

Australian Principals Federation

President's Message—Julie Podbury



Change School Hours?

Over the summer break, you might remember that recent one where devastating fires were followed by destructive floods followed by the fairly scary Coronavirus. The one in which many of our members worked endless extra hours to respond to each crisis and mop up as well as support their communities and continue to do so. Another matter was raised via social media (Mamamia) by an individual who is finding fitting work around damn schools is a damn inconvenience and is suggesting that schools should look at what they are doing and change school hours to fit modern life! Madeleine Heffernan from The Age picked up the story and wrote to me in early December *“Many parents complain they (school hours) are not work friendly and premised on the idea of a parent (read mother) at home.”*

APF Councillors had a lot to say about this matter, and given the impact that such a change would have on our members working conditions, I decided to share some of these opinions as these are balanced, reasoned, oh, and, puts the needs of students first!

I responded to Heffernan *“This is a vexed topic and there are no right answers. There are so many conflicting points of view – what’s best for the kids, industrial agreements, parents work pressures, out of hours care arrangements, instructional day versus actual hours worked, the need for flexibility according to context, the list goes on. Our key interests are in what is in the best interest of the child and their education, and our members and their working conditions.*

A number of schools have tried to accommodate changes to school times, in consultation with their communities. It is often pressure from parents that stalls any attempted changes, however. School hours may have originally been premised on the idea that there is a parent at home; still schools are well aware that the majority of families have 2 working parents, and work to accommodate them within reasonable limits. Before and after school supervised yard duty is one way this is done, as well as the Out of School Hours Care service that is provide by companies such as TheirCare, Team Kids and others on school sites.

If this push is in response to the fact that our PISA results are steady, while other nations have improved, we would argue that we don’t want to impose similar cultural pressures on children in this country. Extending school hours is not the answer. Children need a balance in their lives with essential social, cultural, community and sporting activities beyond school. If we look at the model presented on the global scale as being an ‘effective educational system,’ Finnish schools have a start time of 8:00 am and finish at 1:00 pm. Children are engaged in out of school activities for the afternoon period.”



A primary principal from the Geelong area had this to say.

These are my views on the school-hours discussion from a primary and family point of view:

- Primary aged children learn best at the beginning of the day and their readiness/capacity to learn diminishes as the day goes on. By 3.00pm, most kids are spent as far as learning goes.
- Schools adapted to this by changing the way the school day was structured. We went to a 2 hour session, followed by 30 minutes recess, followed by another 2 hour session followed by lunch and then finally a one hour session to finish the day. The benefit was in the two X two hour sessions being the optimum time for learning.
- To respond to parent needs for child-minding, most schools have offered out of school hours care as a service for parents. We began with an after-school care program that was very successful, but still only ever captured at best 10% of the kids. 90% of our population didn’t require this service at all.

In this issue:

We discuss the issues around school hours on this page.

On P3 we follow up the article from the last issue with a missing part of the story.

One member tells you her story about APF support and encourages you all to recruit your colleagues to the APF on P4

A question to you about our Log of Claims for the next EBA is on P4

A member Issues Report is on P5.

Infectious Diseases Leave

Members of staff who need to quarantine themselves if they fear they have been exposed to the Coronavirus can access IFL which will not deduct from their sick leave.

Please liaise with employee.relations@educaton.vic.gov.au or call 03 7022 0013.

Evidence to support this leave can include a copy of tickets and the individuals passport.



- Our school also had extensive after school sporting programs in local competitions. These were school teams in local comps. At one stage we were running 5 or 6 basketball teams, all of which played in local comps beginning around 4.00pm and running through until after 7.00pm.
- Many of our kids were involved in various sporting and arts endeavours, all of which began around 4.00 to 5.00pm. An extension of the school day would have played havoc with local sports. At my school kids were involved in after school training for footy, cricket, athletics, basketball, soccer, baseball, swimming, hockey, netball and tennis. Others were involved in afterschool music lessons, dance groups and ballet, while more again were at cubs, scouts, etc. Extending the school day would limit these opportunities for our children to pursue individual interests with like-minded community groups.
- Finally, we want primary aged kids to get outside, use their imagination, develop socially with other local kids and learn to be good citizens in a community. They spend more than enough time at school and as a parent and now grandparent, I don't want school time eating into social and family time.

