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PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION
BCE’s Sexuality Education Project, commissioned by Brisbane Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane, aims at strengthening BCE’s capacity to deliver evidence-based Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) that meets the needs of students and is informed by the best of the Catholic Christian tradition.

THE PROJECT
The project has involved a comprehensive three-part literature review and extensive audit of Year 11 students, primary and secondary parents, primary and secondary educators in the metropolitan and country regions of Catholic systemic schools, and BCEO staff.

LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS

Paper One:

Paper 1: Reimagining Sexuality Education for Catholic Schools: Catholic Christian Perspectives
A reimagined approach to RSE must meet the needs of students and be informed by the best of the Catholic Christian tradition. Such an approach will:

• be grounded in a positive theology of sexuality and personhood
• advocate relationships and sexuality as core to human thriving
• be influenced by an expanded vision of sexuality that encompasses dignity, spirituality, sexuality and sex
• be concerned with the whole and integrated person within the context of body, heart, mind and spirit dimensions
• be committed to the universal cultivation of just, compassionate and loving relationships.

Paper 2: Reimagining Sexuality Education for Catholic Schools: Catholic Educational Perspectives
1. RSE is research-based and theory informed and imbued by a Catholic Christian worldview within a moral and ethical framework.
2. A Catholic Christian perspective to RSE is committed to human thriving and concerned with the emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual and physical aspects of growing up, intimacy and wellbeing.
3. RSE (Prep – 12) meets the needs of and builds on the experiences and learning of children and young people using pedagogies that promote deep integrated learning.
4. RSE will be spotlighted within the Australian Curriculum for whole-of-school planning and anchored by the Archdiocese of Brisbane Religious Education.

Paper 3: Reimagining Relationships and Sexuality Education for Catholic Schools: Implementation and Sustainability Guidance
1. No formal curriculum can be the cure-all for society’s concerns about children and young people.
2. Effective RSE involves the whole life of the school. It includes what is prescribed and taught (explicit curriculum) and extends beyond the explicit to include school procedures, attitudes, relationships, structures and culture (implicit curriculum) and that which is ignored and evaded (null curriculum).
3. A whole-of-school approach (Prep – 12), has the capacity to strengthen and transform a school’s culture (Catholic Identity), ensuring that, across the whole life of the school, the Catholic Christian messages about personhood, relationships, wellbeing, sex and sexuality are consistent.
4. A whole-of-school approach concerns the following critical components for successful and sustainable implementation:
   a. School Leadership
   b. Developing, Implementing, Reviewing and Evaluating Whole-of-School RSE Planning
   c. Policy
   d. Partnerships
   e. Formation and Professional Learning
   f. Learning and Teaching
   g. Early Identification and Intervention
   h. Pastoral Care
   i. Parent/Carers Capacity Building
   j. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting

SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS
The following summary represents the voices of the four cohorts surveyed: Yr. 11 students, parents, educators, BCEO staff.

To what extent is RSE valued?
- All cohorts strongly agreed that sexuality education is valuable and is viewed as a priority.

Is a Catholic Christian approach to RSE valued?
- A substantial majority of BCEO Staff and Educators value an explicitly Catholic Christian approach to teaching RSE.
- Only a minority of Parents and Yr. 11 Students value an explicitly Catholic Christian approach to teaching RSE.

What does RSE in BCE schools look like?
- RSE is currently occurring spasmodically, if at all, and a large proportion of Educators and Yr 11 Students are unsure how often RSE is taught in their school
- Across P – 12 no RSE topics are covered to a great extent in any year level
- Parents/Carers and BCEO Staff believe it is important for all RSE topics (that were assessed) to be taught in schools, indicating a strong discrepancy between the extent to which RSE topics are covered and the extent to which they are valued
- Educators and BCEO Staff are in strong agreement that special needs students are not catered for in RSE
- The majority of Educators do not feel there is adequate school support to assist them in providing effective RSE, and do not have access to professional development opportunities
- The majority of Educators believe that the school organisation of sexuality education is severely lacking in all aspects assessed. In the minority of schools where RSE had some strong elements of organisation educators rated the effectiveness of RSE significantly higher
- A significant percentage of Educators are concerned about how to teach the Catholic Christian approach, as well as reactions to sexuality education from the Church and the wider community;
- A large proportion of Parents/Carers are unsure if RSE takes place at their child’s school. Parents are also unsure about how Parents/Carers are currently involved in RSE at schools
- All four cohorts have a similar understanding in regard to what young people today are most concerned about and acknowledge that pressure from society is the most concerning issue.
How effective is the current RSE?

All four cohorts responded with consistently low effectiveness ratings of current RSE across a range of items. Results indicate that current RSE has had no significant impact on students’ thoughts, attitudes or behaviour with the majority of educators indicating that current RSE is predominantly ineffective. Parent/Carer effectiveness scores were consistently low, with the majority of BCEO staff indicating that current RSE is highly ineffective.

What suggestions for improvement were identified by the different cohorts?

• Yr. 11 Students’ top suggestions were to increase RSE frequency, improve pedagogy/teaching environments and make RSE more comprehensive and meaningful.
• Parents/Carers’ top suggestions were an increase in parental involvement, inclusion of social and emotional learning content and improvement of pedagogy/teaching environment.
• Educators’ top suggestions were to have more professional development, updated resources and curriculum development, and guidance for teaching from a Catholic Christian perspective.
• BCEO Staff’s top suggestions were to have more professional development, updated resources and curriculum development, and guidelines for teaching RSE from the Catholic Christian perspective.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions drawn and recommendations made in this section would not be of any substance were it not for the openness and candor of students, parents, educators and BCEO staff. The fact that so many wanted their voices heard on the topic of RSE shows beyond doubt that RSE is a priority in pursuit of outcomes for the young.

The foundations for human thriving and in particular sexual and relational wellbeing, begin in childhood and demand ongoing growth in intimacy and maturity. Catholic Education is well positioned, at this critical time, to provide optimum conditions for the flourishing of the young. With its distinctive Catholic Christian worldview so thoroughly committed to human thriving and having access to the very best of educational insight and practice, it is concerning that, despite its high level of potential for relevancy and possibility, school-based RSE is missing the mark.

In the findings of the RSE Audit, students, parents, educators and BCEO staff tell us that what we are doing and the way we are doing it is not engaging young people, is not meeting their needs, is not preparing them to build healthy sexuality and identity, is failing short in empowering them to build and maintain loving and ethical relationships, and is not coaching them to adequately navigate the challenges of relationships. Young people tell us that they are not experiencing the Catholic teachings regarding sexuality and intimacy as “Good News”. There is strong evidence that many young people encounter conflict between the Church’s official pronouncements on sexuality and sex and their lived reality. Altogether, this presents as a disturbing and unacceptable state of affairs.

Through everyday life, children and young people have exposure to many and varied sources communicating messages and lessons about identity, body image, sexuality, sex, relationships and love. Not all of these messages and lessons nourish and enhance life. Many are life-defying and life-destructive. Whether we teach RSE well or even at all, children and young people will continue to be shaped by the explicit, implicit and null curriculums of the world in which we live. An absence or avoidance in providing an evidence-based approach to RSE in our schools may result in the diminishment or even cruel loss of love and life opportunities. Any attempt at RSE that is inattentive to the needs of the young and devoid of the richest and best of the Catholic Christian tradition may misrepresent Jesus’ vision for reality, leading the young to ignore the Catholic Christian tradition as a whole, and disregard the Christian lifestyle. For these reasons, the current state of RSE in our schools is a serious and urgent concern.

The present circumstances relating to RSE do not determine where we can go; they merely determine where we start. It is clear that all cohorts want effective RSE and educators want to deliver RSE more effectively. This report concludes with a series of recommendations for BCE Leadership arising out of the Literature Review and the Audit. The recommendations are designed to give RSE the legitimacy that children and young people deserve and the empowerment, guidance and support that educators seek. The recommendations commit to the safety, wellbeing and holistic development of children and young people, ensuring their right to comprehensive evidenced-based RSE that cherishes personhood, relationships and sexuality as fundamental to the Catholic Christian vision for human thriving.
**Recommendation 1:**
That BCE Leadership advocates for, and commits to, whole-of-school evidence-based RSE implementation (P-12) that meets the needs of all students and is informed by the best of the Catholic Christian tradition.

**Recommendation 2:**
That BCE Leadership approves the design and development of comprehensive learning & teaching RSE Guidance to support effective delivery of high quality explicit learning and teaching of a Catholic Christian approach to RSE.

The learning & teaching RSE Guidance will be informed by:
- Australian Curriculum P – 10 (spotlighting the relationships and sexuality Focus Area of the HPE Curriculum)
- Archdiocese of Brisbane Religious Education Religion Curriculum P -12 and The Religious Life of the School
- BCE’s Learning and Teaching Framework
- Catholic Church’s official teachings on sex education

**Recommendation 3:**
That BCE Leadership approves the development of a BCEO Relationships and Sexuality Policy for all Archdiocesan schools.

**Recommendation 4:**
That BCE Leadership promotes strategic and sustained partnerships with recognised external providers and organisations in support of BCE’s implementation of effective Relationships and Sexuality Education.

