

Australian Principals Federation

President's Message—Julie Podbury



It never rains: No it's been pouring for months it seems!

Last week's newsletter generated considerable feedback. The concerns about cleaning changes, along with the facilities/B&G survey prompted this response from **Loretta Piazza, Council Member**, about cleaning at her school.

"I have spent many hours during the past two days dealing with issues associated with the enhanced (additional) school cleaning. We had an excellent cleaner whose employment was terminated in a matter of hours last Thursday. She was replaced by a person whose cleaning is not only sub-standard but does not meet the requirements of our school's COVID safety management plan. Numerous senior teachers provided her with a series of school 'inductions', but this has had no impact on improving the standard of cleaning.

I deliberately chose to retain my cleaning company until 30 June because I was sceptical of the new Metro model. My scepticism has been justified. As a school with five staff testing positive to COVID-19 since mid March, and being shut down on two separate occasions, the enhanced school cleaning must be of a high standard. I should not have to spend my valuable time demanding ISS provide our school with a cleaner who can do a decent job!

I don't think there is any principal who isn't concerned about our workload. But to assume the central management of the cleaning is reducing our workload, is fallacy. Personally, I feel I have lost all control over what happens in my school and no matter what I say or want, is not particularly valued. I am now more frustrated than ever.

Let's be very careful what we wish for. The latest responsibility under review is DET's management of buildings and grounds. If the cleaning is anything to go by, some of our workload will be reduced, but it's unlikely we will be left satisfied with the whole operation. Every school is different, with varying personnel and finances and therefore with varying needs. This argument requires far more discussion and delving deeper into what is currently working, what isn't and how best to assist each school manage. I'm not prepared to sign away my control of the management of my buildings and grounds until DET can guarantee my workload will be genuinely reduced and not replaced with more palaver."

Loretta Piazza, Principal, Meadowglen PS



However, it was Minister Merlino who drew the most member feedback for his comments reported in The Age about Equity Funding, in the last line of the article by Adam Carey.

Victorian schools tipped to reopen in term four as case numbers drop. Adam Carey, The AGE, 25th August, 2020

Victorian schools are on track to reopen in term four as the number of new cases of COVID-19 falls.

Education Minister James Merlino says he is confident that students in Victoria will return to the classroom in term four, based on the downward trend in community transmission of COVID-19 under stage four restrictions.

Once schools reopen, small group tutoring sessions for students who have fallen behind are also being considered, both in term four and next year, the minister said.

Students in years 3 to 10 will have missed about 17 weeks of face-to-face classes by the end of term three. Those in other years will have missed about 12 weeks.

Mr Merlino said a decision on exactly when in term four schools would reopen for all students would be

In this Issue:

[Save the date](#) details about our exciting **AGM/PD** on P7

Minister Merlino ignited a storm of emails with his comments about catch-up tutoring once we are out of remote learning. Not all members held the same view however. **Pages 1-3**

On P4 we discuss the [changes to the Early Intervention Service](#) and the service providers. Detail on the changeover process is provided.

On [P5 Lisa Vinnicombe](#) provides information about a Deakin University research project on Teacher Wellbeing during remote learning.

[Cosentino](#) rolls out his School of Magic workshops for schools on **P6**.

Cyberhound/Superloop introduces [Adam Dymond](#) on **P7**

APF Website

<https://apf.net.au>

based on the advice of the Chief Health Officer.

"I'm confident [schools will reopen] based on the continuing downward trend in community transmission and the positive cases in our community," Mr Merlino told the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee on Tuesday.

Term four is due to begin on October 5.

Speaking at a parliamentary inquiry into the Andrews government's response to the pandemic, Mr Merlino said a decision on when to reopen schools for all students will be made in line with the national cabinet's strategy of suppression of coronavirus.

Speaking separately, Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton said case numbers were "heading in the right direction" for schools to reopen "at some stage in term four".

"I think it will be staggered but I absolutely hope we can get there," Professor Sutton said.

The details below were taken from the extended article on-line.

"Tutors are also likely to be recruited to help students who have fallen behind during Victoria's extended period of remote learning catch up on lost learning, Mr Merlino told the parliamentary committee hearing.

Add to shortlist

"This will be a feature not only for term four as we return to face-to-face teaching but particularly for term one next year," he said.