An eastern suburb secondary school principal said: I tried changing the day by 5 minutes and I spent more time responding to parent complaints. It is impossible to make everyone happy.



A northern suburb secondary principal said: Given the research about adolescence and sleep patterns it would be good if school hours could be pushed back.

I consulted with my community about this last year.

There are many societal pressures that prevent this:

- After school activities and sports are an impediment
- Secondary school students are used as pick up and drop off for younger siblings and so primary schools would need

to align with any changes in time.

- Kids get tired.
- Also, teachers as professionals would have their work hours dictated to by other community demands. What impact would it have on the family lives of school staff if our work hours were changed to accommodate the work hours of other industries? It is already challenging to attract people to the profession, we do not want to make it more so.

A country primary principal said: I did try to negotiate earlier start and finish times for a short period when our building program was occurring to limit impact on and for OHS concerns for staff & students.

To put it mildly parents were not interested... in fact they were more worried about the impact on them – drop off of siblings at kinder or secondary school and their working hours. I did drop the discussions very quickly.

The final say from an urban primary school principal: I think it's not only a situation where the students are tired but also where do they see the teachers (many of whom are parents) work hours fitting into this, thus meaning that many, many more teachers will be required to cater for the group of parents "demanding" longer hours. Also, these longer hours will not be 9-5 (how can a working parent be there at 5 to pickup!). At what point will there be room for the 2 hours of meetings and all the additional work that teachers are required to do.



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Tel: 0412 584 002

Have you encouraged Acting Principals in your Network to join the APF?

** NOTE: Monday, Thursday & Friday are my APF working days. If you need assistance on Tuesday and Wednesday, text Julie or Mark direct please.*



Gemma Naylor
APF Executive
Officer

gnaylor@apf.net.au

Join the APF

www.apf.net.au

Forms can be completed on line.

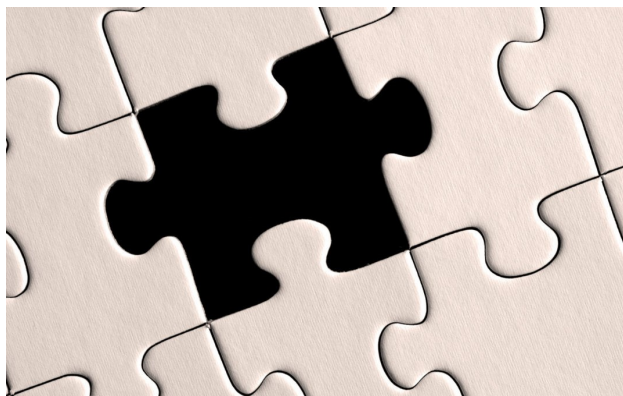


join

Missing piece of the puzzle—Violence in schools story. Julie Podbury

The story in our last newsletter on violence in schools lead to me speaking on ABC radio with Virginia Trioli last Thursday morning. It was an interesting experience being in the studio, and many of the callers seemed to be very critical of schools. The anonymous phone call I took after the show was from a woman who told me all principals are evil, they are all toxic. They all have power and abuse it. Why did I answer my phone to an unlisted number?

However the one question I could not answer as I did not know was this. What happened between the child and the teacher to cause this level of violence? Everyone assumed the worst. So I followed up and was provided with this explanation. In the last part of the day the CRT allowed his grade 2 class to do 'colouring-in'. When he asked the children to pack up to prepare for the end of day bell, this child wanted to continue colouring. The teacher insisted she stop and she got upset. That is what lead to a teacher getting punched in the face and then pushed out of the door and into a garden bed where he was kicked.



