



Redcliffe State High School Queensland, Australia

SNAPSHOT FROM THE FIELD

Redcliffe State High School transformed by using the High Reliability Schools™ framework to embrace data-driven goals, boost teacher morale, and increase engagement among students.



DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1,280 students
- 5% Special education
- 6% Indigenous students
- 11% Language background other than English

Redcliffe State High School is located in Redcliffe, Queensland, Australia, a community of approximately 9,200 residents.

CHALLENGE

Redcliffe State High School's High Reliability Schools™ (HRS) journey started in a bright place—specifically, the Sunshine Coast of Australia.

After seeing renowned education researcher Robert J. Marzano speak at a High Reliability Schools Institute, Redcliffe State's team decided it was ready to "take on more."

And there was plenty to take on. At the time, principal Shonda McKinlay said that some of her students and staff were disengaged, with no big picture or systemic solution to address inconsistent student outcomes.

Many lacked the courage to try something new, or even the knowledge of what to try.

It was Marzano's speech at the conference that inspired McKinlay to apply the principles of the comprehensive school improvement framework at Redcliffe State, even though it would take time to trial, influence, and embed.

"HRS brings everything together in a package, and it is all interrelated," McKinlay said. "A great framework to focus on improving the learning of individual students and teachers."

IMPLEMENTATION

After the conference, Redcliffe State formed pedagogy teams to discuss their teaching method and try out new approaches. Professional development helped to further integrate specific, research-based strategies to the school community at large.

Four teams of volunteers emerged to represent the faculty, and each trial-led concepts such as proficiency scales. Each team took responsibility for gathering information, looking for leading and lagging indicators, and sourcing the quick data.

"This took hold, and is now an embedded part of our school timetable and culture," McKinlay said.

The school also teamed up with Steve Boyle, a Solution Tree Australia HRS-certified associate,

through digital communication to establish a strong team approach.

Every year, Redcliffe State tries new concepts to integrate into their school, McKinlay said. Many are added to the school's long-term structures and practices—the most recent being student-generated assessment and parent reporting.

Instead of seeing statistics as an inconvenience, teachers began to find utility in the data-driven leadership framework.

"Now it is a tool, a discussion starter, and a way to move our kids forward," McKinlay said.

“This is not a quick fix, and it is a lot of work, but the amazing thing is that teachers acknowledge how much work it is, but that they are really engaged and wouldn’t want to change what we do.”

—Shonda McKinlay, principal, Redcliffe State High School, Australia

RESULTS

Since beginning its HRS journey, Redcliffe State has succeeded in building teacher morale and satisfaction, as well as motivating students to take ownership of their academics.

“Accreditation is an obvious sign of success, but in reality, our biggest success is the embedding of successful practices and seeing improved results for our kids,” McKinlay said.

Once considered a “pain,” data is now embraced in Redcliffe State’s classrooms. For example, students use SABER proficiency tables to determine their level of ability in approaching a project. The simple visual gives them an immediate level of motivation to improve, and they diligently work with the

instant feedback to claim ownership of each learning concept.

Families are also provided with term progress reports for each child, designed to provide diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment for evaluating their long-term progress.

McKinlay says the HRS framework has transformed the learning culture of Redcliffe State into one where students and teachers alike refuse to accept failure.

“[Our] kids know teachers will do everything they can to get them past the line,” McKinlay said. “Our school has been transformed, and we love it.”



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