**Pastoral Care: A New Type of School**

**In Brief**

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.” When Martin Luther King spoke these words he might not have been picturing current school systems today or even the young adolescent, however his words speak to today’s world of education. When growing up, the young adolescent is developing in terms of what they need socially, emotionally, and academically. Yet, some schools seem to only focus on the academic needs of the student. Research has come a long way in proving that personal and social needs are of a equal importance. Martin Luther King believed that you are not getting a full education unless you are also building character. Pastoral care within education is one way to help students grow academically, socially, and mentally, all of which help develop one’s character.

**Overview and Approach**

In the field of Social Studies, pastoralism is a common word. Pastoralism is defined as, “The branch of agriculture concerned with the raising of livestock” (Introduction: pastoral systems worldwide). The thought is that as the leader of the flock it is your job to parent, defend, and lead your flock in the right direction. This term can have a wide range of applications because of its’ broad reference to being parental.

Pastoral care is an evolving concept in education. What started out as a means of developing a student’s morality and social well-being, has also converged with student’s mental and physical health. It makes sense that school conditions contribute to all of these factors of a student’s life because the student spends at least seven hours a day in that environment (Campbell, R., Cross, D., Hearn, L., House, J., 2006). Some schools follow a school well-being model in order to implement pastoral care (Konu A., Alanen E., Lintonen T., Rimpela M., 2002).

The school well-being model is a set of empirical data that can be generated based off of a specific group or even an entire school. The study looks at four main categories… school conditions, social relationships, means for self-fulfillment, and health status. The research in these studies reports the current conditions of the tested population. It does not fix the problem. However, by looking at the various results of this model, schools can see where they are lacking and then make improvements and they can see where they are already fulfilling some goals so that they can continue to build upon them.(Konu A., Alanen E., Lintonen T., Rimpela M., 2002).

Once a school takes the initiative to evaluate themselves in the various areas in which they could improve upon, there is a 10-step action plan that can help schools reach the gold standard in pastoral care. The stages of the plan are:

**Stage 1: Engage and involve the community-** Ensure that all staff, students and parents feel valued and are a part of the decision making process.

**Stage 2: Review staff wellbeing-** Assess whether or not current systems are appropriate

and effective.

**Stage 3: Review student wellbeing outcomes-** Ask students for their perspectives on

how well the school is meeting the four main categories.

**Stage 4: Use data to assess the quality of current practices-** Make use of satisfaction surveys and other records like grades, attendance, and behavior.

**Stage 5: Map policies and practices against outcomes-** Evaluate which improvements fit best in pre-existing school policy areas.

**Stage 6: Enable staff to reflect on their own pastoral care practices-** Make sure that your staff knows what pastoral care is and has a clear definition of it.

**Stage 7: Decide what needs to be stopped, started and kept-** Determine what works and what does not in the current school system.

**Stage 8: Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities-** Provide a clear explanation of what everyone’s new role is.

**Stage 9: Communicate progress regularly-** In order to ensure ongoing engagement you need ongoing open communication.

**Stage 10: Provide sufficient capacity and resources-**Everyone in the system needs to help each other by sharing resources and lending a helping hand.

(Cross, D., Lester, L., 2014)

**Application**

By feeling as though they are a part of a safe and supportive environment, students will have a greater number of needs met and will grow stronger mental well-being (Cross, D., Lester, L., 2015). This is only one way to look at pastoral care. Another approach is to look at the student as a person and as a social being. Often schools try to lump these things together for efficiency. However, by separating different factors of a student’s life one can divide and conquer. Just because young adolescents can be immature does not mean they do not have multiple aspects to their personality. We have to meet as many needs of the young adolescent as we can, especially when it comes to social outlets (Best, R., 2002).

**Conclusion**

Social and emotional well-being does not start in the classroom. In truth it starts with the staff. It is in the main office where the kids first enter, on their bus, and even in their cafeteria. In order to enhance the social and emotional well-being of the child, it must be understood that everyone in the school should be a role model. The staff needs to be seen as key players just as the teachers are. If the staff builds a sense of community, the students will do the same thing in their peer to peer interactions. It is through this that the kids will have a better social and emotional development (Social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education., 2009). Pastoral care might just be an answer that creates well-rounded and real-world ready students.

**Works Cited and Active Links**

Best, R. (2002). *Pastoral care and personal-social education: entitlement and provision*. London: Continuum in association with the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education.

<https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/best-pastoralcarepse.pdf>

Discuses the value of looking at the student as a social being. This article makes the argument that students who are successful socially have a better chance of being successful academically.

Campbell, R., Cross, D., Hearn, L., House, J. (2006). *Pastoral Care in Education.* Child Health Promotion Research Unit: 3-8.

The conditions of a school can have a huge impact on the well-being of the child. By starting with school conditions a lot of the other focuses of pastoral care will then fall into place.

Cross, D., Lester, L. (2014) *Pastoral Care: A Ten Step Plan:* 1-2.

<https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/article/pastoral-care-a-10-step-action-plan>

Provides the 10 steps a school should follow in order to implement pastoral care. It also provides an argument as to why schools should switch to this model.

Cross, D., Lester, L. (2015). *The relationship between school climate and mental and emotional wellbeing over the transition from primary to secondary school.* Psychology of Well-BeingTheory, Research and Practice 5(9): 1-4*.*

<https://psywb.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13612-015-0037-8>

Students need to feel safe in school and around their peers. Safety is seen as vital for physical survival but it is also essential for mental well being.

"Introduction: pastoral systems worldwide." Pastoralism in the new millennium. Accessed April 19, 2017.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/Y2647E/y2647e02.htm>.

Pastoralism is a concept that has just breeched the surface of education. Various countries are placing their own spin on this new method.

Konu A., Alanen E., Lintonen T., Rimpela M. (2002). Factor structure of the School Well-being Model. *Health Education Research, 17*(6): 732.

<https://academic.oup.com/her/article/17/6/732/697260/Factor-structure-of-the-School-Well-being-Model>

The study looks at four main categories… school conditions, social relationships, means for self-fulfillment, and health status. Schools can be evaluated based on these categories and can then better their pastoral care systems.

Social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education. (2009). Retrieved March 27,

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph20>

The best way to implement pastoral care in a school is through the staff such as the teachers, administrators, staff, and other faculty.

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