

# Australian Principals Federation

## Acting President's Report—Tina King



In my first and only face to face attendance at a forum for this year, I participated in The Age and Informa summit around education. The conversation focussed on the educational challenges in navigating the disruption and challenges caused by COVID-19 and stories of resilience, developing innovation and inspiration were shared by key educationalists and stakeholders.

I have deeply reflected, particularly in this last week and in light of recent announcements by the Premier, of the challenges which lie ahead and not just in the immediate weeks but over the coming months and well into 2022.

As a leader, I have always valued and fostered the development and cultivation of strong relationships which are built upon mutual trust and respect. Now it seems more than ever, we will need to rely on re-establishing strong connections and prioritise the re-building of trusting relationships in order to address the months of stress and at times isolation.

For this reason, I have included in the newsletter [an article that](#) was published as part of my involvement and presentation at The Age Summit in April this year. For many of our inspiring and insightful leaders, there will be nothing new in what is presented in the article, other than simply providing a key prompt and reminder that we need to continually invest and harvest the relationships that exist within our school and beyond.

There will come a time again (and hopefully sooner rather than later) whereby Webex and Zoom meetings are not the default. As we navigate our way out of the extended lockdown and welcome staff, students and parents back to school, remember to prioritise and nurture the key relationships that are unique to your school and setting.

*T. King*

## APF Annual General Meeting & PD

### CHANGE OF DATE: 2 December 2021

at Riversdale Golf Club

(pending status of restrictions)

9:00 am to 3:30 pm

*In consideration of the current restrictions and impact upon schools with the staged return to onsite learning, we have decided to postpone the date for the AGM. If restrictions have not been lifted by the new date, we will hold the event online.*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTEEM

Students' attention-seeking behaviours arise from a need for affirmation and prestige with peers. How and why do esteem needs cause students to act in ways that defy what they know is right, to ignore their own strengths and accomplishments, and to restrict their success as a learner? Does the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy – esteem – give us the clue? If we can better understand how this tier works, we can help our students satisfy their esteem needs in healthy and beneficial ways.

More information in the next newsletter.

from Hippocampus,  
an email publication of  
Principal's Digest



311/19 Milton Pde.

Malvern. 3144

Office phone: 0412 584002

### In this Issue:

**P1 re the Change of Date for the APF AGM & PD**

**Parents Payments Reference Group Report, by Wendy Powson, Andrew Cock and Bill Kersing on P2**

**VET & VCAL Catch Up Funding P2**

**Semester 2 Reporting Advice P3**

**Shade Sail Funds P3**

**The main ingredient for teaching success, by Amy Sarcevic, based on the wisdom of Tina King, commences on P3**

**Leadership That Builds Trust, David Brooks, Columns on P3 and 4**

**Member feedback re meeting remotely P5**

**Brad Johnson posits that "A classroom in which students quietly work at their desks might appear to be ideal, but the amount of time we subject children to a seated position is almost inhumane" P5**

**APF Website**

<https://apf.net.au>

## Parent Payments Reference Group – report by Andrew Cock, Wendy Powson & Bill Kersing



Last Friday, APF representatives attended the Parent Payments Principals Reference Group (PRG) which has been formed by DET to provide feedback on the implementation of the clarified and strengthened Parent Payments Policy (PPP) to the Department. The PRG will identify and raise key financial and operational questions from schools, enabling a further source of feedback to the Department in addition to what is received through meetings with school peak bodies and direct engagement with schools. This group is chaired by Stephen Fraser, Deputy Secretary, School Education Programs and Support. The group involves representatives from the APF, VPA, VASSP & PASS.

The first meeting involved some context building and time spent surfacing some of the key issues. As we know this is a very contentious topic for principals around the state and the principal representatives shared and upheld this frustration to the DET representatives.

The DET representatives shared with us some of the background as to the process and decision making. The current Department view is that Parent Payments only make a small percentage (around 12%) of the total revenue that goes into schools and that from last year it was found that a large number of schools continued to be non-compliant with the policy, hence why the additional approach was implemented. However, in providing feedback it was made clear to the representatives that this pressure has added to Principal wellbeing, budgeting/revenue/staffing issues, unclear and at times inappropriate expectations of the policy and an undue pressure on schools as we try to cope with remote learning and recovering from a pandemic.



The group of principals made it clear that the actual decline in revenue over the last two years due to little or no fundraising, combined with a drastic cut to partnership funding (OSHC, gym hire, etc) will be further exacerbated by the inevitable reduction in parent payments. The application of the policy in its current form will strip programs from schools and create a system of inequity rather than equity, both within individual schools and across schools.

There was also a lot of discussion around the Department's viewpoint being based on school bank balances and school abilities to pay for items, the DET policy that schools must maintain an operating surplus/balance and how this creates additional pressure placed on schools and from a variety of sources.

As you can appreciate the hour session went incredibly quickly and the issues being surfaced will require further discussion. We look forward to being able to report back on the next meeting and will continue to push the principal view to ensure that it is being heard.

## VET and VCAL Catch Up funding available again in 2021

Earlier this term, secondary schools received communication about Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) additional funding to support Year 11 and Year 12 students complete planned VET studies in 2021.