It could include a tutor working with a group of four or five students whose learning is at a similar level, in sessions of 30 to 40 minutes, three times a week.

Students in grades one and prep could also receive one-on-one tutoring to develop phonemic awareness, and secondary students could receive extra support on their numeracy and literacy.

The extra assistance would be paid for using schools' equity funding."

@ @ @

Member feedback: That would be the equity funding we were directed to, and have, already committed on the SPOT tool.

Do I now terminate my school-based counsellor (employed with equity funding) to now hire CRTs to tutor students, or do I re-align her role to listening to kids read?

My equity funding will continue to be targeted where my leadership team and I decide, not the Minister. The problem will be that this thought bubble will lead to our communities expecting (demanding?) their schools to employ these tutors.

Re small group tutoring – the Minister needs to get a grip on himself and develop greater understanding about what is already happening in schools. Really undervalues all the hard work teachers have put into remote learning and the various and ingenious ways schools have ensured engagement and support for our most vulnerable (eg appointment of learning coaches, revised programs, small group tutoring and so on). When DHS and the likes have 'abandoned' these children (can't visit because too risky due to COVID) schools have continued to offer support – not just on the educational front but also on the social and emotion.

Not sure where they are going to source the teachers for these "small group tutoring sessions" – I definitely don't want my teachers burning themselves out after school or over Jan holidays –

Another case of making announcements to the media and leaving the Principal as fodder for parents. DET values????

As we all know, budgets are set the year prior. It is amazing that he believes that we retain our equity funding rather than resource our schools to ensure that the gap between the different socio-economic levels are diminished.

The minister's comments demonstrate ignorance in terms of how schools have supported and continue to support students at academic and social emotional risk. Furthermore his statements undervalue the incredible work teachers and school leaders have put in during both remote learning phases. Schools have been creative and ingenious in ensuring continued engagement and support for our most vulnerable students, for example revised programs for these students, appointment of learning coaches, small group online tutorials just to name a few. Let's measure learning growth first before making assumptions that they have fallen behind and let's acknowledge what is already happening and how schools – specifically



Podium 2,
Tooronga Village,
766 Toorak Road,
Glen Iris, 3146.
Tel: 0412 584 002

**Many new members!
Thank you for advocating for the APF!**

Remember my APF days are Mon, Thurs & Fri



Gemma Naylor
APF Executive Officer

gnaylor@apf.net.au

Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be completed on-line.

The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

teachers and school leaders remain committed to supporting and nurturing the growth of all our students.

When The Minister talks of “equity funding” he is referring to a specific cohort of schools that actually receive “equity funding”. My colleagues are correct in pointing out that budgets have been prepared 12 months in advance, but so have State and Federal budgets – and look at what has happened to them since COVID !

Interventions will likely be critical for Non-English Speakers who have lost learning momentum and have probably missed out on English listening and speaking for almost 6 months at what we all know is a critical language-acquisitional phase in their lives that is pretty much non-recoverable if you subscribe to Piaget’s theories. So, yes, they will need intensive work in VERY small groups. Then there are the Preps who have missed out on critical developmental steps as well as learning the decoding skills they would normally have acquired by now. Catching those up will be huge. On top of that, if you take into account the limited amount of teaching time in literacy and numeracy recommended by DET for remote learning then , as a profession, we would be doing ourselves a disservice to argue that what students have learned during Remote Learning is of equal value to what they would have learned face-to-face. If that is true, we should give the game away and let codifiers and programmers take the credit - and pay - while we take a pay cut and apply for child-minding positions. Or else, we should ramp up the efficiencies that allowed us to maintain student learning progression rates in half the teaching time and ask for double the pay or agree to half the hours.

I hate to admit it, but Merlino is correct AND If the Minister did not have an answer he would be pilloried.

Concern I have is where we are going to source these suitably trained/inducted/WWCC tutors. There is already significant demand (and shortage) of CRTs. I do not want my teachers burning themselves out (further) after school or during the Jan holidays. I also think it undermines the amazing work that teachers have been doing for the past 17 weeks (and continue to do) and Principals alike have not stopped since the bushfires in Jan.

I wonder if this is also to go in hand with the DET commentary around not seeing major repeats across the board – this way they are seen to be doing something to stop it.

This is nothing more than political grandstanding... by someone who has no knowledge of what works best in schools.

