

Australian Principals Federation



President's Message – Tina King

Richard Elmore aptly noted that successful school reform begins from the inside out. Specifically, it is about people doing things and not having things done to them. In school terms this translates to school leaders and teachers leading the work and not having interference from system mandates and impositions. Trust is considered as one of the essential elements at schools however feedback from members indicates eroding levels of trust. Last week, a secondary school principal sent me this: *What are Principals losing sleep over at the moment?*

Having a teacher in front of a class
Covering upcoming leave
Being able to acquit and pay for time in lieu
Decreased revenue from parent payments
Student behaviour
Parent behaviour
Fragile staff
Maintaining programs and camp experiences for the students
Implementing the changes from the VGSA in 2024

The above list is by no means exhaustive, however it will resonate with many of you and it is easy to lose hope and optimism when confronted with ongoing and increasing challenges and demands. School leaders are great at taking care of others, often at a personal cost and detriment. Whilst you spend time shielding and buffering others, take heed and ensure you do this for yourself. Refocus the work as necessary to meet competing demands and push back and put on hold what is not deemed to be a priority.

Your wellness is a crucial aspect of the educational system as it has a direct impact on the overall health and wellbeing of school communities. By prioritising your own health and wellbeing you are better placed to manage the demands of the role and feel more equipped to tackle the challenges that come your way. In turn the system must recognise the importance of this issue and take proactive steps and measures to support school leaders.

We are not far away from completing and releasing the position paper on this very matter that has been developed as a result of the Education Summit held in conjunction with other key stakeholders (CEP, PASS, VPA and VASSP). The position paper is a call to action for it is time that the expectations placed upon principals are appropriately adjusted, particularly in regards to administrative tasks and the number of responsibilities principals are expected to manage.

T. King

Foresight in Leadership, Deborah Patterson, Passion, Guts and Leadership



Foresight is the ability to predict what will happen or be needed in the future. Leaders with foresight can determine necessary and appropriate actions to take. Initial hard work pays off: detailed plans promote foresight.

It is essential for a leader to have a Plan A, a Plan B and a Plan C. In schools it is important to set money aside for emergencies and unexpected expenses that arise.

In contrast, oversight is an unintentional failure to notice or do something. Oversight is usually the result of inattention or inexperience.



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John Millen

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The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

Enrolment Management Plans

We have been advised that some principals are receiving communication to advise that their school will be receiving an Enrolment Management Plan for 2024. This is in response to the Department’s changes to the [Student Placement Policy](#) which states:

The Placement Policy, in particular the priority order of placement, has changed since the beginning of the 2023 school year. All enrolment decisions made from the start of Term 2, 2023 should be made in accordance with the current Placement Policy as outlined on this [page](#).

The Department’s Placement Policy embeds the legal entitlement for students to enrol at their designated neighbourhood school, and to enrol at another school if there is sufficient accommodation.

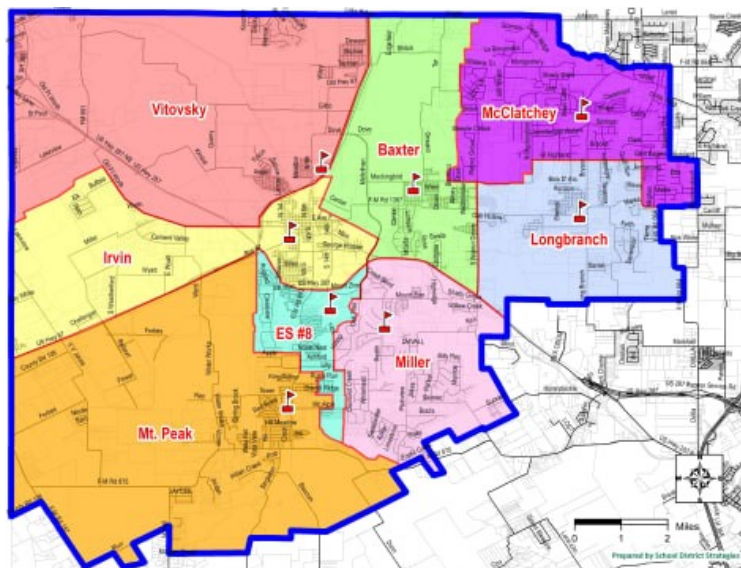
Whilst the Department’s enrolment policy reinforces the legal entitlement for a student to enrol at their designated neighbourhood, it is the latter part of the statement about enrolling at another school that is causing confusion particularly when a school has capacity (as deemed by the VSBA built capacity) however an EMP has been applied.

