

Australian Principals Federation

President's Message—Julie Podbury



Two distinct systems, and a slew of other things.

In the last two weeks two issues have given our rural and urban members different things to think about. We deal with both in this issue of the newsletter.

The urban schools are grappling with the issues related to cleaning; which may be far bigger than is acknowledged. See below.

The rural schools are raising deep concerns about the wellbeing of the students and the impact that is bringing. The lack of support services to service the needs of the students is compounding an already serious problem. The APF also continues to raise concern about rural teaching principals who have two important roles to fulfil, an unreasonable burden in our view.

John Handley presents No2 in his series on Staffing in preparing for 2019. John also reports on the August FISO meeting. We also share the Auditor General's report on School Councils on Page 4

Cleaning Reforms: Urban schools

While hosed down by DET in the media, this matter is far from resolved according to our members.

Members are telling us:

- Schools must be clean and not just to some supposed industry standard, but to a standard where children (and their parents) and the staff who work in close quarters can be assured of the conditions in respect to their health. Viruses are easily spread in schools, when standards are not maintained,
- Clean refers to floors, tables, door handles, toilets and sinks. These MUST be cleaned daily!
- Children can at times wet their pants, vomit, and bring all manner of unspeakable things into the classroom on their shoes. In many classes in primary schools, they sit on the carpet! It must be clean!
- Principals have had to bite into other sources of funds to pay for those things not now being cleaned or secured. If they had access to other sources of funds, that is!
- Many cleaners have had hours and wages cut,
- This is seriously impacting on the operation of schools and diverting attention from the core business,
- Emergency cleaning call out is not working very well according to those who have spoken to us,
- The cleaning companies are very rigid and the goodwill that existed between many schools and their former cleaners, may never be established in the new model.

The APF says:

- This is an industrial issue: It is impacting heavily on Principals, their health and their workload,
- The APF was not involved in the consultation,
- Those who were involved in consultation say that the advice offered was generally ignored,
- If you have an issue please raise it with the company ASAP,
- Please copy DET Cleaning into all communication with the companies,
- When DET does get involved with very difficult issues they are often resolved very quickly
- The faster we can resolve the outstanding issues, the faster you can get back to your real work
- **United Voice may well have rescued cleaners who were not being paid award rates; HOWEVER, there are no other winners at this point according to our members: NOT SCHOOLS, NOT TEACHERS, NOT STUDENTS, NOT THE MAJORITY OF CLEANERS AND MOST ASSUREDLY NOT THE PRINCIPAL CLASS IN SCHOOLS!**



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Assoc Prof. Phil Riley

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APF Annual PD & AGM



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RURAL SCHOOLS ARE IN CRISIS! Members are telling us:

- The Education State and FISO is having a revolutionary impact on our 'whole approach' to teaching and learning, student wellbeing and system improvement. In Teaching & Learning terms it is the best ever period to be a principal or teacher !!!
- The T&L Resources are outstanding, research based and supported by credible educationists,
- Rural networks are at different stages of development but are embracing CoP and other DET initiatives,
- PCOs are sharing more, meeting to compare data and working together to resolve common problems of practice,
- Teachers (VCE) are meeting across schools to moderate, undertake PD and to support all their students. Networks established in 2017 to meet,- Collaborative Professionalism has been happening before it was introduced to us in 2018,

HOWEVER

- Improvement is not at a level we want in some rural areas,
- Many rural areas can't get CRT's and are getting NO applications for teaching jobs
- In some schools the principal is the CRT, massively increasing their workload
- Rural areas are experiencing second generation parents who can't parent,
- Rural areas are experiencing the same community drug issue as our city cousins but without the resources to help,
- Rural communities are struggling due to a lack of 'wellbeing' type resources. Some of the poorest shires are in rural Victoria,
- SSSOs (speech therapist /psychologist/social workers/etc.) either will not go to the country or simply don't get paid enough to go to the country or stay there,
- SSSOs who are retained by the rural areas are so overworked they are overwhelmed and spend the bulk of their time travelling between schools,
- SSSOs spend so much of their time conducting endless assessment that they are not able to carry a caseload and therefore are not generating sufficient clinical hours to maintain their registration.
- Those specialists working in our system are working as hard as they can, at the risk of burn out, they are doing a great job!
- Schools need these personnel to be working with schools, shoulder to shoulder but there is not enough of them for the tidal wave that is poverty in rural areas,

SO

- If we want all this good work (FISO) not to be lost on our most marginalised students, we need the Wellbeing component of DET enhanced for rural schools,
- Student Attendance is a huge issue in some rural Victoria areas, city schools with higher SOFE have much better attendance levels than some rural schools,
- VCE results, in some rural areas follow a similar pattern to attendance,
- We all want the best for our kids and communities. We can almost touch the success but generational poverty and associated fallout will make it difficult to reach if resources aren't increased to support student wellbeing,
- We need our kids to be able to come to school, be supported and to feel wanted, known and happy. This sometimes means feeding and clothing, in addition to teaching. It is hard for students to learn if these elements are missing. It is frustrating for schools that don't have the personnel or services in place to deliver these basic human needs.

