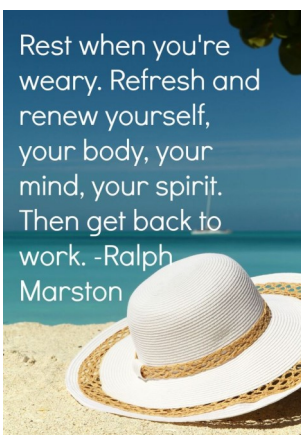


Australian Principals Federation

President's Message—Julie Podbury

The last newsletter for 2016



This is the last newsletter for 2016, which brings an end to a tumultuous year where a great deal has happened in our schools and in education generally. While we at the APF are not in the office until mid- January, I remain available to APF members right through the break. If you ring the office I will get the message, or call me directly on 0419 103 664. Please do not hesitate in making contact if you need any assistance. Have a good break and refresh your mind and body over the summer break.

The news in the last weeks, from the Trends in International Mathematics & Science Study (TIMMS), about our international numeracy standing comes as no great surprise. Substantial underfunding of education to support students in the higher SFO schools over the last decade has bitten hard. When the Federal Education Minister, Sen Simon Birmingham said he was embarrassed by the results; he should be because successive federal governments are partially responsible for this due to the iniquitous funding models of the last 30 years. The new funding applied by the current State government to redress this issue will need considerable time to reverse the trend, however the problem is no longer isolated to particular postcodes. The work on teacher training and lifting the entry is a helpful start, however the APF strongly advocates considerable work is needed to level the playing field at prep entry, where the disparity is enormous; where a greater number of students starting school have not developed any basic literacy or numeracy. This means a huge effort and an immense injection of resources is needed to kick start their learning once they start school. Many students will never recover from this poor start which the data demonstrates.

It's not all bad news on that front; our colleague Ian Sloane at Mitcham PS had an excellent story in The Age in the last few weeks. The video embedded in the story is well worth a look. <http://www.theage.com.au/national/eight-students-in-every-class-have-no-idea-what-is-going-on-why-we-cant-solve-our-maths-problem-20161129-gt04fv.html>

This last newsletter for 2016 includes some useful information for school and regional leaders

We include:

- ◆ [Comment on TIMMS and school funding](#)
- ◆ [Mitcham PS is kicking goals and bucking the trends](#)
- ◆ [Swimming and the Victorian Curriculum](#)
- ◆ [2017 Professional Development](#)
- ◆ [Integrity Program has a vital re-boot](#)
- ◆ [Don't act as if you own the place](#)
- ◆ [APF membership data and stories from the trenches](#)
- ◆ [Education State in schools –Forum](#)
- ◆ [Questions re the on-line PDP](#)

The hyperlink will take you to the appropriate page.



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APF President
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Steve Durkin
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David Finnerty
Treasurer
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The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

Members issues: Swimming in the Victorian Curriculum

I had some very angry emails from members last week when this hit the press, with a mere three weeks to the end of the school year. Here are just two of them:

Hi Julie,

The swimming program plan again demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of how schools operate, along with the impact the new parent payment policy has on schools.

Up front I would have to find over \$52,000 should I be required to pay for the program without seeking parental support as we now do for our 2 week swimming program, which is voluntary. We have approximately 90% uptake. If I charge only for the transport and pool entry, then the instruction component of \$4.00 x 615 students for 10 days means I have to find \$24,600 to run this program.



As a school which receives \$8000 in equity funding and bugger all camps and excursion funding we will be in a position of having to cut a staff member, ES position etc. to meet this. My frustration re the equity funding is the regular conversations from schools in receipt of significant funds is that they actually can't spend it all.... As a school which is in the middle of the private school belt I cannot afford to be not offering a diverse and broad range of extra-curricular programs (although swimming isn't that now) as it could potentially be another nail in the coffin of the public school system where in our area we have 48% in secondary Govt. Schools and approx. 67% in Govt. Primary Schools, with more leakage to the private school system each year. I just love it when one of our outstanding academic and sporting families arrives at the start of term 4 to apologise, but they have just been offered a full scholarship for their 5 children to attend one of the local independent schools.