The catch up finding has been provided in recognition of the difficulties faced by students completing vocational subjects through VET in either the VCAL or VCE. It will assist in covering additional costs relating to facilitating completion of applied VET studies that may not be covered by current school budgets.

If you have not received this communication or been informed of your school's VET catch up finding please contact the Vocational Education Unit by email:

[vet.secondary@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vet.secondary@education.vic.gov.au)



311/19 Milton Parade  
Malvern, 3144  
Tel: 0412 584 002

**Any changes to schools, addresses and credit card details, should be notified to me ASAP, so I can keep my database up to date.**



Gemma Needs  
APF Executive  
Officer

[gnaylor@apf.net.au](mailto:gnaylor@apf.net.au)

Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be  
completed on-line.

## Semester 2 Reporting Advice

Schools have received [Reporting Advice](#) outlining minimum student reporting requirements for Semester 2. Similarly to last year, the requirements have been adjusted to reflect COVID-19 impact and disruptions.

In summary the minimum requirements for Foundation to Year 10 include:

### English and Mathematics:

1. Provision of a short description of what was taught for English and Mathematics
2. Reporting of student achievement against the Victorian Curriculum F-10
3. Reporting progress as compared to the last time the curriculum area was reported on
4. Inclusion of an age-related five point scale.

### Other curriculum areas:

1. Provision of a short description of what was taught.
2. If enough assessment evidence is available, reporting of achievement against the Victorian Curriculum F-10 using a five-point scale

**OR**

A short comment on progress and achievement in the respective learning area.

The Department has provided a copy of [frequently asked questions](#) to support schools in completing Semester 2 reporting.

## School Shade Sails Fund

Schools are encouraged to apply for the shade sails grant of up to \$25,000 for each campus. The funding was announced by Minister Merlino as part of Victoria’s key safety measures for the return to onsite learning and will be administered by the VSBA.

All projects are to be school led with [registrations](#) closing at midnight on 22 October 2021.

You may read the program guidelines, and FAQs before registering online:

<https://vsba.smartygrants.com.au/>

- [School Shade Sails Fund Guidelines](#)
- [School Shade Sails Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Please note that the [School Shade Sails Fund](#) initiative is different to the **School Shade Grants Program** administered by the Department of Health and is being delivered to Victorian government schools and community organisations from 2019 to 2023.



School principal Tina King still vividly recalls the day a recently qualified teacher knocked on her office door and began sobbing.

Just months into the role, pressures from parents, students, and impending exams had begun to feel overwhelming – her last hope to purge all in an impromptu meeting with her boss.



## LEADERSHIP THAT BUILDS TRUST

Leaders can increase trust within complex and diverse schools in these nine ways.

### 1 Assume excellence.

Micromanaging people makes them feel distrusted and leads them to be distrustful themselves. Once a leader has set the vision and goals, there should be plenty of operational autonomy.

### 2 Be more human.

Studies have shown that in professional meetings, as little as five minutes of time chatting about non-work stuff builds collaboration and trust.

### 3 Don't support back-channel criticism.

The practice of encouraging members of an organisation to criticise colleagues online should be discouraged. Once this behaviour becomes acceptable, the harshest people in the organisation take over and everyone else cowers.

### 4 Discourage cliques.

A team that has split into different subcultures is bound to become a team in which distrust thrives. Having people work in mixed groups cuts down on in-group behaviour.

### 5 Don't overvalue transparency.

Making an organisation's



Enhanced cyber safety and student wellbeing

[superloop.com/cyberhound](https://superloop.com/cyberhound)

“It was heartbreaking,” Ms. King recounts. “I remember feeling sadness for her. But at the same time, I was incredibly grateful she entrusted me in that way.

“It was thanks to this that we were able to put supports in place and help her deal with the demands of the job more effectively,” she added.

This undercurrent of trust and respect in her working relationships has helped Ms. King – who now heads the **Australian Principals Federation** – navigate a myriad of complex issues during her thirty year career in school leadership.

On one occasion, Ms. King dealt with an acute case of classroom ostracism by staging an afterschool meeting with parents – something she said would not have been possible without the strong relationships she’d cultivated with them.

“Trust is the magic ingredient,” she said. “When team members trust you, they are more likely to come to you for support and listen to what you have to say. When parents trust you, they respect your advice and often let you take into consideration what’s best for their children,” she added.

By the same token, building trust has helped Ms. King gain cooperation from students.

“Students that trust you are more likely to feel positive about being in school, to risk making mistakes with their work, and to ask for help when they need it. They’re also more willing to embody the values you are trying to instill in them,” she said.

Ms. King’s advice isn’t just anecdotal. Data has consistently shown the importance of trust in a school environment.

Students with positive teacher relationships are **more motivated**, achieve **higher grades**, and even have **better health into adulthood**. Conversely, students with **poor teacher relationships** have more peer problems, greater emotional difficulties, and are less likely to exhibit prosocial behaviour in the classroom.



### **Building trust**

While the solution may seem obvious, the pathway to get there isn’t always that clear. So how does Ms. King cultivate trust in her working relationships?

