

Changing Our Future...One Student at a Time

About the project ...

The purpose of the *Changing Our Future...One Student at a Time* project was to engage and motivate students to increase their participation in school and board initiatives and to inspire and support the community. Students from the drama class at Geraldton Composite High School wrote, produced, directed and acted in a play addressing issues of bullying and racism. Then, with the help of staff and volunteer parent drivers, they took the play on the road, performing at each of the board's elementary schools, as well as an elementary school in the co-terminous board. The play was about hope, inspiration and the impact of student involvement in addressing the many challenges that board communities have experienced in the past few years due to the closures of mills and supporting industries. Students in the school's alternative education program participated in many aspects of the production, while students from the media class produced the soundtrack and filmed the production.

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- The play provided students with an opportunity to be positive role models for others, to volunteer and to contribute to their communities. The project took place at a time when board communities were noting an increased need for social and mental health supports, while opportunities for youth were drastically reduced due to declining populations.
- Students took an active role in creating a safe learning environment at their own school by taking a strong stand against bullying and racism. As an extension to this, sharing their powerful messages with others contributed to safer learning environments in other schools.
- Students took pride in their involvement and leadership in an activity that delivered a message of hope to their struggling communities, engaged community partners and increased the involvement of many parents in their school activities.

Lessons learned for moving forward ...

- Bullying is a challenging issue that has a negative impact on student learning and sense of belonging, having senior students (rather than adults) speak to intermediate and junior students about bullying is an effective and powerful anti-bullying strategy.
- The involvement and leadership of students in a meaningful learning activity emphasized the importance of community involvement and will hopefully lead to the increased involvement of students in school and community activities.
- The success of the project has led to a board commitment to involving students in the future delivery of messages dealing with social responsibility.