**Recommendation 5:**
That BCE Leadership supports the provision of ongoing, cohesive and coordinated whole-of-school RSE Formation and Professional Learning for school leaders, teachers and other staff using both existing structures and cross-directorate approaches.

**Recommendation 6:**
That BCE Leadership approves the development of an authoritative whole-of-school implementation process that will guide a school’s RSE journey in identifying its current RSE status, setting targets and strategising to meet these targets.

**Recommendation 7:**
That BCE Leadership ensures that quality assurance measures link the whole-of-school implementation process for RSE to existing cyclical renewal structures, reporting systems and teacher performance management systems.
Acknowledgements

The BCE Relationships and Sexuality Project was commissioned by Brisbane Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane.

The project has been managed by Kerry Bird (Personal and Social Development Education (PSDE) Project Officer) under the overall guidance of Mark Elliott (Principal Religious Education Officer) and Kevin Twomey (Deputy Executive Director). The project has been ably supported by the Audit team, Dr Matthew Neale (Senior HR Officer), Jessica Frisby and Laura Graham (Provisional Organisational Psychologists) and BCE’s PSD Reference Committee: Kerry Rush (Senior Education Officer ResourceLink), Sue Diggles (Senior Education Officer Student Protection), Marisa Dann, (Senior Education Officer Curriculum), Anita Smith (Senior Education Officer Student Wellbeing), Kathy Shelton (Senior Education Officer Student Wellbeing), Kathryn Bekavac, (Senior Education Officer Student Wellbeing), Nello Raciti (Senior Education Officer Inclusive Education), Kevin Twomey, Mark Elliott and Kerry Bird. Acting members on occasion were: Danielle Carter for Marisa Dann, Margo Caradine for Nello Raciti, Ben Van Trier for Kerry Rush, Lesley Lavercombe for Anita Smith and Carolyn de Witt-Ryall for Sue Diggles.

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Wholehearted appreciation is reserved for more than 2000 participants - Students, Parents, Educators, and BCEO staff - who gave their time to complete the surveys and make their voices and opinions known. Sincere gratitude to school leadership, supervising teachers, school administration and BCEO administration for their steadfast and patient support. The research would not have been possible without these people. Their contributions will greatly influence future directions for RSE in the Archdiocese of Brisbane and benefit the lives of children and young people.

Particular and sincere thanks to Dr Matthew Neale, Senior HR Officer: Capability Development for his outstanding professionalism, wise counsel and generous support at every stage of the Audit and this report. BCE is indebted to Provisional Organisational Psychologists, Jessica Frisby and Laura Graham. The substance of the Audit from the construction, collection and collation of the surveys to the comprehensive and precise analysis and reporting of the data is largely the work of these remarkable research assistants.
PART 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE BCE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT

This Report

The BCE RSE System Report presents the key findings of the Literature Review and the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The report concludes with a series of recommendations for BCEO Leadership arising out of the Audit and the Literature Review.

Aim of the Project

In responding to the Church’s call to integrate faith, life and culture, Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) seeks a re-imagining of the way schools understand and deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). The project is a two year project aimed at strengthening BCE’s capacity to deliver evidence-based RSE within the Catholic Christian perspective.

Project Timeline

The project began in March 2013 and will continue until March 2015. It consists of four main stages:

- Stage 1. Literature Review and Discussion Papers (2013-14)
  - Paper 1: Reimagining Sexuality Education for Catholic Schools: Catholic Christian Perspectives
  - Paper 2: Reimagining Sexuality Education for Catholic Schools: Catholic Educational Perspectives
  - Paper 3: Reimagining Relationships and Sexuality Education for Catholic Schools: Implementation and Sustainability Guidance
- Stage 2. BCE Sexuality Education Audit (2013)
- Stage 3. BCE RSE System Report & Strategic Development Plan (2014)
- Stage 4. Implementation of the Strategic Development Plan (2014 - )

PSDE Reference Committee

The BCE Sexuality Education Project is supported by BCE’s PSDE Reference committee. This committee consists of: Kevin Twomey, Deputy Executive Director; Mark Elliott, Principal Religious Education Officer; Kerry Rush, Senior Education Officer ResourceLink; Sue Diggles, Senior Education Officer Student Protection; Marisa Dann, Senior Education Officer Curriculum; Anita Smith, Senior Education Officer Student Wellbeing; Kathy Shelton, Senior Education Officer Student Wellbeing; Kathryn Bekavac, Senior Education Officer Student Wellbeing; Nello Raciti, Senior Education Officer Inclusive Education and Kerry Bird, Project Officer, Personal and Social Development Education (PSDE).

Overview of the BCE Sexuality Education Audit (Stage 2)

Stage 2 of the project involved the collection of information from BCE systemic schools regarding the status and effectiveness of current sexuality education delivery. A series of four surveys were developed to collect information from the perspectives of the following groups:

- A selection of 30 Year 11 Students from each secondary and P-12 college in the Brisbane Catholic Archdiocese
- A random selection of Parents/Carers from all secondary and P-12 colleges and from a random selection of primary schools
- Teachers, school leaders, guidance counsellors and chaplains (Educators) from all secondary and P-12 colleges and a random selection of primary schools
- BCEO professional Staff.
Additionally, Parents/Carers who were not randomly selected were also invited to nominate themselves to receive a survey should they wish to participate in the project.

Audit project team
The Audit project team consisted of:

- Dr Matthew Neale, HR Officer: Capability Development
- Mrs Laura Graham, Provisional Organisational Psychologist
- Ms Jessica Frisby, Provisional Organisational Psychologist
- Mrs Kerry Bird, Project Officer, Personal and Social Development Education (PSDE).

Survey development
Four surveys were developed specifically for this project:

- Survey of Year 11 Students
- Survey of Parents/Carers
- Survey of BCE Educators
- Survey of BCEO Professional Staff.

The surveys included questions about sexuality education - what is taught, how it is taught, how effectively it is delivered and potential issues impacting the delivery of sexuality education. The four surveys each addressed common themes. Many of the questions were exactly the same in each of the surveys. Some questions addressed the same topic but were worded slightly differently in order to cater for the audiences of the particular survey. Additionally, there were some questions that were not asked across all surveys but rather of particular groups because the survey team was particularly interested in the views of those particular groups for those questions. While all questions for the surveys were developed uniquely and specifically for this Audit, a range of pre-existing surveys assisted in the development of sexuality education topic definitions and the wording of survey questions.

To support the construction of the student survey the project team conducted six interviews with a range of Year 11 Students from two colleges in the Brisbane Archdiocese – one regional and the other urban. The purpose of the interviews was to validate the specific wording of questions on the Survey of Year 11 Students and to identify any areas of particular interest or concern to students.

Survey delivery
The surveys were delivered to respondents using a staggered approach. This meant that each group received their version of the survey at different times within the project period. In general, the Surveys of Educators, Parents/Carers and BCEO Professional Staff were delivered via email and those invited to participate responded to the surveys online. There were some Parents/Carers who had not provided an email address to BCE. For these Parents/Carers a paper copy was provided with an invitation to complete the survey and return in the reply paid envelope supplied.

Delivery of the Survey of Year 11 Students was arranged with each individual college. Colleges assisted with the distribution, supervision, completion and collection of the student surveys. Schools were asked to arrange a class of 30 Year 11 Students to complete the paper-based survey and return surveys via the supplied reply paid envelope. Paper based surveys were used to ensure schools had maximum flexibility with regard to when and where the surveys were administered. In addition, given that the students would be commenting on the sexuality education they received, pencil and paper surveys were regarded as being more transparently anonymous than online surveys.
Survey sample

- Yr. 11 Students:
  - One class from each participating school/college
  - 960 invited / 840 responded
  - 87.5% response rate

- Parents/Carers
  - 30 randomly selected from each participating school/college
  - 2100 invited / 569 responded
  - 27.6% response rate

- Educators
  - All Educators invited from each participating school/college
  - The term ‘Educators’ was inclusive of teachers, school leaders, guidance counsellors and chaplains
  - 3299 invited / 1029 responded
  - 31.2% response rate

- BCEO Staff
  - PAO / Seniors from RE, L&T, Student Protection, North & South
  - 141 invited / 55 responded
  - 39.0% response rate
PART 3: THE AUDIT FINDINGS
The qualitative and quantitative survey data has been comprehensively and rigorously analysed to summarise the results and identify key emergent issues. These findings, together with the Literature Review, will provide a solid evidence-base to inform recommendations for the effective delivery of a Catholic Christian approach to RSE across the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

What is understood as sexuality education?
Participants were asked at the beginning of each survey to articulate their understanding of what is meant by ‘Sexuality Education.’ Generally, comments fell into two categories: narrow or broad conceptualisations of what is understood as sexuality education. The narrow definitions focused on a singular concept, such as the biological aspects of RSE, or were limited to one element of the Catholic Christian teaching about sex. Broad definitions were more comprehensive and addressed a range of factors related to sex, sexuality, relationships, and Catholic Christian teachings. Figure 1. below showcases a range of these comments from all four cohorts:

Figure 1. Comparison of definitions of sexuality education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort:</th>
<th>Narrow Definitions:</th>
<th>Broad Definitions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yr. 11 Students:</td>
<td>“Learn about sex.”</td>
<td>“Sexuality education is the subject that covers everything about a person’s sexuality: i.e. sexual orientation, sexual intercourse, precautions about sexual intercourse, personal identity, etc.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Carers:</td>
<td>“Changing bodies.”</td>
<td>“Providing information about sex and sexuality to help children understand and negotiate sexual relationships safely and responsibly. Topics such as how we see ourselves, what it means to be male and female and how we relate to others, the human body and how it works, emotions, feelings, attitudes, values, decision-making, relationships and communication specifically in relation to sex and sexual relationships.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators:</td>
<td>“Educating Students about sex and the problems that may be encountered.”</td>
<td>“Sexuality ed could be about a number of things, e.g., sex ed in itself (knowing the parts of the reproductive system and how they work), or it could be about personal sexuality choices, friendships, communication, contraception, beliefs...... So much!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCEO Staff:</td>
<td>“Having an understanding of human sexuality from a physical/human development perspective.”</td>
<td>“Sexuality (and relationships) education is learning about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. It should equip children and young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual health and well-being.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To what extent is RSE valued?

