANEL  
DISCUSSION

*Blurring the Edges  
of Learning  
Transitions*

- **Facilitator**

- *John Sheen, WCEC*


- **Panelists**

- *Charlotte Bagnall*
- *Casper Rongsted*
- *Dr Santino Atem Deng*
- *Alison McQuade*
- *Yolette Dezilwa*
- *Rennis Alias*

Please  
standby. We  
will be back in  
five minutes

Grab a cuppa, and stretch your legs..





# Wicked Problem Solving Breakout Sessions

## **Breakout Session A (stay in this current room)**

### **Wicked Problem 1 – Led by Casper and Diane**

*How can we inspire students to consider transitioning to career work in the growing industries in Wyndham of aged care and construction?*

## **Breakout Session B (breakout room B - see link in comments)**

### **Wicked Problem 2 – Led by Meg and Charlotte**

*How can we inclusively and respectfully meet the literacy and numeracy needs of young people, including migrant and refugee children, who have fallen behind their age group in mainstream education?*





Regroup  
Next Steps  
Close



Wyndham City

# Learning Community Strategy

2018 - 2023



## Contact Us

**Wyndham City Council Learning Community team**

<https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/learning-community>

**Wyndham Community and Education Centre (WCEC)**

<https://www.wyndhamcec.org.au/>