Questions principals are raising are why has an EMP been applied and why was this communication only received last Friday, the day prospective parents were required to submit their preferences for Year 7 enrolments? Additionally, if a school has capacity, is it parent choice or not? We have been made aware of occasions whereby a school has rejected an out of zone enrolment application, only to have the parent appeal to region and have the decision reversed. The [Find my School](#) site currently links Victorian Government School Zone information which states in part:

Going to a school outside your zone

You have the choice to seek enrolment at a school that is not your local school. If the school has sufficient space for all students who apply, then your child should be offered placement.

We acknowledge that at a whole system level, the policy aims to encourage students to enrol at their designated school and discourage out of zone enrolments. However contradictions in the policy exist with mixed messaging resulting in confusion for not only school staff but parents. Clearer and consistent guidance and information is required. I have raised these concerns directly with key DE staff seeking clarification and further information.



Prepare yourself to empower others.

Empowerment is a management term that consistently fails to live up to its promise, in large part because leaders find it difficult to give up control. They see their role and status as tightly linked to their decision-making authority.

Prepare yourself to delegate decisions by:

- Reflecting on what has held you back from empowering people in the past. Was it a failure when you tried? What could you have done differently to make it a success? What were your feelings when you delegated, and what can you learn from them? What will it take to make the first step?
- Planning for a staggered transition of responsibilities, starting with giving low-risk decisions to capable people. This helps build up confidence in yourself and others before you distribute responsibility more widely.
- Considering it an opportunity to increase the quality of your decision-making and to explore other aspects of your role, such as innovation and growth, as you free yourself from some of your managerial responsibilities.

Reminding yourself why you’re doing this — which should be to give people an opportunity to develop and harness their (often greater) insight into the product, service, or market in question.

Acknowledgement: David Lancefield in Harvard Business Review: “5 Strategies to Empower Employees to Make Decisions” March 2023.

from Hippocampus, an email publication of Principal’s Digest

NAPLAN 2023 REFORMS to REPORTING

Principals have received direct communication from the VCAA advising of updates to the way NAPLAN results will be reported this year. The reforms include resettling of the NAPLAN scale and time series to align with the online transition made last year and will see the introduction of new proficiency standards.

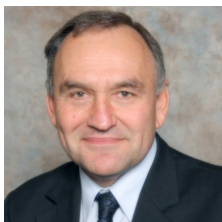
Education Ministers agreed in 2019 through the [National Schools Reform Agreement](#) to introduce proficiency standards for literacy and numeracy aimed at providing simpler and clearer information relating to student achievement against the standards.

In light of these changes, the proficiency standards for NAPLAN 2023 and for all testing moving forward are:

- *Exceeding*
- *Strong*
- *Developing*
- *Needs additional support*

A copy of the Education Ministers Communique can be found [here](#). The VCAA is currently updating the relevant suite of online NAPLAN reports to align with the new proficiency standards. School and individual NAPLAN results are expected to be released by mid to late July this year.

From the memory box, No. 7, Henry Grosseck



There are times, fewer than more, when a question almost cliché-like, asked of you, lingers in your mind, longer than most. That happened to me not so long ago. It was the lingering that had me enthralled. “What’s the best advice you’ve ever been given?” was the question.

I almost rattled off an answer before stopping myself mid-thought. I thought again, and again. Each time I came up with a different answer. Truth be known, I wasn’t at all sure. Over the course of my life, I’d received advice from so many quarters and so many people and in so many different contexts. It did not take me long to start feeling a little embarrassed at my hesitancy at not answering what to me seemed like a very straightforward question. My friend, a colleague, noting my predicament, suggested I narrow my focus to advice related to my profession.

That didn’t really help a lot either, because by then, my mind was tossing up whether the best advice I had ever received professionally was that upon which I had acted with great success or that upon which I had not acted and learnt from a sorry mistake. The longer I mulled over the question, other thoughts began to clutter my mind – what would my colleague think of my answer for one. It dawned on me that I rarely took a considerable time to answer any questions – a few seconds at best. Any longer, and an awkward silence would descend, at least in my mind. Food for thought in that I thought!

My most comfortable answer came to me much later. Way back in my pre-service training, our English literature lecturer, a rather eccentric fellow, challenged us to make sense of W.B. Yeats, famous poem, ‘He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven’ in terms of our teaching practice. The poem, romantic in nature, inspired lively discussion. For me, consequentially, I have done my best as a teacher and principal, though not always with success, “to tread softly on the dreams of others”. Vulnerability is at the core of that poem.