Our teachers know their students better than anyone, and to think ‘tutors’ can come into our schools, take a group of students for 30-40 minute sessions three times a week and miraculously fix the gaps in their learning, is just unrealistic.

If Minister Merlino is serious about raising standards, he would be asking us what he can do to help. Equity funding is not the magic bullet.

@ @ @

The APF shared these comments with Minister Merlino and requested a direct response from him. Unfortunately, the Minister declined our offer, however, his office provided the following by way of background.

The Minister went to lengths at PAEC to acknowledge the outstanding work of teachers and schools during the pandemic, and highlighted the fact that a number of students had thrived in the remote learning environment.

He also noted the fact that some students have struggled to maintain their learning progress, despite the best efforts of teachers.

The Department is currently considering the strategies that have been progressed in the UK and other jurisdictions to support students who have not made as much learning progress as others during the pandemic. One of these is the engagement of tutors as an additional resource to support the work of teachers.

No commitments have yet been made.

The Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support (MYLNS) model of direct teaching support to Year 10 students has been implemented effectively by secondary schools over the last 12 months, including through the period of remote learning, and will be expanded to reach Year 8 students in 2021. One option is to consider whether and how this model could be expanded further.

Many schools already use their equity funding to support additional literacy and numeracy through the engagement of additional staff.



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 Online 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

Principal Health and Wellbeing Services: the Early Intervention Service.

Following a recent tender process the Department has selected a new partner for the provision of the Early Intervention Service. The Department has also made some minor changes to the service, including the addition of new service offerings. The change will be effective on 31 August 2020. The new provider, Cogent Thinking, will take over delivery of this program from the incumbent provider Injurynet.

New service offerings:

Whilst very similar to the existing program, the key inclusions of the new program are summarised below:

1. Up to 15 hours of dedicated case management support provided by a Care Coordinator with an allied health qualification
2. Psychological service sessions (8 per calendar year)
3. Physiotherapy (6 sessions per issue)
4. Dietetics (4 sessions per calendar year)
5. Exercise Physiology (6 sessions per issue)
6. Advice about other services available within the Department to improve health and wellbeing

The Department is committed to implementing a leading practice Early Intervention Program. The refinements to the offering, including type of treatment modality and number of sessions, is a result of a comprehensive review of the current program, as well as market research conducted during the tender process. The Department maintains the flexibility to assess the individual cases of participants on a case by case basis where required.

What won't change:

1. Eligibility criteria remains the same. All principal class employees can access these services.
2. Principals will continue to access the service through the same 1300 telephone number. See below.
3. Treatment providers will continue to be located in local communities across Victoria, and available in the Principal's preferred location close to home or school. Some interventions can be provided telephonically where clinically appropriate and convenient for the Principal.

Current participants of the program will have the opportunity to continue with their existing treatment providers if they choose to.

Advantages of the new offering:

We believe the new program will better support our principals to manage their health and wellbeing concerns via:

1. **A Focus on Recovery:** Case Management from an Allied Health Professional, working with the Principal to understand their issue, and collaboratively setting treatment and recovery goals.
2. **A Focus on Principal Satisfaction:** Formal feedback collection mechanisms have been structured into the new program to ensure service quality and effectiveness is maintained and opportunities for service improvement are identified.

A focus on Continuing Care: A formal approach to identifying principals with chronic conditions or extended treatment needs, ensuring appropriate referrals to ongoing services within the Department or the community are made.

How will the Department manage the transition between the two providers?

In discussion with the incumbent and incoming provider, the following is being proposed:

1. On or soon after 24 August 2020, the current provider Injurynet will send out a letter on behalf of the Department to all current participants of the program advising them of the change in provider. The letter will seek consent for the transfer of their information to the new provider and will provide reassurance that they will be able to continue with their current approved sessions with their treating practitioners



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.

2. From 31 August 2020, the new provider will commence taking calls for all new participants to the Early Intervention Program.
3. Given the inbound phone number will remain the same, during the transition period a menu option will be added to the 1300 number enabling participants to choose between having their call put through to the current provider or being transferred to the previous provider.

The intranet will be updated with the new program details.

The APF strongly supports and endorses this service for Principal Class members. Please let us

know if you experience any issues with the changeover.