Dear Julie

Yet another requirement for schools to take on? I am beyond frustrated. When is this going to stop!! I love my job as a school principal but over the last five or so years I have been worn down by the ever increasing demands on schools in conjunction with the demands for improved educational outcomes.

This year we have also been faced with the demands of meeting all of the Safe Schools Standards requirements and now this information that has come out about expectations that schools need to meet in regards to swimming. We have an intensive swimming program for two weeks now each year from F-2 and camping programs for Years 3-6. Do we have to forgo the camping program that has so many benefits for students? Where is the parental responsibility for ensuring children are able to swim?

I cannot bear hearing that 'schools are allocated funding and how they spend that budget is up to individual schools' any more as we are expected to spread our funding ever more thinly.

I have had to make major cuts to my staffing as lower than expected enrolments and an ageing staff has taken a dramatic toll. I believe a local school is actively working to create a larger school to the detriment of others around them. I have had to cut my PE program a lot, put my library teacher back in to a classroom in what will be her final year of teaching (she had to be driven home because of the shock this created) and have had to put the teacher I have trained this year for Reading Recovery in to a classroom next year. This has all had a profound effect on my health but no-one is really concerned about that as they are all concerned about their own or their fellow teacher colleagues' welfare. Thank goodness for my AP!!

We keep hearing noises about the government's concern about Principal well-being but we are not seeing anything that truly reflects that.

We are all passionate people wanting to make a difference to the lives of the children in our schools but without the necessary funding and resources it is incredibly difficult.

Julie's response: I fully understand the frustrations expressed in these emails, especially as the timing was so unfortunate, just three week before the end of the school year. I have spoken to the responsible DET personnel, on behalf of the APF members, and they have tried to re-assure me on a number of aspects of this matter.

Firstly, we are advised that the compulsory requirement for swimming is not a change of policy. According to our advice this is in the current AusVELS standards and is being moved across to the new Victorian Curriculum. The extraction below is from AusVELS Level 5

Learning Focus

As students work towards the achievement of Level 6 standards in Health and Physical Education, they refine and expand their range of skills, and perform them with increasing precision, accuracy and control in more complex movements, sequences and games. Students begin to observe, and give constructive feedback on, the skill performance of their peers. **They consolidate their mobility and safety skills in aquatic environments and develop confidence and responsibility in the water by, for example: swimming competently for a continuous distance of 50 metres (25 meters in freestyle and 25 metres in another stroke); demonstrating sound breathing and stroke techniques; throwing a rope or buoyant object to a person at least five metres from the side of the pool and pulling or**



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If you become aware of a colleague who is not coping or who needs help, please contact the APF without delay.

We are here to support and offer advice to all members at any time.

Julie - 0419 103664

jpodbury@apf.net.au

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The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

instructing them to safety; and performing survival techniques of sculling, treading water, floating and survival strokes for an extended time (four to six minutes), while clothed, in a pool and/or in open water.

The link to swimming in the Victorian Curriculum F-10 is here:

<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/health-and-physical-education/introduction/learning-in-health-and-physical-education>

The **Victorian Water Safety Certificate** is a Victorian Government initiative, which describes specific competencies that should be achieved by the end of primary school. These competencies identify the knowledge and skills to enable students to safely enjoy water based activities in calm and shallow aquatic environments. The competencies focus on water safety knowledge, rescue skills, survival sequences and the ability to swim a continuous distance of 50 meters.

Further information to assist teachers to plan and implement swimming and water safety education within the Health and Physical Education curriculum can be accessed from the Health and Physical Education Resources Page.

Secondly, in line with the Parent Payment Policy July 2016, the APF believes School Councils can ask parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of swimming programs. As long as parent payment processes and practices are fair, transparent and efficient it seems completely reasonable to ask parents to contribute to items that are essential to student learning. The following is extracted from the DET website re parent payments. Check [here](#).