“Firstly, you need a clear set of defined values – and to live by them religiously,” she said. “Having values written on your school website is great. But you need to embody those in everything you say and do. There has to be that consistency,” she emphasised.

“For example, are you ordering your students to listen to one another and then getting distracted when they come and talk to you? Are you telling them to keep calm when they’re upset, then getting angry when other children misbehave?”

“It’s important to model the behaviour you want to see in your students. If you do that, they will learn to trust and respect your authority.”

Secondly, you need to be accessible and make the time to talk to people, Ms. King said.

“If you don’t give due diligence people can feel isolated. Your advice comes as a top down directive, with no moral purpose and no real incentive to achieve those things. Conversely, when you make people feel valued by sharing your time with them, they feel part of a team, and have all the motivation that comes with teammanship,” she said.

The third ingredient is active listening – a skill that Ms. King describes as a ‘forgotten art’.

“Genuinely listening to people’s opinions, ideas and problems is really important,” she said. “It’s something we don’t do enough of these days, but it can really help foster those meaningful relationships that help students and team members thrive.”

By the same token, non-verbal communication, like facial expressions that show you are interested and a tone of voice that conveys empathy is also a skill worth perfecting, Ms. King said.

“Children are surprisingly capable at reading non-verbal cues. They know when a teacher is



operations highly visible to outsiders has not always worked well over time. Trust comes from competence and results.

#### **6 Be honest about mistakes.**

Screw-ups are, paradoxically, opportunities to build trust so long as you admit error and are clear about what you’ve learned and what you’re doing to change. Leaders who preen and self-promote are often distrusted.

#### **7 Recognise that you’re not psychic.**

Lots of people think they know what’s going on in others’ minds and actually don’t. People who feel unseen and misheard will not trust you.

#### **8 Give away power.**

A good way to earn trust is to spread authority among your colleagues, which encourages cooperation.

#### **9 Answer distrust with trust.**

If you keep showing up for people even if they seem to have rejected you, it will eventually change their lives.

Acknowledgement: “A Practical Guide to Building Trust” by David Brooks in *The New York Times*, June 11, 2021

Principal’s Digest,  
October 2021

showing genuine interest in them,” she added.

### ***A growing need***

**Recent studies** have shown that teachers are more likely to suffer job-related stress than other professionals. One in five report feeling ‘tense’ about their job ‘most’ or ‘all of the time’, compared with one in eight workers in other professions.

Meanwhile, more than half (**57 percent**) of those living with health and emotional pressures have considered leaving the sector in the past two years. Volume of work, “not feeling valued”, and an increasingly target-driven culture are among the top cited reasons. In this climate, Ms. King said cultivating trust-based relationships is especially important.

“Teaching is becoming a lot more complex. These days, we need to be many things to our students,” she said. “On top of that, demands from parents are becoming greater and there is far more accountability than there was thirty years ago when I began in the profession.

“As leaders, we need to support children as best we can, but also our staff. If we don’t we’ll see more people walking away from the jobs they would otherwise love to stay in, and which they worked hard to get into,” she concluded.

**Amy Sarcevic**

Freelance Editor, Informa Australia  
The Age Schools Summit 27 April, 2021

### ***Member feedback—meeting remotely.***

***APF Editor...we need to consider some guidelines for WebEx meetings. While they are efficient and time saving in some ways, many people fail to engage and are clearly undertaking other tasks during the meeting. Maybe that is an acceptable practice.***

A member responded

My immediate response to the above comment in the APF Newsletter is that people do appear to be doing other things during WebEx meetings, but is this any different to face to face meeting with people on iPads and iPhones? The bigger question might be to ask how relevant is the content/agenda at the meeting? Often meetings are one way, the presenters offers information. When online, input is often limited to the chat.....which means, ask away and we will get back to you which is hardly interactive and remove the real time impact and reduces engagement.

Another reason for the lack of engagement is possibly the lag that often occurs due to technology.

### ***BODY AND BRAIN***

**A classroom in which students quietly work at their desks might appear to be ideal, but the amount of time we subject children to a seated position is almost inhumane.** Research findings about the importance of physical movement during class time include that the brain works best in tandem with the body; children naturally want to move and be active; physically active children perform better academically; exercise releases endorphins, which helps children’s mood; movement taps into multiple intelligences and creative learning possibilities; increased physical activity helps with classroom management. At least once an hour, have students stand, stretch, or do some physical activity, perhaps with Go Noodle or YouTube. When students get restless, have them do sit-ups, planks, or other exercises; just two minutes of this helps students get refocused. During transitions, play music and let students move to release energy; perhaps dance moves can become part of transitions. Have students play games like pickup sticks to build co-ordination and fine-motor skills.

“Right the Wrongs of Sedentary Education” by Brad Johnson in *Principal*, January/February 2019

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



### **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.



DAFIN  
CONSULTING

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINCIPAL CLASS EMPLOYEES  
& Leadership Teams**

Contact [dafinconsulting@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dafinconsulting@optusnet.com.au) or David Finnerty 0412 927 007 or Julie Podbury 0419 103 664.