

Australian Principals Federation

Acting President's Report—Tina King



As our strength, resolve and resilience continues to be tested in continued times of challenge, we ask you to look out for your colleagues and check in on each other. Please contact us for assistance and support if needed.

One of the most inspiring and rewarding aspects of undertaking this role, has been the opportunity to engage with leaders across our state. The level of commitment and leadership is truly inspirational and we ask you to consider your health and that of your loved ones as you balance the competing demands.

EBA Update

The APF bargaining team continues to meet with DET representatives in order to reach agreement on matters pertinent to the Principal Class. At the forefront of the deliberations, continues to be matters of negotiation relating to salary differentials between our school leaders and top of the teacher classification, leave entitlements and ongoing workload concerns and challenges.

Principal class employees need to be recognised and rewarded as a distinct group of employees with differing roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. The EBA which was negotiated in 2017 saw the implementation of initiatives which impacted significantly on our school leaders. In particular the introduction of Professional Practice Days and Management of Teacher Work brought about unexpected consequences that required careful management in order to minimise conflict and discord at the school level.

Whilst these items to do not fall under the scope of our negotiations, such initiatives do have direct impact on school leadership with due consideration and deliberation necessary.

The pandemic crisis continues to have significant negative financial impact and on so many levels—government, business and families. Australia's annual inflation rate has jumped to 3.8% having increased from 1.1% within the last 12 months. The Reserve Bank is expecting inflation back below 2% by the end of the year however forecasts that consumer prices will rise by 1.5% through 2022.

Earlier this year, the State Treasurer Tim Pallas MPS announced the new wages policy to apply in 2022. Changes to the Victorian Public Sector Wages Policy from 1 January 2022 will see capped increases in wages and conditions at a rate of growth of 1.5% per annum. These are significant factors for consideration when determining and debating increases in wages.

The APF bargaining team has been appreciative of Managements preparedness and willingness to listen to matters lodged. Both parties have deliberated on items within the log of claims with good intent, compassion and demonstrated understanding. We are awaiting Managements official positioning on key items and once this is confirmed, we will consult with our respective membership.

Parent Payment Policy

The Department has recently announced changes to the Parent Payments Policy. As a result, we have received many calls and emails expressing angst and concern at the changes. The APF was not involved or consulted on any of the adjustments and we are raising expressed concerns at relevant stakeholders forums.

We have been informed that the changes were made as a result of a need for greater compliance with the relevant legislation as stated in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (The Act). The Parent Payment audit conducted last year of approximately 400 schools, indicated that in some cases communication, payment requests and payment practices were non-compliant with DET policy [Parent Payment Policy](#) and provisions within the [Education Training and Reform Act](#).



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APF Website
<https://apf.net.au>

In relation to voluntary contributions The Act stipulates:

2.2.7 Voluntary financial contributions

The school council of a Government school may ask the parents of a student enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a financial contribution to the school.

A school council may use voluntary contributions for any purpose for any school in relation to which it is constituted unless the contribution is provided for a specified purpose.

The following principles apply in relation to financial contributions—

- *a school council should clearly explain how contributions will be spent when making a request for a contribution;*
- *each contribution is to be voluntary and obtained without coercion or harassment;*
- *a student at the school is not to be refused instruction in the learning areas specified in Schedule 1 because the student's parents do not make a contribution;*
- *a student is not to be approached, coerced or harassed for contributions;*
- *any record of contributions is confidential.*

If the school council asks the parents of a student enrolled at the school to make a financial contribution, the school council must tell the parents about the principles that apply in relation to financial contributions.

Education and Training Reform Act 2006
Division 2 – Instruction in Government Schools (Section 2.2.7 Page 42)

Many schools have raised concerns that the changes to the policy will see shortfalls in locally raised revenue. Whilst it is clear that schools must provide free instruction, clarity is sought from DET in order to determine what is deemed essential and core curriculum provision. The financial impact on some schools will be immense and we encourage you to note and submit your concerns by contacting us at the APF or sending an email to the Parent Payment Team at payments@education.vic.gov.au

Parent Complaints—Community Liaison Officers

Members often seek clarity regarding the role and responsibilities of Community Liaison Officers. The Department has a 3-tier process for managing complaints:

- Tier 1 - school level resolution
- Tier 2 - referral to region
- Tier 3 - referral to central

When a complaint has reached Tier 2 status due to contact made with Regional Office, the role of the CLO is to provide support and advice to principals in relation to concerns, questions or complaints received. Contacting a school, assuming guilt and telling the school what to do, is by no means conciliatory or conducive to a positive outcome.

