

27 July 2020

## Media Release

### From the Classroom to the Dining Room: Lessons from Home Learning for Parent Engagement

Lessons from the COVID-19 home learning period for school-family relationships and parent engagement headlined a webinar featuring Queensland independent schools and leading academics today (27 July).

When learning moved from the classroom to the dining room for the majority of Queensland students for part of Term 2, many parents and carers became engaged in their child's education like never before.

From weekly check-in calls to families, to virtual parent-teacher interviews, online community wellbeing hubs and virtual cross-country events involving entire school communities, independent schools and their families re-imagined how to connect and interact.

Two Queensland independent schools – [St Andrew's Anglican College on the Sunshine Coast](#) and Concordia Lutheran College in Toowoomba – shared their experiences and lessons from the home learning period during a webinar facilitated by leading Griffith University-based researchers on parent engagement, Dr Linda Willis and Professor Beryl Exley.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) Executive Director David Robertson said more than 50 years of research proved students do better academically, socially and emotionally when their teachers and parents partner to support their learning.

"The COVID-19 home learning period cemented the value of education as a national priority, teachers as frontline essential workers and parents as critical partners in their child's schooling," Mr Robertson said.

"Maintaining learning outside the physical school environment forced rapid change, including to the ways schools and parents traditionally interact. In doing so parents and teachers developed a new-found appreciation for each other's roles," he said.

Mr Robertson said today's webinar was part of a broader joint project by ISQ and the Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network (QIS Parents Network) to support community and parent engagement in independent schools and the second event with Griffith University.

Griffith University Bachelor of Education Program Director Dr Linda Willis said the home learning period elevated parent engagement to the forefront of school thinking and considerations.

"Not only did it put the engagement of parents in their child's learning centre stage, but also the important role technology can play in bringing them together in new, positive and parent-friendly ways," Dr Willis said.

"Parents, like some teachers, were forced to familiarise themselves quickly with technology or to engage via phone with their teachers in order to access how their child would continue to learn outside the face-to-face classroom environment," she said.

"Green shoots, silver linings and pivots have emerged from this pandemic, particularly in the area of parent engagement in learning. The next challenge for schools will be to build on the energy, goodwill and ideas from this period and take the best of what works forward."

**Media contact: Justine Nolan M: 0428 612 315 E: [jnolan@isq.qld.edu.au](mailto:jnolan@isq.qld.edu.au)**