Yr. 11 Students, Parents/Carers, Educators and BCEO Staff were asked questions that inquired about the value they placed on sexuality education and if it is viewed as a priority.

Summary of key findings:
- All cohorts strongly agreed that sexuality education is valuable and is viewed as a priority.

Figure 2. The value of sexuality education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The provision of ongoing, developmentally appropriate sexuality education is a priority</td>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BCEO Staff</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people should receive sexuality education so that they have the information to make responsible choices</td>
<td>Yr. 11 Students</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents/Carers</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is a Catholic Christian approach to RSE valued?

Yr. 11 Students, Parents/Carers and BCEO Staff were all asked at the beginning of the survey if the teaching of sexuality education should be different in Catholic Christian schools, compared to non-religious schools. Their answers are indicative of their pre-existing views about RSE prior to completing the main body of the survey.

Summary of key findings:
- A substantial majority of BCEO Staff and Educators value an explicitly Catholic Christian approach to teaching RSE.
- Only a minority of Parents and Yr. 11 Students value an explicitly Catholic Christian approach to teaching RSE.

Figure 3. “Should sexuality education in a Catholic Christian School be different from sexuality education in a school that is non-religious?”

“I feel if it wasn’t for my teachings from outside school I would not know how to live a good catholic life and I don’t think I would want to.
- Yr 11 Student
Respondents who gave qualitative comments explaining their answers to the above question differed markedly. A sample of these comments (in both agreement and disagreement) from all three respondent groups is provided below:

*Figure 4. Comparison of statements in agreement and disagreement of a Catholic Christian approach to sexuality education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohorts:</th>
<th>Agree:</th>
<th>Disagree:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yr. 11 Students:</td>
<td>“Well I think that a Christian school shouldn’t educate or encourage Students about finding their own sexuality. Where they are homosexuals, bisexuals, lesbians or gays - they shouldn’t encourage Students to look towards that path as it is an unlawful nature (sin). Basically, teach about man and woman - what is right. This school doesn’t need to focus on sexuality or sex education. We need to be taught more Christianity more of our God and His Grace and love for us!”</td>
<td>“It should be taught like it is in every other school we’re not different, everyone has the same questions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Carers:</td>
<td>“Catholic faith involves embracing the knowledge that our bodies (and those of others) are the temple of God, to be respected in all ways including in relation to our sexuality. This should underpin all of the essential factual and psychological content also provided.”</td>
<td>“The teachings in Catholic schools are based around the Catholic religion and in an ideal world it would be lovely if we could think our children will not have sex until they are adults, and married but this is not the ideal world and we all know that children are becoming sexually active at a younger age and we need to remember the bible is an ancient document and so many variables come into play when children make these decisions. They need to make informed choices and this is how that can be helped....”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCEO Staff:</td>
<td>“It should unashamedly promote Christian values in the delivery of factual and conceptual information. Key topics should be looked at through the lens of the Catholic tradition and beliefs. Non-religious schools do a great job in presenting Sexuality Education, but Catholic schools have this added rich religious dimension in which to deliver and unpack this education.”</td>
<td>None of the BCEO Staff members who indicated RSE should be the same in all schools provided any comments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants in all cohorts were asked various questions about their perspectives on the Catholic Christian approach to RSE. The following graphs showcase some of this data:

**Figure 5. Perspectives on the Catholic Christian approach to sexuality education**

Educator, Parent/Carer & BCEO Staff Perspectives on the Catholic Christian Approach to RSE

- **Educators:** I believe that students should have access to faith-based sexuality education at school
  - 94% agreement

- **Parents/Carers:** Sexuality education in Catholic schools must be taught in the context of the Catholic Christian faith
  - 34% agreement

- **BCEO Staff:** Sexuality education in Catholic schools must be imparted in the context of the Catholic Christian faith
  - 76% agreement

**Figure 6. Yr. 11 Student perspectives on the Catholic Christian approach to RSE**

Yr. 11 Student Perspectives on the Catholic Christian Approach to RSE

- It is important that sexuality education is taught to students from Catholic Christian beliefs and values
  - 28% agreement

- Most young people do not agree with Catholic Church’s teachings on sexuality
  - 72% agreement

- Young people don’t fully know/understand the Catholic Church’s position on some sexuality topics such as homosexuality; sex before marriage; contraception
  - 48% agreement
What does RSE in BCE schools look like?

This section describes Audit findings in five areas: the topics covered in RSE lessons, the issues that are of concern to young people in BCE schools, how RSE is delivered in schools, the extent to which students with special needs are catered for, and the way RSE is organised and supported in BCE schools.

Summary of key findings:

- RSE is currently occurring spasmodically, if at all, and a large proportion of Educators and Yr 11 Students are unsure how often RSE is taught in their school
- Across P – 12 no RSE topics are covered to a great extent in any year level
- Parents/Carers and BCEO Staff believe it is important for all RSE topics (that were assessed) to be taught in schools, indicating a strong discrepancy between the extent to which RSE topics are covered and the extent to which they are valued
- All four cohorts have a similar understanding about what young people today are most concerned about, with pressures from society being the most concerning issue
- According to Educators and Yr 11 Students, when RSE is addressed it is done so in pastoral care/personal and social development, health education, religious education and science
- Educators and BCEO Staff are in strong agreement that special needs students are not catered for in RSE
- The majority of Educators are unsure what resources are available in their schools to assist in the teaching of RSE
- A large proportion of Parents/Carers are unsure if RSE takes place at their child’s school. Parents are also unsure about how Parents/Carers are currently involved in RSE at schools.

RSE Topics

This section includes data about what RSE topics are valued by Parents / Carers as well as the extent to which these topics are taught.

Summary of findings:

- Parents/Carers and BCEO Staff believe it is important for all RSE topics (that were assessed) to be taught in schools
- The majority of Yr 11 Students and Educators are unsure about how often RSE related topics are taught
- Across P – 12 no RSE topics are covered to a great extent in any year level
- There is a strong discrepancy between the high level of importance assigned to each RSE topic by Parents/Carers and the low extent to which each topic is currently covered by Educators.
The Audit survey asked participants to rate 45 different topics that could potentially be covered in classes about RSE. These topics have been grouped into eight themes or categories that describe a related set of topics. The results in this report focus on the themes rather than the individual topics for clarity of presentation and ease of understanding.

**Figure 7. Individual RSE Topics categorised into key themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>Individual Survey Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ethical decision making: Engaging in or avoiding sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Abstinence: including reasons for not having sexual intercourse and the development of skills for being abstinent (e.g. communication and refusal) 
- Celibacy: abstaining from marriage and sexual relations 
- Spirituality of sexuality: appreciation of sexuality and sex as fundamentally good and as divine gifts 
- Sexuality's capacity/power to either enrich or diminish life 
- Teen pregnancy and parenting responsibilities 
- Sexual irresponsibility e.g. using someone, promiscuity, unsafe practices 
- Sexual diversity and orientation 
- Abortion 
- Avoidance of unintended pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections by using contraception 
- Catholic sexuality teachings e.g. on sex before marriage; on contraception; on homosexuality etc 
- Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV 
- Identifying and managing sexual feelings 
- Chastity (respect) and prudence (wisdom) 
- Development of an informed conscience and ethical decision-making about sexuality and sexual activity |
| 2) Biological aspects of human development | 
- Reproduction Anatomy - reproductive parts of the male and female bodies and how they work 
- Menstruation 
- Fertility and conception 
- Physical changes associated with puberty and adolescence 
- Pregnancy and Childbirth 
- Social changes associated with puberty and adolescence 
- Emotional changes associated with puberty and adolescence 
- Managing body care and hygiene 
- Nocturnal Emissions 
- Spiritual development associated with puberty and adolescence |
| 3) Relationships: Family and peer | 
- Skills for building and managing family relationships 
- Skills for building and managing friendship and peer relationships: initiating, maintaining and ending relationships |
| 4) Relationships: Intimate | 
- Skills for building and managing boyfriend/girlfriend relationships 
- Relationship/dating safety e.g negotiation, assertiveness and consent 
- Seeking trustworthy help and advice about sexuality, relationships and sex |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>Individual Survey Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5) Protective Behaviours | • Protective behaviours to avoid harm, exploitation, harassment, manipulation and abuse in relationships  
• Recognition, avoidance, and prevention of sexual abuse, assault, harassment and exploitation |
| 6) Self-respect, respect for others, and equity | • Stereotyping  
• Misuse/abuse of (personal and relational) power e.g. bullying, manipulation, exploitation, coercion etc.  
• Respect for all people regardless of sexual orientation/identity (i.e. no name-calling, taunting, bullying)  
• Femininity and masculinity e.g. gender roles, equality/inequality  
• Human rights and responsibilities relating to sexuality, sex and gender identity  
• The influence of peer pressure on relationship and sexual behaviour  
• The influence of alcohol and drugs on sexual decision making and behaviour  
• The influence of media (inc social and digital media) on identity, relationships and sexual behaviour  
• Development of a positive body image  
• Development of a healthy self-identity and sense of purpose |
| 7) Theology of Sexuality | • Christian understanding of love: to love ourselves and one another as God loves us  
• Christian understanding of marriage: two people who promise to build, with the help of divine grace, a lifelong, intimate and sacramental partnership of love and life  
• A Christian understanding of the goodness of the human body |
| 8) Different religious/ cultural/ societal understandings of sexuality | • How people of different religions, cultures and societies understand sexuality and sex in different ways |
What RSE topics are valued?