The following article, prepared by the DET Complaints Management team, provides role clarification for the CLO position.

Supporting School Principals

As a principal you have many demands and pressures on your time and your wellbeing is essential for creating a positive school culture for teaching and learning. A positive relationship between students, parents and school staff is also critical in realising and maintaining the best possible educational outcomes for students and protecting the wellbeing of all involved.

Occasionally, schools may receive complaints from parents, families and community members which can be stressful, particularly when complainants demonstrate challenging behaviours.

While complaints and challenging behaviour are an inevitable part of working in a public service,



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I would appreciate your advice to us of any change of address, phone number, school or credit card details.



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Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be completed on-line.

you have supports and resources available to assist you with managing complaints as well as supporting your wellbeing.

This is where Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) can help. CLOs are regional staff members whose role includes managing general enquiries and complaints from members of the public and school communities. CLOs aim to achieve a mutual agreement, manage the expectations of the complainant and support principals and school staff.

The CLOs can help you to establish a communications plan, link you up with other specialist teams in the Department, or support you to rebuild a strained relationship.

CLOs also assist in responding to escalated complaints to the region. To do this work, they will discuss the concern with you, the steps you and the complainant have taken to resolve the issue and discuss the student's engagement in learning and wellbeing, as well as your wellbeing and any impacts that might be affecting your staff.

A CLO might also contact you to discuss an enquiry from a parent, clarify a school policy or issues surrounding a complaint. *Their goal is to support and work with you.*

As Andrew Dowling, CLO for the Barwon Area in SWVR noted, 'when both parents and principals feel supported, this opens the gate to respectful relationships that they can have with each other'. Andrew also commented that 'much of the (CLO) work is enquiry-based and gathering information and policy to give the right advice. A common scenario is that parent and school communication and expectations break down'. In this context, the bulk of the role is working with parents and schools to get better outcomes for the kids concerned, and developing the same expectations of what the school is able to provide.

As a principal, you are encouraged to reach out to a CLO or Senior Education Improvement Leader (SEIL) to get support when managing a complaint at the school level. Call your regional office, or the Departments state-wide number on 1800 338 663 and ask to speak with your local CLO or SEIL.

Other Supports

The Department has resources available to assist you in the management of complaints and protecting your wellbeing through conflict. For more information, see the **Policy, Guidance and Resources tabs on PAL** - [Complaints — Parents: Resources | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/complaints-parents-resources)

The Department has engaged the services of Frank Handy, Chairperson of the Independent Office for Dispute Resolution to prepare conflict guidance and videos; see: [Conflict Resolution in schools](#) (intranet login required).

The Department has also engaged the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria to provide conflict resolution training through the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership. There are two courses currently offered. [Leading through Conflict](#) is customised for principal class cohorts and [Navigating conflict](#) is customised for teaching, education support and reception staff.

Support is also available at these links:

Complex Matters Support Team (CMST) – this team was established under the *Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy*. The team can support you with complex matters that involve a lot of written correspondence, which may in turn be having an effect on your wellbeing. You can contact the Complex Matters Support Team on Ph. 03 7022 1201 or email: complex.support@education.vic.gov.au

Principals and assistant principals have access to a range of further supports for their wellbeing as part of the [Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy services](#).

[Proactive Wellbeing Supervision](#) (PWS) – this has now been expanded to include assistant principals as well as principals, on an ongoing basis.

Other services at part of the Principal health and wellbeing strategy, including [Principal Health Checks](#), [Principal Mentor Program](#), and [Early Intervention Program](#).



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.

School leaders may also wish to access [Manager Assist](#) for timely, short-term coaching and guidance on how to support their teams.

The [OHS Advisory Service](#) is also available for support on any health and safety matters, including mental health and wellbeing.



APPLYING YOURSELF TO THE JOB AT HAND – Kevin McKay, Principal,

Dandenong Nth Primary School.

Principles of principled job applications for principals

Theodore Roosevelt, one of America's most flamboyant leaders, argued that: *"Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."* Being a Principal Class Employee offers that opportunity.