Deakin Research – Teacher health and wellbeing during remote learning: “Educating in a Crisis” Lisa Vinnicombe, Post Doc Research Fellow, Deakin University REDi.

Dear Colleagues,

Many of you will be very familiar with Professor Phil Riley’s research into Principal Health and Wellbeing which he has been conducting for more than ten years. This year, I am on leave from my position as Assistant Principal to work in Phil’s team on this major study.

Covid-19 has presented us with a situation in education which none of us could ever have predicted, with a sudden shift to remote learning for a significant part of the school year. As a result of this, we started planning this research project with the aim of getting the teachers’ voice on their experience of online teaching and learning. We started developing the groundwork for this project in April, as an offshoot to the major study. At that point, it had become apparent that this was going to be much more than just a short period of disruption.

This project entitled “Educating in a Crisis” focusses on the health and wellbeing of **teachers** during school closures this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim of the research is to hear first-hand from the teachers what it has been like to suddenly transition to online learning and take some lead from them as to what has worked, what has not worked, and what learning we can get from this for post-covid schooling. In particular, we want to learn how this has affected their health and wellbeing.

The study has received ethics approval from Deakin University, and this is all explained in the letter to principals that is attached in this newsletter.

I have run a number of focus group discussions already. Some of these have raised some very real concerns for teacher wellbeing, professionalism and overall mental and physical health. Teachers have appreciated the opportunity to reflect with others on their experiences in a focus group discussion. It has reminded all of us how isolating this has been for many people: in an occupation where we are used to being surrounded by people all day, every day, it has been a major shift in working conditions, with a range of positive and negative impacts reported already by the groups.

There are two letters attached in this newsletter – one is for principals explaining the project and the other is for teachers. If you think that you have some teachers in your school who might be keen to participate in a discussion via Zoom, please pass on the letter to teachers to them. They will contact me individually if they are interested and the FGD will take place out of school hours at a time that suits all participants.

The more extensive the groups that sign up, the more reflective and rich will be the data that we collect from this research so I hope that in spite of time constraints and a general sense of Zoom fatigue that has crept into most schools, there will be some interest from teachers. It is a unique opportunity for teachers to have a voice – it rarely happens!

Thanks in anticipation of your support!

Lisa Vinnicombe, Post Doc Research Fellow, Deakin University REDi.



Health & Wellbeing support for Principals T3

*Requirements for COVIDSafe Plans for all workplaces with onsite operations in Metropolitan Melbourne came into place from Friday 7 August 2020. We’re encouraged that DET managed these requirements on behalf of schools through the existing [Safety Management Plan \(COVIDSafe Plan\)](#). It is **not** necessary for individual schools to develop their own, but if any principal wants support to tailor the plan to their school, we’re advised the OHS Advisory Service is ready to assist (1300 074 715).*

The Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan) summarises relevant risks and controls within schools. This document in conjunction with the School Operations Guide, endorsed by the Victorian Chief Health Officer (CHO), sets out the approach for managing safety risks in schools.

We suggest school leaders consult with staff members, school OHS committees and Health and Safety Representatives to review and implement the Safety Management Plan (COVIDSafe Plan).

Cosentino

It has always been a dream of Cosentino to have his own Magic School and help students discover their passion. Being an unemployed artist, has given him time to set up his Magic School and make this goal a reality.

I know schools are looking for wellbeing activities during this remote learning period, the Cosentino School of Magic is an amazing whole school activity, that really helps students' self-esteem and confidence.

Cosentino School Of Magic workshop

Are you looking for something different to inspire curious minds? Does your remote home learning program engage students to find their passion? Have you ever asked if your students want to learn magic to entertain, impress and amaze? Now you can!

In this 30min interactive virtual streaming tutorial designed for all ages and skill levels, Cosentino will share 20 years of professional performance experience teaching students fun, educational and amazing magic tricks using everyday household items.

Cosentino will first perform and present each magic illusion as it would appear on a live on stage or Television appearance. Then take students step by step through the secret, technique and method to the effect.

With the use of procedural texts, students receive hands on activities that stimulate metacognition, learn sleight of hand techniques that enhance their dexterity and fine motor skills as well as presentation, showmanship and confidence skills. Students will use thinking dispositions such as:

- Gathering data through all senses.
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision.
- Creating, imagining and innovating.

Thinking flexibly and responding with wonderment and awe.

So what are you waiting for... Let the magic begin.

