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TOP MARKS FOR COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL CULTURE IN DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

A leading international educational authority has praised Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) for its healthy school culture and its direct impact on student learning.

Speaking from the United States, Dr Anthony Muhammad said that in seeking improvement, leaders tend to focus, almost exclusively on technical changes, without recognising that deep and sustainable improvement cannot be achieved without changing culture.

"A healthy school culture is one where educators have an unwavering belief in the ability of all students to succeed and where this is passed on through policies, practices and collaboration.

"Catholic Schools Broken Bay has correctly and courageously sought to deliver improvement in classroom practices by establishing a collaborative culture of continuous improvement, a culture that is absolutely focussed on ensuring all students succeed."

Dr Muhammad was addressing, via live video link, more than 1,800 staff from Catholic Schools Broken Bay's 43 schools and central office gathered for their recent annual Strategy Day.

The day reflected on the progress made since the launch of the *Towards 2025* strategy, and reaffirmed its commitment to the next chapter through *Shaping Tomorrow, Together in Faith*.

A former teacher and principal and now an international educational consultant and author, Dr Muhammad told the gathering, "CSBB's culture recognised there are only two types of roles, the educator in the classroom and the staff who support them."

Director of Schools, Danny Casey said the Strategy Day was an opportunity to celebrate how far CSBB had come over the last six years, recognising that its greatest achievements were seen every day inside the classroom.

"When we launched our first strategy six years ago, we knew there were significant challenges ahead. We flattened our organisation structure, strengthened staff voice and listened to our front-line leaders and staff and committed to a learning culture where every student could thrive", Mr Casey said.

"Learning outcomes occur in the classroom, not the Board room, and today, by any objective measure, we have come a long way, with stunning improvements in faith and learning outcomes."

"We have also built strong partnerships with families, creating a more connected, responsive and future-focussed Catholic education system in Broken Bay."

Reflecting on the progress to date, the Diocesan Administrator, Fr David Ranson, thanked CSBB staff for the progress made and the work they do each day. He reminded all that Catholic education must continue to respond to the changing needs of families, while always remaining grounded in mission, a mission shared with parishes.

Fr David said, "Innovation and faith are not competing ideas. Our mission calls us to continually improve how we serve students and families so every young person can become the person God created them to be."

"Working to the *Shared Mission Principles* CSBB has established with our Parishes, it is clear we are delivering for the students and families we serve." Fr David said.

Central to CSBB's strategy is continued investment in professional learning, collaborative coaching, leadership development and technology enhancements to better support student learning and reduce teacher workload, according to Danny Casey.

CSBB has prioritised support for staff seeking to achieve the highly valued NESA accreditation as a *Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher* (HALT). CSBB now has 45 HALT accredited teachers, representing almost 30 per cent of all HALT teachers working across Catholic school systems in New South Wales, while more than 100 additional teachers are working towards accreditation.

"We also have two new key support systems, CSBB Early Years Screeners and CSBB Data Ecosystems," Danny Casey said.

The screeners provide teachers with evidence-based insights into student learning from the beginning of a child's educational journey. The data ecosystem brings together information previously spread across multiple systems, giving teachers and school leaders a real time view of student learning, attendance and wellbeing.

"So rather than waiting weeks or months for the information, teachers can identify learning growth, monitor attendance and respond quickly to emerging needs, allowing earlier intervention and more personalised learning."

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General Information

*At Catholic Schools Broken Bay, our vision is to provide authentic, professional Catholic education, delivered with care and compassion. This vision is brought to life through our bold and future-focused **Shaping Tomorrow, Together in Faith** strategy - a shared commitment to walking alongside every student and*

family on a seamless journey in faith and learning, from Baptism through to post-school pathways.

Shaping Tomorrow, Together in Faith places students firmly at the centre of everything we do in our Shared Mission - uniting schools, parishes, and communities to work as one. It commits our system of schools to being at least as good as the very best, to maximising the learning growth of every student, and inspiring hearts and minds to know Christ and to love learning.

Spanning the Central Coast, Sydney's Northern Beaches, and the North Shore, Catholic Schools Broken Bay is a vibrant system of 43 schools serving over 18,000 students from Kindergarten to Year 12 - each part of a shared mission to shape extraordinary futures, together in faith.

Dr Muhammad's keynote title for CSBB's Strategy Day was "Transforming School Culture 2.0: Why Culture is Important Today, Tomorrow, and Forever."

Dr Anthony Muhammad, PhD, is an author, international thought leader and much sought-after consultant. He served as a practitioner for nearly twenty years where he served as a teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal. He was named the Michigan Middle School Principal of the Year in 2005. Dr. Muhammad has also been honoured by the Global Gurus organisation as one of the 30 Most Influential Educators in the world in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. Dr. Muhammad is recognised as one of the field's leading experts in the areas of school culture and Professional Learning Communities at Work (PLC). He also serves as an Associate Professor of School Leadership and Culture at Academica University of Applied Sciences in Amsterdam, The Netherlands."