Lastly, for those families who are unable to afford these costs, then there is an entitlement to use the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund for eligible families. (Check [here](#)) Members do remind us that the \$125

Essential student learning items

These are items, activities or services that the school deems **essential** to student learning in the standard curriculum. Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own. Examples are:

- ◆ items that the student takes temporary or permanent possession of such as text books, student stationery, book bags, Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS)
- ◆ materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. technology projects, workbooks, photography)
- ◆ school uniform (where applicable)
- ◆ **activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend**, such as costs associated with excursions and work placements.

per head for primary students is far from adequate to cover costs of any camp, let alone include excursions or a swimming program.

School Leader Wellbeing with Kaya Consulting

Register your interest for our 2017 PD program

[School Leader Wellbeing flyer apf 2017.pdf](#)

Program Description

Building on our understanding that wellbeing is an interplay between individual, relational and organisational influences this program provides a comprehensive process for School Leader wellbeing. Rather than providing a simplistic workshop with a few strategies this Wellbeing series provides school leaders with a tool to investigate their own wellbeing, examine the impact of leadership on wellbeing and a framework for improving staff wellbeing.

The base package includes four workshops spread out over 6 months with an optional facilitated peer online and face to face conversations to embed behaviours. The workshops provide a specific wellbeing lens for AITSL's Australian Professional Standard for Principals professional practice of Developing Self and Others. Attendees will also engage in a pre and post diagnostics that measure improved practice and thinking about wellbeing as a leader.



Angela Stefani
APF Executive
Officer

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Join the APF

www.apf.net.au

Forms can be
completed on line.

LawSense—School Law Vic 2017

Following sell out seminars in 2016 LawSense has now developed SCHOOL LAW 2017, which includes **dedicated streams for State and non-State schools**. Here is the link to the seminar program: [SCHOOL LAW VIC](#).

Another valuable event in the LawSense 'Education Series' includes LAW FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLORS on 16 March 2017. This can also be viewed [here](#).



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The Integrity Agenda



This initiative did not start well. APF members, who were members of the Regional or Central Integrity committees were very vocal in their criticism of the operation and apparent lack of planning for meetings or indeed the very purpose for them, have resigned. A committee member said to me... "There needs to be a purpose for attending and I saw little evidence of this in the year or so I was involved."

The APF believes that all criticism has been acknowledged and there is an attempt to resurrect this initiative with new lead-

ership and a purposeful agenda. Having met with Jonathan Kaplan the new Exec Director, Integrity and Assurance Division, as well as Bella Stagoll, the Acting Director Integrity, we are assured of their intentions and their promises about the new vigour that will be apparent. The APF offers our support and includes some information below. However we do temper our support with the comment that senior government bureaucrats were the architects of the dishonesty, deceit and theft from Victorian students and other inappropriate behaviour, so it is a shame that now we all feel as if we have been tarred with that brush because of the response taken. It will take quite an effort to repair the relationship damage.

The APF encourages members to get involved and help shape this agenda in the best interest of us all.

Membership of the ILGs is a significant responsibility. It represents an opportunity to ensure our Department's integrity agenda is grounded in the real-world experience of school leaders, reinforcing our core purpose to improve learning and development outcomes for Victorian students.

The groups are being strengthened in 2017 to support the Department's to address the integrity issues that matter most, implement smart systems that are effective and easy-to-use, and embed ethical leadership across our organisation.

To submit your expression of interest:

Prepare a short statement (150 words or less) describing why you would like to be appointed and the relevant skills and experience you would bring to the group

Please include the name and contact details of one referee (who must be a Department of Education and Training employee at a school or in a corporate role). This could be the person who approached you to apply.

*Please send your completed EOI to integrity.assurance@edumail.vic.gov.au before **5.00pm, Friday 16 December***

Applicants will be notified about appointments at the start of Term 1 (ahead of the first meeting in March, 2017)

For further information about the groups and the expressions of interest process, contact your region's Integrity Liaison Officer via:

[What are the Integrity Leadership Groups?](#)

For more information about the Integrity Reform Program see:

[What is the Integrity Reform Program?](#)

Don't act as if you own the place!