**Facing Allegations?****Read this!**

The APF has established an outstanding panel of retired Principals, SEILs, Assistant Regional Directors, and Regional Directors who are available to offer individual Principal support and or mentoring.

This Panel has expertise in all manner of school related issues. If however, you are undergoing an investigation or facing allegations, you may well want the support of one of these people who can support you through such a difficult time.

Contact the APF for a referral, or contact Janine Blachford, program coordinator.

janine.blachford@gmail.com

Or phone 0401 992 272

OR

Contact

Sarah Carthew,
Senior Project Officer
at Bastow
03 8199 2986



Workforce Planning 2019, Article 2, John Handley, APF ADVISOR

Term three is a key time for detailed workforce planning for the following year. Within the APF we recognise the variability of experiences in this domain across our schools, depending on context such as time in Principalship and location and circumstances of school. As such we attempt to provide our best advice and sometimes a different perspective to support our members.

Whilst access to the 2019 SRP is several weeks away, it is still possible to use the existing planner as a tool in each school's Workforce Planning for 2019.

Typically, student enrolments are firming up, so over the next few weeks projections can be made that enable schools to identify their staffing profile and numbers of personnel. This would include subject selections in secondary schools that impact on potential teaching allocations and oversupply or shortfalls in particular subject domains.

Communication with staff on leave, including those on family leave, is highly recommended to confirm potential vacancies for 2019. As is early communication with staff around potential time fraction changes, requests for leave and potential retirements in 2019 so as to ensure appropriate consultation and decision making can be undertaken.

In our previous Newsletter, some particulars of a Workforce Plan were noted. Namely – *'these might include details of student enrolments and projected trends, planned curriculum (class sizes and classes to be taught/supported), staff profile and cost (Leadership, ongoing, fixed term, part-time), staff on leave (including various paid, unpaid) and a Leave replacement mapping. And having a projected timeline for each stage of the planning and implementation process that is communicated with staff'*.

The identification of school responsibility positions, and related vacancies as early as practicable enables each school to better access available recruits.

Within the school's workforce planning documentation, it is useful to be able to link the number of employees (EFT if you like) to the available \$\$\$ via the SRP. In this way it is possible to model changes to curriculum coverage with available funds.

It is not uncommon for schools to plan for classes to be taught, allocate release from teaching periods for responsibility positions etc, only to find via the SRP that the cost of staff is beyond them, or the reverse – the numbers of staff available exceeds the number required. Being meticulous in this workforce planning is worth its weight in gold!

Another area of contention in some schools is the reconciliation of available funding for English as an Additional Language, Equity funding, or International Student program funding. Explicit and detailed planning that matches availability of revenue with necessary expenditure on staffing and program delivery so as to optimise outcomes is invaluable. Our advice would be for such planning and subsequent allocations to be readily explainable to our Consultative Committees.

Our next article will focus on advice with respect to recruitment, particularly in the context of fixed term vs on going appointments.



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Thank you for the referrals. Many new members are joining the APF!



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APF Executive
Officer

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School Councils in Government Schools

Victoria's Auditor-General, Andrew Greaves, tabled the following report in the Victorian Parliament recently:

School councils of government schools operate within a complex and unique governance framework, sharing governance responsibilities with the principal of their school and the Department of Education and Training (DET). Because the governance framework of government schools is unique, it is particularly important that the roles, responsibilities, limits of authority and accountability of those involved are clearly defined and well understood, and that the framework works well in practice.

School councils' role within government schools is not insignificant. As of February 2017, school councils operated in 1 534 government schools that served over 600 000 students. In 2016–17, Victorian school councils were responsible for budgets totalling \$1.65 billion. School councils' activities have a real impact on students and their school community's confidence in the way they are managed.

DET is responsible for:

- ensuring that school councils understand the governance framework
- overseeing their activities

advising the Minister for Education on their performance.

In this audit, we examined whether school councils are meeting their objectives under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In doing so, we considered DET's guidance, and whether DET effectively oversees school councils and keeps the minister informed on their performance.

We made five recommendations for DET.

The full report and a short recorded presentation of less than 10 minutes that details the report's main findings are available on our website [here](#).