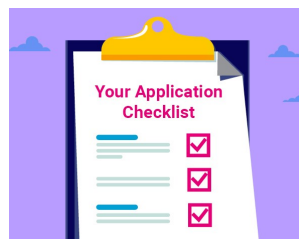


To become a Principal Class Employee, you usually have to submit an application designed to persuade individual members of a selection panel that they should interview you. As a consequence of a successful interview, you need to be ranked as the most meritorious applicant to actually "land the job". Principal class selection, therefore, is essentially a two-part process. The first part of the process, that of submitting a successful application, is often where Principal Class Officers fail to do themselves justice.

Application writing is an art, and an art worth your learning! Do you become skilled in the art by writing applications, or by reading them? Maybe it's a combination. A proven method to develop application-writing skills is by participating in targeted "professional development". There are specific programs – both within the Department of Education and Training, and by commercial providers - aimed at developing skills in the specialized strategies of application-writing. One of the more effective approaches is to be coached by someone who has had recent successful experiences with their own applications; particularly if they allow you to analyse copies of their successful creations. Then again, there are agencies and individuals that will draft a professional application for you based on a verbal menu of instructions!

The practice of submitting written applications for vacant positions is probably here to stay as the method of accessing appointment and/or promotion opportunities within the Victorian Teaching Service. Undoubtedly, the nomenclature of the roles will continue to change over time, as will the method of application lodgement, but the first step in gaining an appointment to whatever the positions are called will continue to be by written application.

One of the dilemmas faced by Principal Class Personnel in developing effective written applications is that Principals are perceived by many to be experts at the task. Because of their relative seniority, Principal Class Officers are sometimes viewed as "experts" in all things educational – including preparing job applications. Experts don't need to seek help, do they? Additionally, it becomes increasingly more difficult for a relatively senior person to ask for guidance or help with a task that many believe has reached its pinnacle with one or two successful applications from many years previously. But, like everything, standards and expectations have risen over time. A circa 2001 successful application is unlikely to "cut-it" in 2021. Who do you ask for help, for example, when there is every chance that your next application might be competing with your most trusted neighbour to get you an interview for a sought-after role?



Ask for help! If you have any doubts about the currency of your curriculum vitae or your ability to put together a powerful application, don't even think twice. Find a colleague or a mentor and ask for input or feedback.

QUALITY APPLICATIONS

The interesting thing about applications for positions of increasing complexity, seniority and/or responsibility, is that there is a proportionately higher expectation in relation to the quality of

Support for members

We are here to support and offer advice to all members at any time. If you are concerned about a colleague, please let us know.

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Ring us direct

Stress Defined

Stress, in a nutshell, is anything a person perceives to be a threat. The word "perceives" is important here because threat perception can vary widely from one person to the next, and it determines the intensity and duration of the body's many stress-related reactions. "There can be a big difference between what you perceive and what threat actually exists, but the difference is arbitrary when it comes to the body's response," says Christopher Fagundes, PhD, an associate professor of psychology at Rice University in Texas whose research into stress and disease is funded by the National Institutes of Health. "Your body reacts to your perception of a threat—not to the reality."

Acknowledgement:

By: Markham Heid, Health,
August 2021

the content of written applications as the salary or responsibility levels increase.

A written application is a marketing tool to sell yourself to a prospective employing authority or organization. You won't get the opportunity of an interview if you can't put together a worthy written application! Your application is an advertisement for your services. Selling the idea of service to *others* needs to become the goal.

Your application will inevitably communicate two critical personal attributes – ability and attitude. You will consciously describe elements of your ability, but unconsciously, your attitude will be unfolding at the same time. It would be to your advantage to become conscious of the unfolding attitude and to ensure that it is perceived as positive and optimistic. Those characteristics are generally what prospective employing organizations, and the people within them, value.

The primary task of the applicant is to provide credible evidence that they are likely to be the best person for the advertised vacancy. There should be sound evidence of specific knowledge related to the requirements of the position. Critically, applicants should strive to provide evidence of achievements in previous roles relevant to the criteria of the target position. You will need to convince panel members that you have grown from your work experiences and that you have transferable skills, abilities and knowledge. Simply providing a chronicle of how much time you spent in various work locations won't do a whole lot to convince panel members of your transferable skill and experience levels.

