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Principals head back to the classroom to bolster student outcomes

More than 200 principals from across Central Queensland converged in Gladstone last week (28 and 29 May) to hone their school leadership skills to drive better student results.

The principals took part in Journeying to Excellence: 2014 Regional Principals Conference, which featured a keynote address and workshops on instructional leadership by the Queensland Education Leadership Institute (QELi).

The two-day conference, at the Gladstone Entertainment Centre, drew on the latest education research and equipped principals with the skills and tools they needed to improve learning opportunities for students.

Those taking part in the program included principals from Rockhampton, Emerald, Longreach, Mackay, the North Burnett and Gladstone. These school leaders came from primary, special and secondary schools, along with Environmental Education Centres and Schools of Distance Education.

A total of 196 schools were represented at the conference, including schools as far west as Birdsville and Bedourie, as north as Bloomsbury, and as south as Gayndah, Mundubbera and Biggenden.

Keynote speaker and QELi CEO Dr Stephen Brown said his address explored the latest learnings about effective school leadership.

“At its core, I examined how principals could lead their team of staff and their students to make their school a better place and a more conducive learning environment. After all, research shows that school leaders play the most important role in student outcomes,” he said.

“Today, schools are not simply places where you tell students a list of facts and figures and expect them to repeat that information back. It’s a more responsive process where students learn how to be critical, creative and empathetic.

“For this to happen the school leaders, including principals, need to build a strong and supportive leadership team and culture that promotes learning.”

Queensland Department of Education, Training & Employment Central Queensland Regional Director Paul Wood said the conference was just one of the professional development initiatives being offered to the region’s principals and other school leaders.

“This conference brought together principals with the common experience of leading a Central Queensland school and enables them to further develop their capabilities, knowledge and skills,” he said.
“The workshops had a strong practical element, backed by intellectual rigour, and focused on the common theme of school instructional leadership.

“The feedback from the conference has been overwhelmingly positive and there is a real sense that all Central Queensland school leaders are part of the one team.”

Established as a not-for-profit organisation in June 2010, QELi helps develop education leaders to improve student outcomes. Attracting participants from across Australia and the world, it is a partnership between the Queensland Department of Education and Training, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland.

For more information please visit: www.qeli.qld.edu.au/