

# A framework for Lutheran schools

## Ethos

### We believe

- the Bible is the supreme authority for Christian faith and life
- the Holy Spirit works through the teaching of God's word in our schools to lead people to know and trust in God as Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier
- all people are sinful and saved by grace through faith in Christ
- because Christians live in grace, all they do is for God's glory not theirs
- each person is a unique creation of God and a person loved by God
- all useful knowledge and learning is God's gift to people for their wellbeing
- service to others through actions and relationships is a reflection of and response to God's love for all

### And because of this we value as core

- the Bible as the authority informing what we do and teach
- the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of each person
- forgiveness, being forgiven and reconciliation
- that God, by grace shown through Jesus loves, accepts and values each person
- the uniqueness and worth of each person
- God's gifts of knowledge and learning
- a spirit of service reflecting God's action in our lives

Value-based learning is further developed by contextual values particular to individual school communities

### Therefore, in Lutheran schools we see

- everything we are and do in relation to God
  - each member of our school community as someone in relation to God
- This understanding of the identity of each person before God motivates us to:
- develop the whole person
  - strive for the best
  - care for each person
  - help each student grow in the assurance of their God-given worth and purpose
  - accept the need of discipline for the well-being of the individual living in community
  - reflect characteristics of God
  - create learning contexts incorporating values that reflect God's relationship with God's world

Lutheran schools aim to encourage and support students, informed and sustained by the Word of God, to develop their God-given talents so that they may shape and enrich their world

Meet educational authorities' requirements and state / territory, federal requirements

## LIFELONG QUALITIES FOR LEARNERS

As central to their mission and ministry, Lutheran schools seek to nurture **individuals**, who are aware of their humanity, open to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and growing in and living according to a cohesive worldview

while

**Living in community** and reflecting characteristics of God through core values, especially love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation

and

**Contributing to communities** by being

- self-directed, insightful investigators and learners
- discerning, resourceful problem solvers and implementers
- adept, creative producers and contributors
- open, responsive communicators and facilitators
- principled, resilient leaders and collaborators
- caring, steadfast supporters and advocates

## Paradigms

### Beliefs about learners

- All learners are valued for who they are and whose they are
- All learners need encouragement and deserve respect
- Learners learn in different ways and at different rates
- All learners have the ability to learn and learn best when
  - > They experience success
  - > They take responsibility for their own learning
  - > They can work both independently and collaboratively
  - > Subject matter is meaningful
  - > High, explicit learning expectations are present
  - > They are authentically assessed and appropriately challenged
- Learners need to learn how to learn and think
- Collaborative partnerships between parents / caregivers and schools support learners and learning

### Beliefs about learning

- Learning goes beyond the academic: it includes the spiritual, physical, emotional and social and has a transforming role
- Learning has affective and volitional dimensions as well as cognitive
- Learning is lifelong
- Learning involves learners progressing through developmental cycles
- Learning is facilitated when individual needs of the student are met
- Learning occurs in a context and is driven by curiosity, need and inquiry
- Learning builds on previous knowledge, experiences and understanding

### Beliefs about learning communities

- All people are learners
- Safe and supportive learning environments facilitate active learning
- Effective learning communities respect diversity and encourage reflective practice and productive feedback
- Learning communities are strengthened by having a shared vision and common core beliefs
- Learning communities reflect upon and respond to the world of today in ways that enable their members to face the future with confidence
- Learning cultures need to be intentionally developed

# A framework for Lutheran schools

## Rationale

This framework was developed through a consultative process involving schools and regions within Lutheran Education Australia. The framework provides an overview of how Lutheran schooling is formed and shaped by its beliefs, while meeting legislative requirements and also reflecting current understandings about learners, learning and learning communities. It presents a Christian worldview that reflects a framework of meaning and purpose to inform Lutheran schooling. A Framework for Lutheran schools presents a story to tell, a language to speak, a work to undertake, and a face of God to see, and it helps people who encounter Lutheran schooling to identify the group to which they belong (Scroope, 2005).

## Explanation

The ethos of the Lutheran school is informed by beliefs about God, the nature of people and the relationship God seeks with each individual, which in turn informs relationships with one another and the environment. Since this ethos is deeply held, certain things are highly valued and they influence and motivate behaviour. This ethos comprises the left column of the framework and grounds the worldview of the Lutheran school. It should underpin each school's mission statement, hence the solid arrows are used to make links.

In addition, Lutheran schools are bound by legislative requirements which, together with current beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities, also shape experiences in the school. However, these elements of the framework are somewhat fluid. Legislation and government requirements change over time. Knowledge and understanding of learners, learning and learning communities are informed by current research. As research in areas like science and the social sciences grows, so does an understanding of these elements. An example is brain research which, in recent years, has revealed new insights into learning and the nature of learners. Thus, the right hand column of the framework is linked by less solid arrows, indicating its more fluid nature.

The framework is cohesive as each belief in the right hand column is in alignment with the ethos elements. Thus, ethos underpins all that is done and said in the Lutheran school. The mission statement and beliefs about the lifelong qualities of people who have attended Lutheran schools find their genesis in ethos. These lifelong qualities in turn are supported by, and support, beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities (paradigms). While ethos is founded on the rock of faith and the paradigms are more transient, being based on what the sciences reveal at this moment in history, together they make a cohesive framework for education in Lutheran schools.

## Uses

Schools are encouraged to explore the framework in more detail with their whole school community and use it to inform decision-making so that the inter-relatedness of its elements can be made more explicit and connected to everyday practice in schools. The framework is intentionally brief so that each teacher can place it at the front of their work program/s as a reminder of the Lutheran ethos at the core of all that is done and said in the Lutheran school.