Jarlath O'Brien, Headteacher of Carwarden Community School in the UK, recently wrote an interesting article about the emotional connection some of have to our schools, which made me realise why when things go awry in our schools it can be so distressing. O'Brien has worked in a number of different industries which gives him some clarity in seeing how some Principals and Headteachers operate quite differently to leaders in other sectors. He maintains that the role goes beyond the functional and requires a huge emotional investment. He insists that the privilege of the role reaps huge dividends, however such an investment comes with a big health warning. The attachment and accomplishment feelings can transmute into feelings of ownership. His suggestion is that if you put everything you've got into a school over many years, this can lead you to challenge anything or control everything that puts your legacy at risk. Sometimes the smaller the school, the worse the problem. The first risk is autonomy and real delegation to others; the second risk is that when you leave, because you held it together personally, the school operational and other systems effectively collapse.

So the advice is to remember as the Principal you are the custodian, not the owner of the school you lead. The responsibility is tremendous, but we owe it to the school that it will run just as smoothly when you are no longer there.



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Chris Eeles
Secondary Sector
Vic Branch Exec



Andrew Dagleish
Primary Sector
Vic Branch Exec

?

**Is this where your
photo will be in 2017**

Comprehensive
Sector
Vic Branch Exec
(Comprehensive is P-9 or
10, P-12 or Specialist,
language etc)



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APF membership – You cannot afford to be without it – neither can your colleagues.... Make sure you tell them!!!

While your membership of the APF brings enormous benefits industrially, the nature of those benefits varies considerably. On one hand, we deal with matters like industrial agreements and “big picture” system issues that are able to be freely discussed publically. On the other hand though, much of our work is inevitably confidential in nature as we provide expert advice, support and advocacy in dealing with a variety of sensitive and private matters. Our approach is based upon integrity and mutual respect while always maintaining the strictest of confidence. In many ways, we are the silent supporters of the principal class. We have numerous successes with literally hundreds of members a year, yet these are more often than not private matters, that for our members’ sake, are best kept private. Unlike other organisations that justifiably and proudly trumpet their successes, our successes are celebrated proudly but completely privately, as is appropriate. A membership form is available [here](#) so you can ensure newly appointed Principals and APs in your Networks are able to read the newsletter then join.

Issue	Number	Comments
Staff issues		Variety of matters where Principals seek assistance in handling a difficult matter with a staff member. Principal needs assistance to protect themselves. Sometimes this requires attendance at MPB
&		
Allegations	9	Parents, teaching or ESO staff have lodged a formal complaint to the Region: Preliminary or C&E investigation underway.
Contract, Super & pay issues	19	APF intervention required.
Prin Positions	5	Assistance to interpret actions of DET
Matters around students with disabilities/Disability Advocates	4	Where members are struggling in meeting the needs for students with disabilities/parents complaints/advocates
DET Support –Media	2	Perceived lack of DET support
Abusive student		
WorkCover	7	Help needed to navigate and protect members rights
Well Being & Support	24	Assistance to manage well-being and mental health
Workload & Mental Health of PCE		
Conflict of Interest	1	Negotiating with RDs to protect member
Operational, Funding & general matters	3	These are not matters that are not necessarily industrial matters but if not handled correctly might be an issue.
Child Safe/ Stat Dec	20+	Clarification sought
Consultation	3	Re consultation committee & union intervention
CPSU/AEU difficulties	2	Support to Principal in dealing with poor union behavior in the school
Violent & abusive parent	3	Support to manage
Sexual Assault	3	One of a child by a child- One of a PCE by a Teacher – One of a child by a parent
MPB	4	Assistance with a matter at the MPB
VIT/Ombudsmens/FWC Office	2	Complaint about Prin to VIT, OO or FWC assistance to deal with the response
OS Travel Denial	1	Assistance to deal with this matter



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Why I'm in the APF

“In February this year I found myself in a very stressful and difficult situation with a workplace issue. I was unable to sleep and felt quite isolated. On the advice of a principal friend I called the APF and was immediately reassured that there was a solution to the situation, this was music to my ears as at this stage I just couldn't see a way forward. Julie assisted me in every way, she counselled, reassured and importantly enabled me to move forward with confidence. Her advice was practical and within 20 minutes of speaking with her it was obvious that she was exceptionally experienced and knowledgeable. It was very reassuring and I was able to again focus on the myriad of other issues that also required my attention. Like any principal the list is endless. I was relieved to have someone who advocated for me as a principal without having any other sector to consider – the focus of the APF is purely the principal class and the issues that are unique to us. My membership this year was worth every cent and more.”

