



# WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM

## What Happened?

We have had several years of high energy and commitment to improvement in the quality of learning and teaching in the school. Investment was high amongst staff. This included new learning, training and development, sharing, human resources, drive and initiative from leadership and staff, even before participation in the Learning to Learn program. What Learning to Learn enabled us to do was to extend our knowledge and to support our knowledge and practice in whole school reform. The conditions for learning were ideal – including supportive structures, healthy training and development budget, release time for staff, professional learning terms, internal consultant group, recognition and acknowledgement from outside the school.

In 2003 there was significant staff change and therefore the emphasis for some staff was in the establishment of relationships with new colleagues, in the development of personal/professional credibility and the organisational resiliency wavered. While we continued to maintain, what we considered were good conditions of learning, it did not seem to translate across the organization. This was evidenced by the following:

- Less energy and willingness to engage in (previously agreed upon) whole school initiatives eg Learning Circles, Focus Groups.
- Changing dynamics of the learning teams.
- A propensity for staff to not consider things systematically and from a systems perspective but individually – eg classroom only/not student but teacher focussed.

## The Change

The change happened in our thinking as we attempted to make sense of what we saw as a step backwards. Initially we were disappointed and felt that our work had been to no avail. However, as we explored what was happening we realised that for sustainability we needed to build in an understanding about the change process and the conditions. If professional dynamics change, then it is important to reflect on the practices to take those conditions into account. It may mean that structures and processes need to alter to fit the new context.

## Why do you think this is a significant change?

Often we implement an initiative into our school with enthusiasm and great commitment. The success of the initiative is only measured when actions match what we initially perceived they would be. For sustainability, there needs to be a consideration that change is not an end result but a process and through that process only true learning occurs.

## What evidence will you have to know that you have made a difference?

- Engagement of Staff.
- Language used to define activities within the school.
- Staff taking initiatives/responsibility for whole school activities.
- Energy Level
- Staff able to articulate clear focus.
- Staff Actions reflect clear focus