[Click here to see Cosentino's School of Magic Trailer](#)

For enquiries and bookings, contact adam@cosentino.com.au
+61 403 575 766



H&WB support for Principals continued....

WorkSafe notifications

There are new requirements to report confirmed cases to WorkSafe, and again we're pleased that the Department is managing this on behalf of schools, and providing support when inspectors make inquiries.

Support for school leaders

A reminder that all principals, acting and assistant principals can access four confidential Proactive Wellbeing Supervision sessions for 2020 via teleconference. The sessions involve working in partnership with an experienced psychologist to explore evidence-based strategies tailored to your strengths, challenges and operating environment. The program can be particularly useful when having to manage difficult circumstances and lead wellbeing within the community. For more information, visit [Proactive Wellbeing Supervision intranet page](#) (DET login required).

To discuss strategies for managing individual staff challenges: [EAP Manager Assist](#) (phone: 1300 361 008) is available for all people managers to provide advice and coaching on approaching a difficult conversation, managing challenging team dynamics, leading through uncertainty and change, and supporting staff at risk.

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday 22nd October. APF AGM/PD 10am-1pm

Virtually the best AGM/PD you have never had to leave school or home to attend in 2020.

Guest speakers

Stuart Taylor CEO, Springfox, The Australian Workforce Response to COVID-19: A call for courage, connection and compassion

Loren Peavey, Principal, Greenvale North West PS, a Supported Inclusion School. Loren will talk about this new type of school she is developing and its relevance to all schools.

Celebrity Guest—Cosentino, demonstrating his new Virtual School of Magic.

Attendees will need to register through our website (more details soon). Attendees will be in the draw for one school to win a Cosentino School of Magic Workshop for their school valued at \$2500 (plus GST)

Members, No charge, Non-members \$50



COACHING A STRESSED TEACHER

Some teachers can seem tired, overwhelmed, and stressed – there’s just too much to do and too much pressure to do it all. How do we coach teachers in this predicament?

- Ask teachers to describe their state of mind because emotions can be guides to self-understanding. Strong emotions get us to pay attention to what’s going on.
- Have them recall previous experiences. Where did it fall on a 1-to-10 stress scale? What worked last time to make things better? What was helpful?
- Identify a next step that is manageable. Small bites, small steps.
- Plan for action. This might be something as simple as getting a good night’s sleep, asking a parent to volunteer to help straighten out the classroom, or making a comprehensive to-do list.

When coaching someone it’s important to know the signs and indicators of depression and anxiety disorders. In some cases, expert help is required.

“How to Coach the Overwhelmed Teacher” by Elena Aguilar in *Education Week Teacher*, February 14, 2019

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

Industry Leading Protection for Schools

Schools face ever growing threats from sophisticated cybercriminals. These bad actors are exploiting any network vulnerabilities including any devices connected to or joining the school network. A good example is the risk posed from the Internet of Things devices that often have limited or very basic security controls.

Once a cybercriminal gains access to a school’s network they gain lateral movement and can cause substantial financial and service threats including data theft, extortion, reputational damage, financial crime, ransomware and more.

In addition to these known threats a growing threat is posed for schools through a technique known as ‘island-hopping’. In this scenario cybercriminals look to access a school’s otherwise secure network through a less secure supplier or partner. This is often a service provider who legitimately retains access to the school’s services but does not maintain the high security standards of a school and becomes a soft target for cyber criminals to ‘hop’ through to your environment.

This is where Superloop’s CyberHound solution stands out. Not only providing its Advanced Threat Protection Suite - a multi-layered set of 9 independent layers of network protection tools, but also in providing the ultimate protection of its own services to manage these other emerging cyber attacks. To find out more about how Superloop CyberHound can help your school contact Adam Dymond Regional Manager for Victoria and Tasmania or visit our [website](#).



Introducing Adam Dymond, Regional Manager, VIC/TAS Superloop CyberHound

Adam started with Superloop CyberHound in March this year and brings with him over 25 years of experience from the ICT sector, primarily in telecommunications. Adam is responsible for schools in the Victorian and Tasmanian regions.

Adam would be more than happy to arrange an obligation free review of how Superloop can help optimise your school’s cybersecurity and student welfare requirements.

Please feel free to reach out to Adam via [email](#) or on 0490 307 733.