FISO Advisory Group Report August 2018, John Handley, APF Advisor



Our bi-monthly consultation occurred on 02 August. As I've noted in the past, the DET staff working on the various elements of the scope of this group appear highly committed to developing and providing high quality support to schools. Whether it's FISO, Differentiated Support or the School Review process, they continue to work diligently to improve processes, documentation and training. And they continue to seek feedback to help shape their work.

Whilst I'm not working as a School Principal any longer, I'm optimistic the direction this area of school support is going can have long term benefits for schools and School Principals. If there are any areas that are not working to your expectation, feedback to us would be invaluable.

FISO Continua

A review of the FISO Continua of Practice was a key element for discussion at this meeting. Evidence from surveys is showing most Principals and teachers are now using the FISO Continua to implement and monitor school improvement. At the Advisory Group level, there's universal recognition that the current Continua are still "a work in progress". The language and the descriptors in many cases are still difficult to interpret in a common way across the State. This is particularly true as you move across the categories of *emerging, evolving, embedding and excelling*. If there was a discussion amongst a group of Principals across the state as to what it looks like to be emerging, evolving, etc on some of the "essential elements", I'm confident there would be a wide range of responses. And what do schools that as yet don't see themselves even as *emerging* on a FISO dimension do? DET is now working to refine the language so as to be



Hattie says...

"That's one of my frustrations in the business. Why don't we start with acknowledging and recognising that we do have excellence all around us? Why would you take a teacher who uses a method that you may not like, who uses a method perhaps out of the 1970's, but they're having an impact on their kids – why would you change that? ... Some of those teachers with their arms crossed in the back of the room don't need to change. Some of them do. Your first job is to work out which camp they are in."

John Hattie in an interview with Justin Baeder, Principal Center, December 25, 2017

Quote
from Hippocampus,
an email publication of
Principal's Digest

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

more specific and more easily interpreted, and if possible, to provide some exemplary, more specific evidence of what it could look like. It is expected that later this year a *draft revised Continua* will:

- *present a precisely defined developmental continua for each component within each of the dimensions*
- *use clear, consistent and concise language*
- *ensure it is linked to available, high quality resources to be used by schools*
- *clarify the links between the dimensions and the Improvement Cycle*
- *ensure each dimension reflects the eight Essential Elements*
- *support schools to implement practice changes at the classroom level.*

However, a revised Continua won't be released for action until Term 3 2019, after further consultations and revision.

Differentiated Support for School Improvement

Whilst DSSI initiatives are only in their infancy, an interim evaluation (March to June) indicates growth in confidence in all partnership categories; particularly in coherence of collective expectations, structures that are in place, and trust between teachers, leaders and initiative staff.

We have moved from an arguably, negatively connotated system of School Reviews to a common approach with a broad range of support possibilities that are more contextual for schools.

Post school review, there's little doubt that there can be a mismatch between Principal and school readiness for support and the perceived need for it by Reviewers or Regional staff.

DET has prepared quite extensive advice on this matter to support the implementation of the Leadership Partnership Teams initiative. And the beginning of the process is supposed to be based on common understandings, building positive relationships, and an agreed approach between the support team and the Principal.

If our perspective as School Principals is to use the review process to shape self-improvement, then the availability of a range of initiatives to support us to progress our school's improvement is worth its weight in gold! This can be an area for optimism.

As mentioned earlier, your feedback on any of the FISO scope of works is welcome.



Support for colleagues

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.

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Mark - 0418 551375

industrialofficer@apf.net.au



Mark Arkinstall
APF Industrial Officer

The APF is moving

Before mid October the APF will be moving to the office tower at Chadstone Shopping Centre. The new address will be **Tower 1, Level 8, 1341 Dandenong Road, Chadstone, 3148**. We hope to move much earlier, if our lease can be taken over before October.

We will inform you when the change occurs along with new phone numbers.



The APF _ Industrial Relations 101

At the **APF** consistent with industrial relations '101' we are concerned with matters such as your salaries, classification, entitlements, protections, contracts of employment and amongst other matters, the manner in which you are assessed and the consequences thereof.

Furthermore, your access to industrial and/or legal advice, advocacy and support in relation to matters of discipline, conflict resolution, conflict of interest, complaints and/or performance.

Role of the APF — Industrial Relations: 102

Industrial matters arising from the management and implementation of one's professional role. Specifically as a function of the Principal Class Employee interpreting and performing their accountabilities and obligations as defined by their contract of employment; the operation of industrial agreements, Ministerial Orders and the changing compliance environment determined by legislation, regulations and policy.

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class