Parents/Carers and BCEO Staff were asked to rate the importance of teaching a range of RSE topics at a Catholic Christian school, at an age-appropriate level. Responses were made on a 3-point scale, where “0” indicated that the topic is not important, “1” indicated that it was somewhat important and “2” indicated that the topic is very important. The averages of the responses from Parents/Carers and BCEO Staff are displayed below. Higher averages indicate greater importance. Both cohorts indicated that it is important for all topics to be taught.

**Figure 8. The extent to which RSE topics are considered important to teach**

Young people need accurate information about sex and sexuality to negotiate sexual relationships safely and responsibly. Sexuality education should cover a broad range of topics, including the biology of reproduction, relationships, sexuality, contraception and sexually transmissible infections (STIs). While the position of the church in many of these matters is less than contemporary it is critical that young people get good information which is based on current ‘best practice’.

- Parent
What RSE topics are currently taught?

Yr. 11 Students and Educators were asked to rate the extent to which their school currently covers a range of RSE topics. Responses were made on a 3-point scale where “0” indicates that the topic is not taught or that the respondent is unsure if it is taught, “1” indicates that the topic is taught to some extent, and “2” indicates that the topic is taught to a great extent. The following data shows the average answers from Yr. 11 Students and Educators of Year 11-12. Both cohorts indicated that topics were not taught to a great extent, and Educators tended to report higher scores than Yr. 11 Students.

*Figure 9. The extent to which RSE topics are currently taught*

The graph above shows the data only from year 11-12 educators, as this group of educators matches most closely the student cohort (year 11). The educator data was also analysed for all year levels, so that changes in the extent to which the topics are covered can be described. The graph below indicates that none of the topics are covered to a great extent across any year level.
Figure 10. The extent to which RSE topics are taught by Educators in each year level

The extent to which RSE topics are currently taught by Educators in each year level:

- Different religious/cultural/societal understandings of sexuality
- Theology of sexuality
- Self-respect, respect for others and equity
- Protective behaviours
- Relationships: Intimate
- Relationships: Family & peers
- Biological aspects of human development
- Ethical decision making: engaging in or avoiding sex

Ratings of RSE Topic Frequency

Not taught/Not sure if this is taught  Taught to some extent  Taught to a great extent
Is what is taught congruent with what is valued?

The following graph contrasts the Parent/Carer ratings of how important it is to teach RSE topics with the Educator ratings of how much these RSE topics are currently covered in class. Parent/Carers made their ratings on a 3-point scale from 0 – not important to 2 – very important, whilst Educators made ratings on a 3-point scale from 0 – not taught/not sure if taught to 2 – taught to a great extent. Results indicate that there are strong discrepancies between the two cohorts for each RSE topic. Whilst all topics are regarded as important to teach, none of them are currently covered to a great extent.

**Figure 11. The perceived importance of RSE compared to the extent to which they are taught**

![The perceived importance of RSE topics versus the extent to which they are currently taught](image)
What issues are young people concerned about?
The Audit survey asked participants to indicate how concerned they perceived young people to be about a range of topics. These individual topics have been grouped into categories of similarly themed topics. The table below shows the categories that are used in this report, and the individual topics within each category.

Summary of findings:
• All four cohorts have a similar understanding about what young people today are most concerned about, with pressures from society being the most concerning issue.

Figure 12. Individual concerning issues categorised into key themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>Individual Survey Topic:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Pornography and sexting</td>
<td>• Pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sexting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Pressures from society</td>
<td>• Body image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pressure from society/media to be sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Relationships</td>
<td>• Dealing with feelings such as jealously, rejection, betrayal, insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dating/<code>going out with</code> etiquette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How to make responsible decisions about themselves and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making sense of their sexuality and sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dating safety e.g. refusal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Safety</td>
<td>• Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unintended pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sexual harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being safe from harm including abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contraception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unwanted sexual activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effects of alcohol and drugs on sexual decision making and activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Sexual orientation</td>
<td>• Sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What did the different cohorts nominate as issues of most concern?
All four cohorts were asked to rate how concerning young people may find each topic, from being not at all concerned (1) to being extremely concerned (5). The results indicate that all four cohorts have a fairly similar idea about what young people today are concerned with. The four cohorts also share the same view that pressures from society (i.e. peer pressure, body image, and pressure from society/the media to be sexual) is the most concerning topic for young people.

*Figure 13. The perceived most concerning issues for young people*
How is RSE delivered?

The following data presented is from questions in the survey that pertained to how RSE is currently delivered in schools. This included: how often RSE topics are taught, the circumstances in which RSE is taught, the learning areas where RSE takes place, the methods, resources and teachers involved in the teaching of RSE and the current level of involvement of Parents/Carers in school-based RSE.

Summary of key findings:

- RSE is currently occurring spasmodically, if at all, and a large proportion of Educators and Yr 11 Students are unsure how often RSE is taught in their school.
- According to Educators and Yr 11 Students, when taught, RSE is mostly taught in class by teachers in a range of subjects;
- According to Educators and Yr 11 Students, RSE is mostly covered in the following learning areas: pastoral care/personal and social development, health education, religious education and science.
- Educators mostly conduct RSE within whole class lessons, sessions separating boys and girls and the use of DVD's. The least common methods are drama/role plays' referring students to external local services and having specific lessons for pupils with disabilities or special needs.
- The majority of Educators are unsure what resources are available in their schools to assist in the teaching of RSE.
- A large proportion of Parents/Carers are unsure if RSE takes place at their child's school. Parents are also unsure about how Parents/Carers are currently involved in RSE at schools.

How often are RSE topics taught?

Yr.11 Students and Educators were asked to indicate how often RSE related topics were taught. The most common response from both cohorts was ‘Unsure’. Both cohorts indicated that RSE topics were taught less often compared to more often. This graph demonstrates that RSE is occurring spasmodically, if at all, and that a large proportion of educators are unsure how often RSE is taught in their school.

Figure 14. How often are RSE topics taught?
In what circumstances is RSE delivered?

Yr. 11 Students were asked to indicate how RSE is taught at their school. Whilst 13% of the student respondents indicated that they were unsure and 16% indicated that sexuality education is not taught at all, the most common response was that they were taught RSE topics in class by their teachers. This was also reflected in the Educator’s data, where the most common response was that sexuality education is taught by teachers in class in a number of learning areas (39%).

Figure 15. Yr. 11 Students: In what circumstances is RSE delivered?

Figure 16. Educators: In what circumstances is RSE delivered?
In what learning areas are RSE related topics taught?
- Yr. 11 Students and Educators were asked to indicate what specific learning areas currently include the teaching of RSE related topics. Both cohorts answered relatively similarly, with pastoral care/personal and social development, health education, religious education and science being the most common answers.

**Figure 17. In what learning areas does RSE currently take place?**

- Year 11 and 12 students (maybe year 10) have the choice of choosing HPE as a subject and that is where this sort of stuff is learned, therefore in the 2 years we need that education most, a lot of us don’t have it. It’s stupid...If you ask me.
  - Yr 11 Student
What methods are used to teach RSE?

Yr. 11 Students were asked to indicate what teaching methods are employed by their school for the teaching of RSE. The most common responses were the use of whole class lessons, separating boys and girls and the use of DVD’s. The least common responses were the use of drama/role plays, referring students to external local services and having specific lessons for pupils with disabilities or special needs.

*Figure 18. What methods are used to teach RSE?*
What resources are used to teach RSE?

Educators were asked to indicate what resources their schools used for the teaching of RSE. The majority of Educators responded with the answer “unsure” (59%).

**Figure 19. What resources are used to teach RSE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Educators % of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Life to the Full – BCE</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choicez</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real talk</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills for growing</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills for adolescents</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family planning</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing and developing healthy relationships</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology of the body for teens</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catching on</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s chat education</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking sexual health</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a grip teenz 2.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who is involved in the delivery RSE?