While the teacher is clearly impacted, the whole incident has left an indelible scar on the Principal. Most of us work to protect our staff and students, and when something like this happens on our patch, we feel responsible.

Principal Health & Wellbeing—Mentoring & General Support

Principal Mentoring links Substantive & Acting Principals with experienced current or recently retired principals in a mentoring relationship. These trained mentors partner with their mentees to share their expertise and provide support, as sounding boards and trusted advisors.

Mentors are trained in psychological first aid, and will be able to help recognise emerging health and wellbeing issues and link mentees up with other support and services as needed.

The program offers up to twelve hours of mentoring time. Sessions can be delivered face-to-face, via Skype or phone, or a combination of the two.

You can participate in this program at any career stage, and the service is totally confidential.

How can I register for the program?

Principals are able to access the mentoring program by expressing their interest through the Bastow website. See: [Principal Mentoring](#). For further information contact **Sarah Carthew** on 8199 2986

You will be asked to complete an expression of interest as part of the registration, to help match you with a mentor.

“Interrupting negative mindsets and practices is challenging work for leaders, requiring an orientation to vision – a leadership stance in which we define, coach toward, and message a vivid picture of success. Principals should over-communicate their vision – in meetings, agendas, posters, and feedback to teachers on classroom observations. Much of our work toward educational equity focuses on the problems we need to solve: institutional racism, sexism, exclusion, bias. While we must develop a robust analysis of our equity challenges, the warm demander framework offers us a path forward rooted in hope and possibility.”

“Becoming a Warm Demander” by Shane Safir in *Educational Leadership*, March 2019

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



Support for members

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

Julie - 0419 103 664

jpodbury@apf.net.au

Mark - 0418 551 375

industrialofficer@apf.net.au

John—0407 557 862

jjmhandley@gmail.com

Ring us direct

Conflict of Interest

This issue is still causing concerns for some of our members. If in doubt please ring to ask for advice.

I am happy to come to Network or other meetings to present to you on this topic.

Please email me or ring to discuss.



Mark Arkinstall
APF Industrial Officer

Mark - 0418 551 375

industrialofficer@apf.net.au

Member feedback, Deborah Patterson, Principal

Why every Principal Class Officer needs to be an APF member.



On Thursday 15th March 2019 at 1:30pm I had a stroke at school. I was the Principal of Mill Park Heights PS with around 1,000 students, 100 staff and 720 families. I have been in education for 43 years, an Assistant Principal for four years and Principal in three schools for 23 years. I have been a member of the APF since the beginning joining because my fellow colleagues did and I thought that if I needed industrial representation for whatever the reason, they'd have my back!

After spending five days in the Royal Melbourne Hospital Acute Stroke Unit undergoing numerous CCT scans and an MRI, doctors found that I had a blood clot that went to the brain affecting my speech and brain functioning. I was in total shock! A stroke of all things. Days later a Principal colleague of mine, an APF member, rang and asked me to contact Julie Podbury, President of the APF and discuss what happened. To be honest, whilst still in shock and getting accustomed to the whole 'stroke' thing, I did not want to talk to anyone. However, after thinking about my predicament and what my future options might be, I rang Julie and it was the best thing I have ever done.

Julie listened and sympathized with my situation. Being an ex-Principal herself, she understood. She said that I could make a Workcover claim as the stroke took place at work. However, I did not want to do ANY paperwork because I was still confused, overwhelmed and very, very emotional. "Don't worry, I will do all the paperwork and get it into the Region tomorrow". But we spoke around 8pm. Julie must have spent a couple of hours that night completing the documentation. I couldn't believe it! She replied when I thanked her, "That is what the APF does for its members, we're here for you!"

