

PROVIDING RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION AT A WHOLE-SCHOOL LEVEL: A MULTI-SITE CASE STUDY IN ACTION

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BACKGROUND

The Curtin University RSE Project provides professional development services to Western Australian schools, to improve their capacity to deliver comprehensive relationships and sexuality education (RSE).

The project is currently examining a whole-school approach to RSE delivery through an embedded, multi-site case study. International research highlights the need for inclusive and contemporary RSE; however few integrated whole-school approaches have been evaluated and reported.

METHODS

Four unique school sites in Western Australia are currently enrolled: three metropolitan (primary K-6, secondary 7-12, Educational Support Centre 7-12) and one remote (K-12) with significant Aboriginal enrolment. Each site is being supported by the project team for a minimum of two years, to develop comprehensive RSE strategies unique to their school. Focus is on implementation of a whole-school approach (Figure 1), and various partnerships and methods of engagement are being established.

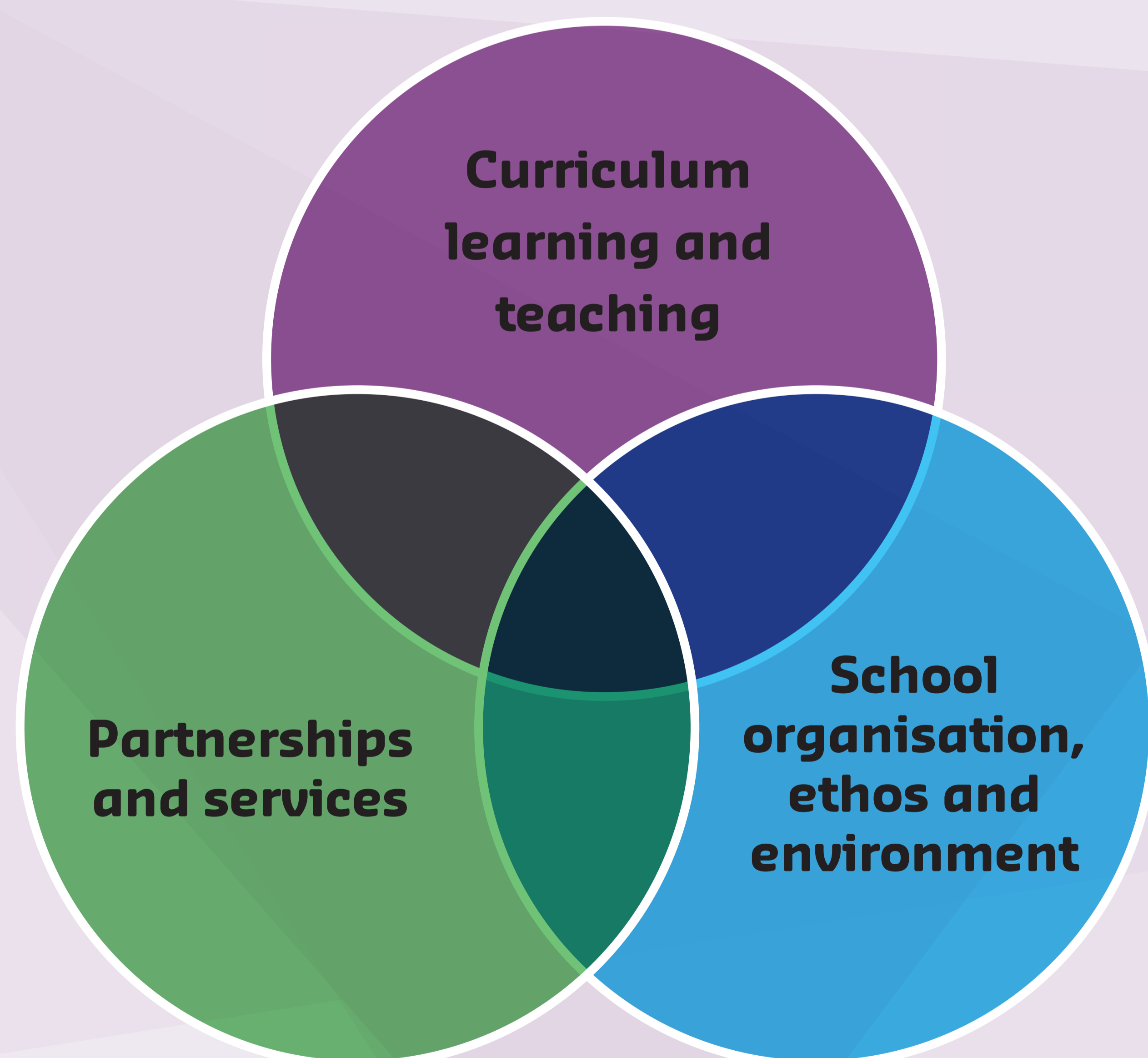


Figure 1: Whole-school approach framework (adapted from WAHPSA, 2019)

INTERIM RESULTS

Each school site is moving towards whole-school delivery in a manner that suits the unique needs of their community. There is at least one identifiable 'champion' to drive school change at each site and most have formed informal or formal committees.

Universally, sites have:

- audited their school climate and teaching content,
- reviewed policy documents
- conducted professional learning for staff (whole-school and for specific learning areas/year levels).

All schools are working towards updating their RSE teaching resources and delivering classroom instruction that is contemporary and engaging. Some have conducted student surveys to help inform these efforts.

Other strategies include programs to strengthen cultural awareness and identities, celebration of key dates related to RSE, fostering positive relationships with local police services, and improving communication between schools and incarcerated parents.

To further support whole-school delivery of RSE, schools have connected with various local agencies or services. They regularly communicate efforts via engagement with School Boards and community elders, normal classroom communications, social media posts, school assemblies, school newsletters and information sessions.

SO WHAT?

Whilst generalisability of specific strategies is limited; this project seeks to provide 'real-world' examples of how comprehensive school-based RSE can be implemented in different school settings. At project completion, the RSE Project hope to provide guidance for schools seeking to improve their delivery of RSE in a manner that is holistic, inclusive, effective and sustainable.

WANT MORE INFO?

Visit www.rseproject.org.au or email RSEProject@curtin.edu.au