Educators were asked to indicate who primarily delivers sexuality education at their school. The most common response was “teachers” (63%), however a further 19% of Educators were unsure who delivered RSE at their school.

Figure 20. Who currently delivers RSE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External providers</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance counsellors</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year coordinators</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School chaplains</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How aware are parents about school-based RSE?

Parents were asked to indicate how aware they are of the existence of RSE at their child’s school. The most common answer was ‘unsure’ (45%), whilst 42% of parents indicated that they are aware it occurs.

Figure 21. Parental awareness about school-based RSE

"As far as you are aware is any sexuality education taught at your child’s school?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsere</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How involved are parents with school-based RSE?

Parents and Carers were asked a range of questions about the level of involvement they have in their child’s RSE. The most common answer to all questions was “Don’t know”. Over 60% of Parents/Carers are unsure about how they are currently involved in RSE at their schools.

**Figure 22. Parental involvement in school-based RSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Parents/Carers % of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are information sessions about SE offered to families?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are families consulted on SE content?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the school seek parental permission for the teaching of SE related topics?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students with special needs

The following data relates to items in the survey that asked about the current and desired level of support given to special needs students in the delivery of RSE.

Year 11 and 12 students (maybe year 10 have the choice of choosing HPE as a subject and that is where this sort of stuff is learned, therefore in the 2 years we need that education most, a lot of us don’t have it. It’s stupid...If you ask me.

Summary of key findings:

- Educators and BCEO Staff are in strong agreement that special needs students are not catered for in RSE;
- Educators and Yr. 11 Students strongly agree that future RSE should be tailored to meet the needs of different groups of students (e.g. students with disabilities, refugees, and ‘English as second language’ (ESL) Students);

Do students with special needs have access to appropriate sexuality education?

Educators and BCEO Staff were asked if special needs students (e.g. students with disabilities, refugees and ‘English as second language’ (ESL) students) currently have access to appropriate sexuality education. Both Educators and BCEO Staff strongly disagreed that special needs students are catered for in RSE.

Figure 23. Do students with special needs have access to appropriate RSE?
**Should RSE programs be tailored to meet the needs of different groups of students?**

Educators and Yr. 11 Students were asked if RSE should be tailored to meet the needs of different groups of students (e.g. students with disabilities, refugees and ‘English as second language’ (ESL) students). Generally, there was strong agreement amongst both cohorts, with Educators indicating stronger agreement than Yr. 11 Students.

*Figure 24. Should school-based RSE programs be tailored to meet the needs of different groups of students?*

![Bar chart showing the percentage of agreement/disagreement amongst Educators and Yr. 11 Students on whether RSE programs should be tailored to meet the needs of different groups of students.]

- **Strongly Agree**
  - Educators: 30%
  - Yr. 11 Students: 20%
- **Agree**
  - Educators: 40%
  - Yr. 11 Students: 30%
- **Neither Agree/Disagree**
  - Educators: 10%
  - Yr. 11 Students: 20%
- **Disagree**
  - Educators: 5%
  - Yr. 11 Students: 5%
- **Strongly Disagree**
  - Educators: 5%
  - Yr. 11 Students: 5%

**How is RSE organised and supported in schools?**

The following data relates to questions in the surveys that inquired about the different ways that Educators are currently supported to deliver RSE. This includes content about how RSE is organised in schools, what is the level of Educator’s self-efficacy to teach RSE, what are Educators concerned about, what support systems do Educators have access to and what kinds of professional development opportunities exist for Educators.

**Summary of key findings:**

- The majority of Educators believe that the school organisation of sexuality education is severely lacking in all aspects assessed
- A considerable proportion of Educators lack self-efficacy to teach RSE
- A significant number of Educators are concerned about how to teach the Catholic Christian approach, as well as reactions to sexuality education from the Church and the wider community
- The majority of Educators do not feel there is adequate school and community support for the teaching of RSE and do not have access to professional development opportunities.
How is RSE organised in schools?

Educators were asked a range of questions pertaining to how RSE is currently organised and facilitated within their schools. The majority of Educators did not agree that there was sufficient school organisation of sexuality education. For instance only 10% indicated that their school has a clear RSE policy, only 11% believed their school has a high quality RSE curriculum in place and only 11% indicated that the curriculum clearly defines who should be delivering RSE, on what topics, and to which year levels. Overall, the organisation of sexuality education in schools is severely lacking in all aspects assessed.

Figure 25. How is RSE organised in schools?
What is the level of educator self-efficacy?
Educators were asked questions about the level of self-efficacy they have towards teaching RSE. Only 47% indicated that they feel competent to teach RSE, whilst 31% indicated that they find it challenging to answer student questions related to sexuality.

*Figure 26. What is the level of Educator self-efficacy?*

What are teachers concerned with?
Educators were asked to respond to a range of questions about concerns they may have about teaching RSE. The results indicate that a significant number of Educators are concerned about how to teach the Catholic Christian approach and they are also concerned about reactions to sexuality education from the Church and the wider community.

*Figure 27. What are Educators concerned about?*
Are teachers feeling supported?
Educators were asked about how much they perceived they are supported in the teaching of sexuality education. The results show that the majority of educators did not feel there was adequate support for the teaching of RSE.

*Figure 28. How supported do Educators feel?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educator Perceptions of Support</th>
<th>Educators % of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents and the community support the teaching of sexuality education at this school</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My school supports the teaching of sexuality education</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are adequate external support networks available to you (e.g. networking with other schools; local community networks to share good practice)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do teachers have access to professional development?
Educators were asked about the level of professional learning they receive. The data indicates that a clear majority of Educators do not have access to professional development in the area of RSE.

*Figure 29. What professional development is offered to Educators?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Level of Professional Development</th>
<th>Educators % of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning is available to teachers for the teaching of SE</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have access to adequate training and professional development to deliver the SE needed</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How effective is the current RSE?

Yr. 11 Students, Parents/Carers, Educators and BCEO Staff were asked a range of questions related to how effective they perceive the current RSE to be.

Summary of key findings:
- All four cohorts responded with consistently low effectiveness ratings of current RSE across a range of items.

Yr. 11 Students

Yr. 11 Students were asked how effective the RSE at their school was. Results indicate that current RSE has had no significant impact on students’ thoughts, attitudes or behaviour.

Figure 30. Yr.11 Student ratings of the effectiveness of current RSE

![Yr. 11 Student Ratings of the Effectiveness of Current RSE](chart)

- The sexuality education I have received at school has changed the way I treat myself and others: 24%
- The sexuality education I have received at school has changed the way I think: 16%
- The sexuality education I have received at school has changed my behaviour: 13%
- The sexuality education I have received at school has changed the way I think: 17%

Figure 31. Yr. 11 Student perspectives on the effectiveness of current RSE

![Yr. 11 Student Perspectives](chart)

- "The sexuality education I have received at this college has not been enough": 56%
- "Teachers at my school teach sexuality education topics well": 21%

Sexual education should be taught better at catholic schools. We need to know everything not just what the bible wants us to know because this will set us up to fail in later life.

- Yr 11 Student
Parents/Carers
Parents/Carers were asked to rate how effective the current sexuality education has been for their child. Effectiveness scores for all questions were consistently low.

*Figure 32. Parents/Carers ratings of the effectiveness of current RSE*

![Parents/Carers Ratings of the Effectiveness of Current RSE](chart)

Educators
Educators were asked to rate how effective the current sexuality education was at their school. The majority of educators indicated that current RSE is predominantly ineffective.

*Figure 33. Educators’ ratings of the effectiveness of current RSE*

![Educator Ratings of the Effectiveness of Current RSE](chart)
BCEO Staff

BCEO Staff were asked to give ratings for the effectiveness of current RSE. The majority of BCEO staff indicated that current RSE is highly ineffective.

**Figure 34. BCEO Staff ratings of the effectiveness of current RSE**

There would need to be discussion so the whole staff knows what SE is taught at present, by whom and when. Then, there would need to be PD to develop a whole school program and PD available to relevant staff members, maybe to the whole staff at various levels. The school program would need to clearly indicate what should be taught at what year levels and how often.

- Educator

**Predictors of Current Effectiveness ratings**

A series of regression analyses were conducted on the quantitative data in order to identify patterns in the respondents’ answers to survey items. In particular, the regression analyses identified answers to questions on the survey that were related to effectiveness ratings. The graphs below describe the extent to which answers to other questions on the survey are related to ratings of RSE effectiveness.

**Summary of key findings:**

- The more often students receive sexuality education the more likely they are to rate it as more effective
- There were only three topics where the extent of teaching on that topic affected student ratings of RSE effectiveness: Biological aspects of human development, protective behaviours and self-respect, respect for others and equity
- The lowest ratings of effectiveness were for students who indicated that RSE was not taught at all
- When taught more frequently, students indicate that their teacher is more competent, compared to when they receive RSE less often
- Teachers were rated as significantly more competent by their students when their RSE focused on: Biological aspects of human development, Protective behaviours, Self respect, respect for others and equity, and Ethical decision-making
- When students are taught RSE in class by their teachers, they are more likely to think their teacher is more competent, compared to those who receive RSE through other methods
- School organisation of RSE substantially impacts Educators’ perceptions about the effectiveness of RSE at their school, with the presence of school organisation elements of RSE significantly increasing Educators’ effectiveness ratings.
Predictors of student ratings of RSE effectiveness

Frequency of RSE
This graph shows that a higher frequency of RSE impacts ratings of overall RSE effectiveness, such that the more often Students receive sexuality education the more likely they are to rate it as more effective.