What is sometimes taken for granted, is the need to demonstrate a stable work history, or else to provide credible explanations for work-history breaks. Unexplained work-history breaks sometimes start alarm bells ringing in the minds of panel members.

Attention to detail cannot be over-emphasized. Use the spell-checker and then have a living, breathing and literate person proof-read your drafts.

There are some common observations of Selection Panel Members that pose what might be considered universal questions pertinent to the preparation of written applications:

WHY

- Provide your date of birth when this is not required?
Indeed, Panels who actively seek this information breach principles of merit and equity? Panel members KNOW this and are likely to be bemused by YOUR apparent lack of understanding!
- Inform the Panel of your marital status?
This information has no bearing on your ability to meet the requirements of educational leadership and is also categorized in the same way as the preceding question.
- Tell panel members that you enjoy SCUBA diving, gardening or outdoor photography, or that you are a member of the Ulysses Club?
- Leave, in the text, the name of a different location that you have applied for in the same round of advertised vacancies?
- Print your application in 10 or 8 point font in order to fool panel members into thinking you have complied with recommendations concerning limiting the length, or bulk, of applications?
It makes it too hard to read and causes the panel to review your judgement
- Include un-annotated, lengthy lists of professional development activities that you have attended?
Panel members want to know what you did, or what you might do, with *what you learned* as a result of active participation in those activities.
- Use specialized jargon or obscure acronyms that 50% of the Selection Panel Members will, almost certainly, not be able to comprehend?

WHY NOT

- Number the pages of your application so that both you and the panel members can conveniently refer to, or cross-reference, specific or pertinent information?



Stress and Your Health

“One of the biggest discoveries of the last 20 years is that stress can influence how the immune system operates and that the inflammation that results from stress plays a role in many different diseases and disorders,” says George Slavich, PhD, director of the Laboratory for Stress Assessment and Research at UCLA.

Inflammation is the immune system's primary weapon against infection or injury. During periods of inflammation, the blood is infused with various enzymes and proteins that, in an attempt to heal wounds or rebuff invaders, can cause heat, pain, or swelling. While short periods of stress and the inflammation it unleashes can exacerbate some pre-existing medical conditions, none of this seems to be harmful for healthy adults. In fact, a little stress can help people stay sharp and respond to a pressing challenge. But if stress lingers for long periods, its effects can have wide-ranging and sometimes disastrous consequences for a person's mental and physical health. From the function of the brain and heart to the activity of individual cells, there's virtually no part of the body that stress doesn't touch.

Acknowledgement:
By: Markham Heid, Health,
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The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

- Ensure that more optometrically-challenged panel members can actually read your application by providing low-sheen paper, high contrast print and moderately large fonts – 11 or 12, for example?
- Use the same criteria headings, in the same order, as the selection panel list of published selection criteria, so that your responses can be conveniently identified?
- Put your address and telephone number prominently on the front page of the application so that whoever needs to contact you, for whatever reason, can do so?
- Break continuous text up with spaces, paragraphs and standout headings – perhaps, even a graphic representation of a particular point?
- Make use of short, one-concept sentences to facilitate Panel Member comprehension of your message?
- Provide some basic information about the relationships between your referees and yourself, together with a pointer as to what attribute/s of yours they are most able to be able to authoritatively comment on?
- Make sure that all required information – such as your record number, email address, telephone contact numbers and current work location details are easily found and UP-TO-DATE?

Generalized advice would also include, don't be presumptuous in what you write. For example, phrase your vision statement in terms of what you "would" do if you were the successful candidate – not what you "will" do. Panel Members are usually well aware that the decision to recommend an appointee is theirs – not the appointees! Some take strong and immediate exception to presumption. Thomas Jefferson said, ***"The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do."*** This is sound advice, which can profitably be applied to the preparation of job applications. Don't ramble, be verbose, or try to dazzle Panel Members with jargon! If you choose to include quotes, make sure they are relevant, understandable and appropriate.

PACKAGING

A great looking application package can immediately give you an edge. At the very least, the person who opens your application will appreciate the care that you have taken to present your application tastefully. The size of the print, the style of the font, the lay-out of the cover, the colour and quality of the paper, and even the binding. It's true that first impressions do count and this holds for job applications. Simply put, it is better for the reader of an application to begin reading with a positive attitude engendered by quality packaging than it is to begin with an ambivalent attitude linked to an indifferent or "couldn't care less" first impression.