Julie Podbury has been by my side throughout the entire process. She liaised with Gallagher Bassett, DET's Workcover Insurers, regarding my umpteen appointments, Independent Medical Examinations and the Department of Education and Training. Her advice and support throughout the lengthy and at times frustrating and confusing process was priceless! Whilst Julie did all the liaising with all those involved I was able to focus on my own mental and physical health and wellbeing and getting on with my life.

One never knows what will happen in the future, let alone whilst working in education, but you'd be a fool to go into or be in any Principal Leadership position without the protection and support of the APF.

I am still a proud member of the APF! I encourage you to make sure all your colleagues are also members. We need the APF, and members who have experienced their support and advice are it's best advocates.

Developing our Log Of Claims

Thank you to all the members that have made contributions to the development of our Log of Claims. We are making good progress.

We need you to assist in identifying opportunities in your school, however small, and across all services to reduce costs, improve efficiency, eliminate duplication and eliminate waste. This includes all aspects of the administrative load.

Please send your thoughts and ideas to jpodbury@apf.net.au. Please put EBA in the subject line.



Role of 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.

Further, 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.

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.

Member issues report, Julie Podbury

This report presents the data for the period 1st August to the 31st December 2019. This report covers a five month period and shows that over this time we handled 171 different issues. The three largest categories remain Staff (30), with Allegations/Complaints/Investigations (21) and Principal class employment matters including contracts/remuneration/superannuation (28). The rise in the number of matters requiring MPB attendance is of concern(10).

Per Region we report that in North Eastern Region we dealt with 32 matters, in North Western Region there were 42 matters, in South Eastern Region there were 50 matters and in South Western Region the count was 47 matters. See chart below.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Agreement/Staffing/CC | 12 |
| Allegations/Investigations | 21 |
| Cleaning/Facilities | 5 |
| Contract – Principal Class | 18 + 10 =28 |
| * Employment matters Prin Class | (10) |
| Operational | 5 |
| Regional Relations | 2 |
| Legal matter | 6 |
| MPB | 10 |
| Parent Complaints and disability | 21 |
| VIT | 2 |
| Staff | 30 |
| Staffing | 10 |
| Wellbeing & Workload | 6 |
| Workcover | 13 |

From 1st August 2019 to End December 2019, of the 171 individual matters; 19 were Complex matters with 10+ hours to work through, many of these are on-going matters, with some having 40 or more hours of work to process them. 92 were classified as moderate, requiring 4-10 hours work, and the remaining category were classed as simple in terms of the hours required; up to 4 hours work. It should be noted that simple does not mean not very serious or not important. Sometimes these simple matters require urgent decision making and critical support, and in these cases we drop whatever else we are doing to attend to the matter.

Also, the appearances at the MPB is costly time wise. Mark handles all of these matters and has developed substantial skill in this area and has had great success. On a number of occasions this success means the complaint is withdrawn. It is my view that is because Mark develops such a watertight case in defence of the allegation being made. Mark Arkinstall, John Handley, and Ian Sloane all work with me to support members in the matters and issues that are causing them grief.

In my view that this data presents a very good case for why every member of the Principal Class should be a member of the APF.



A LEARNING CAREER

It's essential to move toward a career-long talent development system that supports teachers in developing expertise. What would that look like? We cannot force anyone to become an expert, nor can we cram expertise into someone's brain. Rather, it's something that develops over time through continuous learning and working with skilled peers.

Some key steps:

- Select teachers who show passion and enthusiasm for teaching and learning.
- Provide beginning teachers with successful models and lots of support.
- Develop the expertise of mid-career teachers through reflection and peer coaching.
- Create opportunities for veteran teachers to engage in self-directed learning.

Rather than trying to equate teachers' professional learning with checking boxes in an evaluation framework, a talent development system would unleash their potential by telling them that once they demonstrate they've mastered the schoolwide instructional model, they can then guide their own professional learning.

"Debunking the Myth of the Teacher Performance Plateau" by Bryan Goodwin and William Slotnik in *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2019

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

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class