Figure 35. The effect of RSE frequency on Yr. 11 Student RSE effectiveness ratings

The Effect of RSE Frequency on Yr. 11 Student RSE Effectiveness Ratings

- Unsure/Don’t know how often SE is taught
- SE is taught once a year
- SE is taught once a semester
- SE is taught once a term
- SE is taught more than once a term

Yr. 11 Students RSE Effectiveness Rating
RSE content
This graph shows how the content of current RSE impacts Yr. 11 Student perceptions of how effective RSE is. It shows the effectiveness ratings of students who indicated that they were taught each topic to a great extent (in red) and that they were not taught each topic (in blue). It can be seen that for most topics, the extent to which that topic was taught did not have any impact on student ratings of effectiveness. For example, students who were taught about “Theology of Sexuality” gave RSE the same effectiveness ratings as students who indicated that they were not taught about “Theology of Sexuality”. There were only three topics where the extent of teaching on that topic affected student ratings of RSE effectiveness: Biological aspects of human development, protective behaviours and self-respect, respect for others and equity.

Figure 36. The effect of RSE content on Yr. 11 Student ratings of RSE effectiveness

You (Catholic Education) quite often fail to provide us with the info we need by teaching us everything from a catholic perspective and you cotton wool us. You protect us from too much stuff (that is important and we need to know about) and do not prepare us for challenges which we may face in reality.
- Yr 11 Student
Teaching methods for RSE

This graph shows how the teaching methods used in RSE impact Yr. 11 Student ratings of RSE effectiveness. Overall effectiveness scores were low for all Students. However the lowest ratings of effectiveness were for students who indicated that RSE was not taught at all.

Figure 37. The effect of method of teaching RSE on Yr. 11 Student RSE effectiveness ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Teaching RSE</th>
<th>Yr. 11 Students RSE Effectiveness Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE is not taught at all</td>
<td>Not at all effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know when SE is taught</td>
<td>Slightly effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE mentioned occasionally but not taught</td>
<td>Moderately effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE taught by outside presenters</td>
<td>Very effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE taught in class by teachers</td>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Predictors of student ratings of teacher effectiveness

**Frequency of RSE**

This graph shows how the frequency of RSE impacts Yr. 11 Students’ ratings of their teacher’s competency to teach RSE. When taught more frequently, Students indicate that their teacher is more competent, compared to when they receive RSE less often.

*Figure 38. The effect of RSE frequency on Yr. 11 Student ratings of teachers’ ability to teach RSE topics well*

**The Effect of RSE Frequency on Yr. 11 Student Ratings of Teachers’ Ability to Teach RSE Topics Well**

- Unsue/Don’t know how often SE taught
- SE is taught once a year
- SE is taught once a semester
- SE is taught once a term
- SE is taught more than once a term

Yr. 11 Students’ Ratings of Teachers’ Ability to Teach RSE Topics Well

- Not at all competent
- Slightly competent
- Moderately competent
- Very competent
- Extremely competent
RSE content
This graph shows how the content of RSE impacts Yr. 11 Students' ratings of their teachers' competency to teach RSE. It shows teacher competency ratings made by students who indicated that they were taught each topic to a great extent (in red), as well as those who indicated that they were not taught each topic (in blue). Teachers were rated as significantly more competent by their students when their RSE focused on:

- Biological aspects of human development
- Protective behaviours
- Self respect, respect for others and equity
- Ethical decision-making.

**Figure 39. The effect of RSE content on Yr.11 Student ratings of Teachers' ability to teach RSE well**
Teaching methods for RSE

This graph shows the impact that method of teaching RSE has on Yr. 11 Student’s ratings of their teacher’s competency to teach RSE. When Students are taught RSE in class by their teachers, they are more likely to think their teacher is more competent, compared to those who receive RSE through other methods.

Figure 40. The effect of method of teaching RSE on Yr. 11 Student ratings of teachers’ ability to teach RSE topics well

The Effect of Method of Teaching RSE on Yr. 11 Student Ratings of Teacher Ability to Teach RSE Topics Well

Yr. 11 Students’ Ratings of Teachers’ Ability to Teach RSE Topics Well
Predictors of Educator ratings of RSE effectiveness

School organisation of RSE
This graph shows how school organisation of RSE impacts Educators’ perceptions about the effectiveness of RSE at their school. The blue bars represent the increase in Educators’ effectiveness ratings that occurs when they agree that their school has a particular element of organisation, compared to if they disagree. For example, the effectiveness ratings of Educators who agreed that their school has a high quality RSE curriculum were 49% higher than the effectiveness ratings of Educators who disagreed that their school had a high quality curriculum.

Figure 41. The effect of school organisation of RSE on Educator ratings of RSE effectiveness
What suggestions for improvement were identified by the different cohorts?

The cohorts were all asked at the end of their surveys to offer three suggestions for improved RSE in their schools. This qualitative data has been organised and coded according to the key themes that emerged in each cohort’s responses. The following graphs show the most common suggestions made by respondents in their answers to the open-ended questions – these therefore represent the improvements to RSE most desired by each cohort.

Summary of key findings:

- Yr. 11 Students top suggestions were to increase RSE frequency, improve pedagogy/teaching environments and make RSE more comprehensive and meaningful
- Parents/Carers top suggestions were to include more parental involvement, include social and emotional learning content and improve pedagogy/teaching environment
- Educators’ top suggestions were to have more professional development, updated resources and curriculum development and guidance for teaching from a Catholic Christian perspective.
- BCEO Staffs’ top suggestions were to have more professional development, updated resources and curriculum development and guidelines for teaching RSE from the Catholic Christian perspective.

Yr. 11 Students

Yr. 11 Students were asked to give suggestions for improvements to RSE at their school. The following graph shows the most common themes that were present in their responses.

Figure 42. Yr. 11 Students’ top suggestions for improved RSE

- Yr 11 Student

The education that has been received is just based on puberty nothing more. There needs to be more so students don’t feel alone and so they can have a better understanding of things and also they don’t have to rely on the internet.

- Yr 11 Student
Yr. 11 Student Suggestions for Improvement:

- “Start giving it. It’s non-existent here.”
- “Disappointed in all forms of sexuality education ever taught at this school. Really needs to be a regular thing”
- “Talk about sex education in general rather than about abstinence and religious beliefs. That does not help.”
- “I believe that it is terrible that I am 16 years of age and have been taught almost nothing. I am glad BCE has taken the time to help future Students with such a difficult subject.”
- “Modernize the presentations, make them engaging and concerned with relevant problems.”
- “Less Catholic related, yes it’s a Catholic School but it won’t help us in the real world.”
- “Taught to all Students to make sure there’s no silent sufferers. Reflect on issues such as homosexuality and other things people may struggle with.”
- “We need to be taught more in classes. Teachers need to be confident.”
- “It’s important to differentiate religious beliefs and factual information. More depth and time needs to be spent on this.”
- “I know being a catholic school is like #nosexbeforemarriageoryouwillburninhell! but without a doubt people will have sex. I know quite a few, so you should not exactly like promote it but show that if you want to make that decision that is okay! And if say someone were to get pregnant show support to them and ensure that students knew that they are old enough to make them know that they are own decisions. Teenagers have a hard life they are the only people who are told to act like adults yet get treated like children. Thank you for listening.”
Parents/Carers
Parents/Carers were asked to give suggestions for improvement in RSE at their school. The following graph shows the most common themes that presented in their responses.

*Figure 44. Parents/Carers top suggestions for improved RSE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Suggestions for Improvement</th>
<th>% of Parents/Carers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently not consulted/involved/and would prefer more involvement</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE should include Social/emotional learning topics</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy/Teaching Environment</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilise External providers (to some extent)</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Comprehensive/Relevant/meaningful SE</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE should include Safety related topics</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age/maturity appropriate</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach earlier</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate SE topics from RE teachings</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A sample of some of the suggestions for improvement provided by Parents/Carers is shown below:

**Parents/Carers Suggestions for Improvement:**

- “Include positive aspects of sex, relationships, etc, instead of just avoiding harm.”
- “Provide children with information at an early age so they are getting correct and factual [information] before they hear things through the grapevine.”
- “Be relevant to this generation (social media, etc)”
- “Adopt a sexuality program from P-12, ensuring that it is delivered at an emotionally age appropriate time.”
- “Keep it real.”
- “As I have no idea what, if any, sex ed is provided at my child’s school, I cannot comment”
- “Have parent/pupil nights where it is discussed together so parents can hear what is being discussed so it opens up discussions at home.”
- “My child has received no sexual education at school so I would recommend it starts as children certainly talk about it in the school yard and sadly my child is misinformed.”
- “We feel the sexuality education should be in line with the Catholic Christian ethos, however should not promote or be clouded by unrealistic expectations.”
- “I understand that my child is educated at a catholic school though I think that for the reality of life and situations that could be confronted, ie orientation, situation etc it is more important that the school looks beyond just the catholic values and makes sure all scenarios and situations are educated so that young people can make decisions free from fear should they find themselves in a situation eg of abuse, unwanted pregnancy, sexual orientation. also the importance of emotional maturity and damage that could be caused by relationships, situations and decisions.”
Educators

Educators were asked to give suggestions for improvement in sexuality education at their school. The following graph shows the most common themes that presented in their responses.