Do not, however, confuse this recommendation with an expectation that the quality of the actual presentation, as opposed to its content, should suffice to gain you an interview. Expensive paper, quality binding, full colour presentations, and nifty artwork, are no substitutes for unambiguous, concise and appropriate responses to the selection criteria published in the vacancy advertisement.

FINAL WORD

Experience suggests that as more and more members of the teaching service become adept at application preparation, the competition gets hotter and standards go up. Principal Class Employees can't afford to rest on their laurels. They need to be constantly honing their skills and keeping ahead of the game. This article is meant to provide a timely reminder of that and areas that might benefit from careful research and informed reflection.

Write an application for Job.

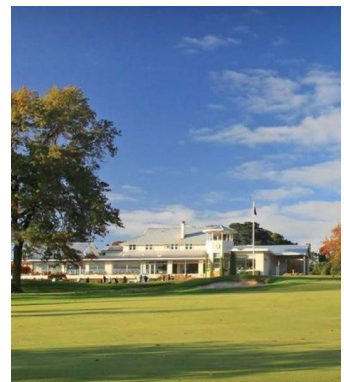
To,
 The Managing Director / Manager / Principal
 { Name of Company / School / Organisation }
 { Address }.

Subject: Application for the post of a



APF Annual General Meeting – Save the date

Planning is well underway for the upcoming 2021 AGM scheduled to take place on **Thursday 21 October at Riversdale Golf Club.** More information to follow, however we invite members to save the date.



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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINCIPAL CLASS EMPLOYEES



The Body's Stress Response

Stress begins in the brain. More specifically, it begins in the brain's limbic system, which is home to the amygdala. While no part of the brain works independently, the amygdala is sometimes called the "emotional center." One of its roles is to detect and assess potential threats and, if need be, notify the hypothalamus, which triggers the body's fight-or-flight response. "The fight-or-flight response mobilizes our body to meet whatever immediate threat we're dealing with," says Darlene Kertes, PhD, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Florida, whose lab studies the effects of stress on health and human development.

That mobilization involves the hormone epinephrine—also known as adrenaline—which floods the blood and initiates a number of short-lived physiological changes. Heart rate and sweating increase, and blood flows more freely to the limbs. The airways of the lungs expand to bolster breathing capacity, while the movement of food through the digestive system slows. Throughout the body, energy and other resources are temporarily reallocated in order to help it meet any physical trials.

Acknowledgement:
By: Markham Heid, Health,
August 2021

The full article is worth a read and can be obtained on-line or at your newsagency

With more than 60 Years of School Leadership experience as members of the Principal Class, Julie Podbury and David Finnerty bring a wealth of knowledge and skills they have developed in complex school, Regional and Statewide settings. They are looking to share that knowledge and those skills by delivering dedicated Professional Development to members of the Principal Class through a new company, DAFIN Consulting.

Julie and David are particularly interested in working with whole of School Leadership Teams, seeking to build the capacity of the team, instilling an understanding of what each member of the team brings to the leadership table, together with the knowledge and understanding of any potential opportunities for improvement existing, both individually and collectively across the team.

As a general rule, the consultants will take a coaching approach to leadership development. The aim of coaching being to facilitate and enable the individual to take control of their own development in ways that will positively impact school culture, organisational effectiveness and collective efficacy. Through these processes, Julie and David will work with the team to build accepted 'Trademark Behaviours' that are lived through genuine relationships and supported by a strong behavioural framework where trust and respect are both expected and freely given.

It is anticipated that such an approach will see the school Leadership Team commit to working with the consultants twice a month for a period of at least one term. During this period, the consultants will on occasion, schedule appointments to work individually with Leading Teachers, Learning Specialists, Assistant Principals, the Business Manager and of course, the Principal. As well, there will be sessions scheduled for the consultants to work with the extended leadership team. The number of sessions the school commits to will therefore vary, depending on the size of the school and more particularly, the size of the leadership team.

While it is not possible to give an accurate assessment of costs to school, the following is offered as a guide: \$200 plus GST, per hour, per consultant.

Where it is anticipated a project will extend well beyond one term, it may be possible to negotiate a total costing for the school.



Principal colleagues in New Zealand

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