Wendy, Secondary Principal



&



The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

EDUCATION STATE IN SCHOOLS- FORUM

Last week, on behalf of the APF, I spent two day at a forum in Aitken Hill with the key players in the implementation of the Education State from the DET bureaucracy, along with the peak stakeholders, to examine the progress so far in this important education initiative. Together we examined the achievement of all the goals around excellence and equity; if inadequate progress was made we looked at the barriers and how they could be minimised or eliminated.

It was a very honest and forthright forum where a colleague Principal made plain concerns about the integrity agenda and the distrust and the fear that exists in system relationships. By saying "The breach of integrity issue has been so very damaging to our trust and interconnection across the system. People are distrustful and frightened. What will be our way forward in winning this trust back?" I spoke about the ridiculous workload and how the need to repair these damaged relationships if we are to make the required progress. I added that thinking about the DET as the "Dark Side", has got to be regarded as Dark Age thinking: a view that must STOP.

The five students present from VicSRC were outstanding in making everyone understand the need to consider their input into the teaching and learning agenda.

There was a really strong will from all sides to trample down these barriers and get on with the work to be done.



The forum was an idea proposed by Secretary, Gill Callister, which was achieved on a short timeline at a difficult time of the year. Her opening speech was outstanding and while she had notes, much of it was delivered from the heart with the passion of an educator! A full report from the Secretary is available for you to read via the link at the bottom of this page, however it is worth repeating the closing paragraphs.

A sense of urgency—setting our priorities for 2017

The most important ingredient in education is still the same—the quality of teaching and learning in our classrooms. What has changed is how we need to support and develop our leaders and teachers to get the best outcomes.

Forum participants agreed priorities for next year, which reflect the essential principles of active engagement of students, professionals and communities; appropriate transparency, reciprocity and mutual respect; honesty about what data tells us and commitment to evidence-based decision-making; and shared responsibility for better student outcomes.

The priorities across our system are to:

- ◆ Enable principals to create powerful learning communities across our whole system where teachers are supported as reflective practitioners to inquire into the impact of their practice on student learning and development outcomes
- ◆ Support teachers to adopt evidenced-based teaching practices that are responsive to diverse student learning needs and ensure that all students experience learning growth
- ◆ Foster genuine student agency and engagement at all levels of our system
- ◆ Identify, share and adopt excellent practice, and
- ◆ Use our system to increase the use of real-time data and evidence to improve student outcomes.

A guiding coalition

In taking up this challenge, we accept the principle of shared responsibility across a wide span of partners, stakeholders and institutions across the community—and the importance of using productive, meaningful collaboration, including frank and honest dialogue, to achieve more progress towards our common goal of improving student outcomes.

See Secretary Callister's report [here](#).



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On-line PDP causing concern.

Answers sought!

Can we populate our school AIP goals into the online for all staff to create a local template?,

Does this delay PDP starting Day 1 2017?

Will the document be printable or will it be an online document? eg the Emergency Management document is 'printable' but does not print as it is written nor does it print all entries. This is important because we print and sign copies for the personnel files. We also use them in discussions but we can work around that.

How transferable will information be between documents? Will it be possible to copy and paste sections from one PDR to another? We have teams of staff who develop similar sections of the PDP and then this is agreed to by all and copied into each PDP.

Will it be possible for a school to set up a template PDP document and then shared with staff (offline)? In particular, this is for ES staff who work in the classroom and who all do the same work with the same school-based expectations. These staff benefit from having a draft template document developed for them to reflect on and personalise rather than to create their own. This also saves ES additional time that would then have to be factored into their TOIL.

Will there be a range of timelines or just the 3- start, middle and end of cycle?

Are the templates the same as existing documentation?

Are we required to cut and paste content into the templates or is it an upload document system?

How will staff access the system to complete documentation?

Will there be PL or 'how to's' provided to support us in using and implementing this system?

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class