*Figure 46. Educators’ top suggestions for improved RSE*

![Bar chart showing the top suggestions for improvement among educators.]

- **PD**: 58%
- **Resources**: 37%
- **Curriculum Development & Guidance**: 29%
- **Timetabling**: 25%
- **Leadership/admin/coordination**: 23%
- **Implementation Guidelines/Support from BCEO**: 19%
- **Pedagogy/methodology**: 17%
- **Whole of School**: 16%
- **External Providers**: 14%
- **Guidelines for teaching CC perspective**: 12%
Samples of some of the comments made by Educators (when they were asked to make suggestions for improvement) are listed below:

**Figure 47. Educator comments offering suggestions for improved RSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educators’ Suggestions for Improvement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “This needs to be understood as an important, and missing, component of our overall school program at all year levels.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Clear guidelines across all schools so that we are safe from parent criticism and gossip.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Resources that are endorsed as appropriate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “More information/PD to all teachers in the school on how to teach SE in school”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “An indication of the expectations of BCE for SE at various levels throughout primary and secondary school.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Policies on what to teach and how, regarding sexuality education”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Someone to overlook the program as a whole to avoid it being disjointed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Training and PD for Staff interested in teaching SE, with a particular Catholic focus.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Consistent and deliberate teaching, age appropriate material, realistic timetabling.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Clear parent communication before sensitive sexuality sessions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “[We need] Teachers who are enthusiastic and comfortable teaching it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Clarity of responsibility for the delivery and evaluation of the delivery.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BCEO Staff

BCEO Staff were asked to give suggestions for improvement in sexuality education at their school. The following graph shows the most common themes that presented in their responses.

*Figure 48. BCEO Staff top suggestions for improved RSE*

BCEO Staff: Top Suggestions for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>% of BCEO Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for Catholic Christian perspective</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-wide Approach</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development &amp; Guidance</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive/relevant/meaningful</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership/admin/coordination</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation guidelines/support from BCEO</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/emotional learning</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age/maturity appropriateness</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some examples of the comments made by BCEO Staff in their suggestions are provided below:

*Figure 49. BCEO Staff comments offering suggestions for improved RSE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCEO Staff Suggestions for Improvement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “Ensure that the SE policy is not an added extra to principals in schools – it needs to be part of the strategic plan”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Provide PD and formation opportunities specifically related to SE”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Provide teachers with clear position statements re: Catholic Christian perspective on SE”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Equip school leaders with information and resources to support their Staff.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Be open to the latest research and understandings about sexuality and adolescent life and ensure this included in the SE program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Develop a school-wide, cross curriculum program of SE that is guided by professional research.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “That completion of high quality professional development be undertaken before any teacher is permitted to teach in this area of the curriculum.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “All teachers need the skills and confidence to teach these topics. Professional learning needs to be available so that teachers are aligning with school, church and system expectations.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1:

That BCE Leadership advocates for, and commits to, whole-of-school evidence-based RSE (P-12) that meets the needs of all students and is informed by the best of the Catholic Christian tradition.

Literature Summary 1:

There is a profound partnership between curriculum, teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Effective and engaging curriculum reflects who we are, who we are trying to become and how we will get there. Curriculum provides essential expert guidance for teachers in regard to what should be taught, how it should be taught and at which year levels. Educational research has consistently shown that a well-developed curriculum provides an essential framework for professional learning and collaboration, thus enhancing teacher effectiveness.

Nonetheless, ‘fixing’ RSE is not simply a matter of attending sessions for formal (explicit) teaching and getting curriculum documents right. Inquiry into the most effective approach for relationships and sexuality learning unreservedly advocates for a whole-of-school approach. A whole-of-school approach to RSE means systematic teaching of RSE in the classroom (P – 12), attending to implicit RSE throughout the school environment - in the relationships, attitudes, processes and procedures of school life and identifying and addressing that which is evaded or avoided throughout the life of the school.

A systematic approach to the implementation of whole-of-school RSE is not possible without the commitment and active participation of leadership to advocate, influence, model and create the necessary infrastructure and supportive context in which RSE can thrive and remain a visible priority in the school. At times this may require leadership to realign structures and relationships to achieve genuine and sustainable change.

Data Summary 1:

The data from the Audit captures two aspects of what a whole-of-school approach to RSE might involve. The first concerns the extent to which comprehensive RSE is valued by representatives of the school community. The findings are very positive with every cohort valuing the provision of RSE.

Comprehensive RSE is valued

- When asked if young people should receive RSE so that they have information to make responsible choices, 92% of Yr. 11 Students and 97% of Parents/Carers agreed
- When asked if the provision of age-appropriate RSE is a priority, 85% of Educators and 80% of BCEO staff agreed
- When asked if RSE should begin in Prep, 40% of parents agreed, 58% of educators agreed and 90% of BCEO staff agreed.

Secondly, with regard to the explicit teaching of RSE in the classroom from P – 12, the findings are less positive. The findings indicate that explicit teaching is occurring spasmodically and infrequently, and in some cases, not at all. The Audit, by virtue of its focus, did not address everything that a whole-of-school approach might involve. For example, the surveys didn’t look at the ways in which adults model and give witness to Christ-centred life-giving relationships within the school community.

RSE is occurring episodically-if at all

Despite this clear value for sexuality education, results indicate that too often sexuality education has been taught episodically, if at all.

- When asked how frequently sexuality education is taught, the most common response from both Yr. 11 Students (26%) and Educators (47%) was ‘unsure’
- Yr. 11 Students and Educators were also more likely to indicate that it is taught less frequently (such as once a year) than frequently (such as once a semester, term, month or week)
- When asked in an open-ended question for recommendations for improved sexuality education, the strongest recommendation from Yr. 11 Students was to increase the frequency of sexuality education (36% of all comments). Another key recommendation was that sexuality education is currently non-existent and needs to start taking place (21% of all comments)
Frequency of sexuality education was also found to be a predictor of student ratings of sexuality education effectiveness. Students who indicated that they received sexuality education more often (e.g. once a term) indicated that it had a bigger impact on their thoughts, beliefs and actions when compared to students who indicated they received sexuality education less often (e.g. one a year).

Current RSE is ineffective

The Audit also revealed that across all four cohorts, there was strong agreement that the current RSE is ineffective.

- Only 13% of Yr.11 Students indicated that the sexuality education they have received has changed their behaviour
- Only 16% of Parents/Carers indicated that sexuality education at their child’s school meets their child’s needs
- Only 12% of Educators indicated that the sexuality education at their school helps students make responsible decisions
- Only 6% of BCEO staff indicated that the current sexuality education helps students demonstrate reverence and care for themselves and others.

No consensus regarding a Catholic Christian approach to RSE

The Audit evidences a range of opinions on the teaching of sexuality education from a Catholic Christian perspective.

- Educators and BCEO staff indicated great value for the Catholic Christian approach to teaching sexuality education:
  - 94% of Educators agreed that students should have access to faith-based sexuality education
  - 81% of BCEO staff indicated that sexuality education in a Catholic Christian school should be different to a non-religious school.
- Yr. 11 Students and Parents/Carers showed a lesser value for the Catholic Christian perspective, and a higher preference for teaching comprehensive, relevant and meaningful sexuality education
  - 34% of Parents/Carers agreed that sexuality education in Catholic schools must be taught in the context of the Catholic Christian faith
  - 28% of Yr. 11 Students indicated that it is important that sexuality education is taught from Catholic Christian beliefs and values
  - In their recommendations for future sexuality education, a preference for teaching sexuality education in alignment with the Catholic Christian perspective was only mentioned by 0.84% of Yr. 11 Students, 7% of Parents/Carers
  - In comparison, making sexuality education more comprehensive, relevant and meaningful was in the top five recommendations made by both Parents/Carers (18% of all comments) and Yr. 11 Students (32% of all comments).

This data demonstrates that if we are ever to give young people cause to pause and wonder about what makes Christianity different and the Christian lifestyle worth finding out about, then we must develop an effective RSE curriculum that is meaningfully delivered from the best of the Catholic Christian tradition.
Recommendation 2:
That BCE Leadership approves the design and development of comprehensive learning & teaching RSE Guidance to support effective delivery of high quality, explicit learning and teaching of a Catholic Christian approach to RSE.

- The learning & teaching RSE Guidance will be informed by the:
  - Australian Curriculum P – 10 (spotlighting the relationships and sexuality Focus Area of the HPE Curriculum)
  - Archdiocese of Brisbane Religious Education (Religion Curriculum P -12 and The Religious Life of the School)
  - BCE’s Learning and Teaching Framework
  - Catholic Church’s official teachings on sex education

Literature Summary 2:
Strand descriptions, content descriptions, elaborations and achievement standards are not enough to ensure improved student learning. Educators need to be able to translate curriculum and best practice into actual classroom practice. Essential expert guidance for teachers improves the odds for the new or struggling teacher, and allows experienced teachers to focus on their student’s needs or mentoring colleagues.

The appeal for learning and teaching guidance was strongly communicated in the recent BCE Sexuality Education Audit (2013). The major areas of need included: whole school approach (e.g. policy, coordination, scope and sequence, staffing, timetabling, time to teach RSE, resources); formation (e.g. how to meaningfully contextualise RSE from a Catholic Christian perspective); and professional learning (e.g. effective teaching methods, how to deal with controversial issues, how to use resources etc.).

Guidance from BCEO and school leadership is essential for the delivery of high quality, explicit learning and teaching of RSE. Key elements of such guidance will provide clear direction for:

- the coordinated and cohesive planning, delivery and assessment of the explicit RSE
- the formation and professional learning of teachers
- monitoring, evaluating and informing future RSE efforts
- critical, creative and responsible use of contemporary resources and materials.

Data Summary 2:
The Audit revealed that by and large, teachers perceive a lack of functional guidance, support and resources for teaching RSE. Furthermore, in the minority of cases where some form of support did exist teacher perceptions of the quality of RSE was substantially higher.

- When asked if their school currently had a curriculum for RSE that defines who should teach which topics to which year levels, the majority of teachers in BCE either strongly disagreed (33%) or disagreed (32%).
- When asked in an open question what could be done to improve RSE, the third most common answer from BCE teachers was curriculum development and guidance (behind professional development, and resources, both of which depend on having an established curriculum).
- Nevertheless, there were some teachers, a minority (11%), who were fortunate enough to teach at a school that did have what they regarded as a high quality RSE curriculum. These teachers’ ratings of the effectiveness of RSE were 48% higher than the ratings of teachers who worked in a school without a high quality curriculum.
Recommendation 3:
That BCEO Leadership approves the development of a BCE Relationships and Sexuality Policy for all Archdiocesan schools.

Literature Summary 3:
Research recommends a whole-of-school approach to RSE implementation. This ensures that across the life of the school, comprehensive evidence-based RSE takes place and that the Catholic Christian messages about personhood, relationships, health, sex and sexuality are consistent. However, research also argues that without policy and guidelines to support practice, any approach to RSE will be inadequate. A properly researched and worded policy is key in determining the priority schools give to RSE, is critical to sustaining school-wide efforts and is indispensable in maximising the benefits of RSE.

Data Summary 3:
The absence of a clear school policy for sexuality education in many schools was a key finding within the Audit.

- Only 10% of Educators agreed that their school has a clear policy on sexuality education.
- Only 11% of Educators stated that the expected outcomes of sexuality education are clear at their school.
- Teachers who stated that their school had a clear policy provided ratings of RSE effectiveness that were 44% higher than the ratings of teachers whose schools did not have a clear RSE policy.

Recommendation 4:
That BCE Leadership promotes strategic and sustained partnerships with recognised external providers and organisations in support of BCE’s implementation of effective Relationships and Sexuality Education.

Literature Summary 4:
While a greater national emphasis is being placed on whole school responsibility for RSE, school initiatives can be enhanced by extending outwards to collaborate with wider community organisations (eg. Child Safe Organisations) and quality, evidence-based external providers. Sharing training opportunities and exploring partnerships with community-based agencies can improve the effectiveness of all involved in RSE implementation.

Data Summary 4:
The Audit results indicated that the use of external providers to assist with the teaching of sexuality education is valued by both Yr.11 Students and Parents/Carers.

- In response to an open-ended question for recommendations for improved sexuality education, the use of external providers was a key theme in both cohort’s responses.
  - 5th most common recommendation for Parents/Carers
  - 6th most common recommendation for Yr. 11 Students

Currently, however, the extent to which external providers are engaged with is unclear.

- Only 32% of Educators agreed that there are protocols in place for the use of external providers of sexuality education.

This data acknowledges the merit of building strategic and sustained partnerships with recognised external providers and organisations and the establishment of clear protocols for working with such partnerships.
Recommemndation 5:
That BCE Leadership supports the provision of ongoing, cohesive and coordinated whole-of-school RSE Formation and Professional Learning for school leaders, teachers and other staff using both existing structures and cross-directorate approaches.

Literature Summary 5:
The extent and quality of Formation and Professional Learning will be reflected in the school’s capacity to achieve its goals. RSE thrives in the presence of effective, developmentally appropriate formal and informal education at every level of schooling, provided by well-formed teachers and other student-services personnel, within a supportive, safe and connected school climate. Consequently, all staff has a responsibility for quality RSE within the context of BCE’s vision to Teach, Challenge and Transform. Investment in initial and continuing staff Formation and Professional Learning for all school personnel is one of the most important factors for whole-of-school RSE success.

Data Summary 5:
The Audit findings indicated that there is currently insufficient Formation and Professional Learning in the area of RSE.

Formation:
The Audit findings indicated the importance of increasing Educator confidence and their capacity to teach RSE from a Catholic Christian perspective.
- 46% of Educators indicated that they were reluctant to teach RSE as they are unsure how to best communicate the Church’s position on some sexuality topics in the context of contemporary culture.
- 30% of Educators indicated they were careful what sexuality topics they teach because they don’t fully know or understand the Church’s position on some sexuality topics.
- 50% of Educators indicated that they were careful of what they taught because of possible adverse Church reactions.
- When asked to give recommendations for improved sexuality education, both Educators and BCEO staff expressed a desire for teachers to receive clear guidelines for teaching sexuality education from the Catholic Christian perspective.
  - 12% of all Educator recommendations
  - 31% of BCEO staff recommendations

Professional Learning:
- When asked about the level of Professional Learning they had access to, only 17% of Educators agreed that it is available to teachers for the teaching of sexuality education
- Only 15% of Educators indicated that they had access to adequate training and professional development to deliver the sexuality education needed
- When asked if they find it challenging to answer many students’ questions about sexuality, 31% of Educators agreed
- When asked if they feel competent to plan and teach sexuality education, only 47% of Educators agreed
- In their response to an open-ended question asking for recommendations for future sexuality education, both Educators and BCEO staff listed Professional Learning as the number one recommendation:
  - 58% of all Educator recommendations
  - 81% of all BCEO staff recommendations

These findings indicate that Formation and Professional Learning opportunities for Educators are highly valued and considered essential.
Recommendation 6:
That BCE Leadership approves the development of an authoritative whole-of-school implementation process that will guide a school’s RSE journey in identifying its current RSE status, setting targets and strategising to meet these targets.

Literature Summary 6:
Young people’s development is influenced by school-wide factors such as relationships, curriculum, teaching and learning, formation, school organisation (including responsibilities, processes, procedures, protocols, staffing, resourcing), ethos partnerships and community services. Careful planning that considers the array of factors, and involves the entire school community, is most likely to succeed in the long term. However, planning is not enough. Ambitious planning efforts without thought to how goals will actually be achieved can undermine the RSE efforts of schools and the extent to which RSE impacts the outcomes and lives of children and young people. An evidence-based implementation process that links to and aligns with a school’s strategic and annual plans will guide the translation of plans into streamlined action.

Data Summary 6:
Whole-of-school approach:
The merit of building a school-wide approach to sexuality education was a key theme that emerged from the data.

- When asked in an open-ended question for future recommendations for sexuality education, building a school-wide approach was the:
  - 4th most common response from BCEO staff
  - 8th most common response from Educators

Implementation Process:
The Audit results also revealed the need for a sexuality education implementation process in schools.

- Sexuality education implementation guidelines and support from BCEO was a significant theme in recommendations for improvement from both Educators and BCEO staff.
- Key reoccurring themes across Educators and BCEO staff recommendations, that are linked to implementation processes, included:
  - Timetabling (25% of Educators comments)
  - Resources (37% of Educators and 46% of BCEO staff comments)
  - Pedagogy (17% of Educators comments)

This indicates that a systematic, whole-of-school implementation process is highly sought.
Recommendation 7:
That BCE Leadership ensures that quality assurance measures link the whole-of-school implementation process for RSE to existing cyclical renewal structures, reporting systems and teacher performance management systems.

Literature Summary 7:
A basic requirement of effective RSE implementation is the quality of implementation. High levels of quality implementation are essential to achieve the desired RSE outcomes for all children and young people. Quality assurance measures and assures the execution of evidence-based RSE implementation.

Data Summary 7:
Analysis of the Audit data revealed that there is a need for improved organisation and co-ordination of sexuality education in schools.

- In response to an open-ended question asking for recommendations for improvement in current sexuality education, improving the leadership, administration and coordination systems within schools was a key, recurring theme
  - 5th most common recommendation for Educators
  - 8th most common recommendation for BCEO staff

The Audit results have also shown that there is currently a lack of clarity and standardisation in schools around school organisation of sexuality education.

- 59% of Educators were unsure about what resources were used in their school’s sexuality education;
- 19% of Educators were unsure who delivers sexuality education in their school;
- 47% of Educators were unsure how often sexuality education related topics were taught;
- 20% of Educators were unsure about what subjects sexuality education currently takes place in.

This indicates the need for quality assurance measures to ensure that improvements to schools’ sexuality education are not only implemented, but also continually reviewed and evaluated.