Looking back, whatever the intent was of that lecturer of mine, all those years ago, a lesson was well learnt. That got me thinking too. I share my professional opinions widely – which ones, when, how, to whom, and which make the most impact? What would others say of my



Passion, Guts & Leadership

Another excerpt from Deborah Patterson’s excellent book.

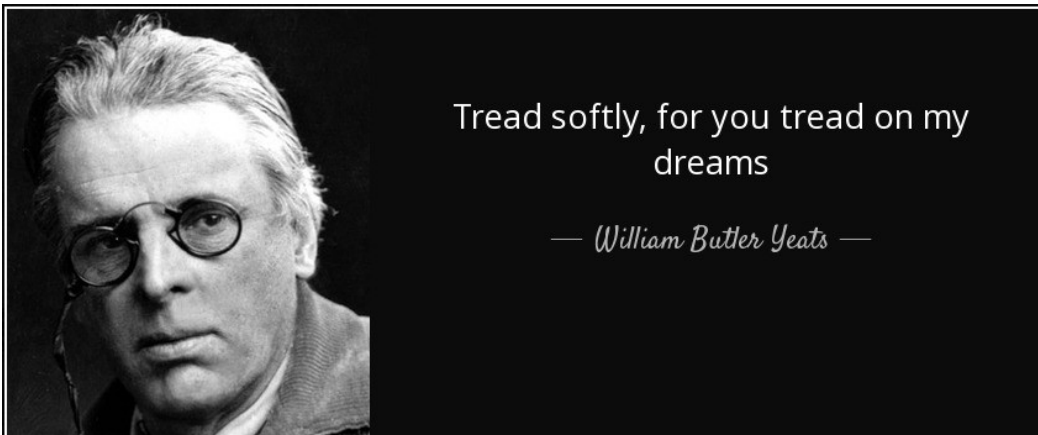
The Flight Path Routine.

One day I was on a flight to Sydney. The captain announced that we would be flying at 32,000 feet and would stay at this height for a period before descending. Flying at 32,000 feet and staying on course became an analogy for me as a principal. If I could work at that level, then I could get to my goals and targets as planned! I also applied this aviation thinking to my school teams. Let’s figure out where we are to go, fly at a productive level (not too low and not too high) and we can reach our destination. I used this language often in my meetings. It is important to know if you and your team are flying too low by being unproductive, or flying too high by being over-productive and working too fast and too hard. Being over-productive can lead to burnout and an unsustainable level of expectation. Flying at 32,000 feet safely will lead to your desired outcomes being achieved.



advice today, more so in the years ahead. Imparting wisdom that lingers is a tricky business.

Our work is pressure laden. The being of time-poor is sadly too relevant to ignore. Short cuts, fraught as they can be, are seductively alluring to the time-poor whom we are. In leadership, we are teachers too. How do you give advice with the time clock always ticking and a potential soap box within sight?



HENRY GROSSEK is the **PRINCIPAL** of **BERWICK LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL** and a member of the **APF Council**. henryk.grossek@education.vic.gov.au

Communicating with Trust

In his most recent blog, John Millen states that “with the recent dramatic changes in our business and personal lives, leaders more than ever must over-communicate and build trusted relationships”. With trust in their leaders, people will give their all and may accomplish excellence. Without trust, nothing is quite right. As a leader, you have the opportunity to influence people to increase their engagement, and it starts with building trust.



Building trust is a complex process with many factors at play, including honesty and integrity, acting in others’ interests, and having consistency between words and deeds. Millen goes on to discuss 5 ways to communicate as a trusted leader.

Share yourself.

Giving people a glimpse of who you are, builds trust because before we can trust people, we must get to know them. The best way to share yourself is to tell your story. As humans, we are hard-wired for storytelling, which is why we become so engaged when we hear stories. Risk vulnerability by sharing yourself and your story.



Support for members

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

However, from time to time you may be concerned about a colleague. Please do not hesitate in making contact with us so we can offer them appropriate support.

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Change your mindset from 'I' to 'We'.

Many leaders fail because they separate themselves from their team in their minds and their actions. Millen quotes Peter Drucker saying, "The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say "I." And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say "I." They don't think "I." They think "we"; they think "team."

Many corporate cultures preach servant leadership but live something quite different — and employees know it all too well.



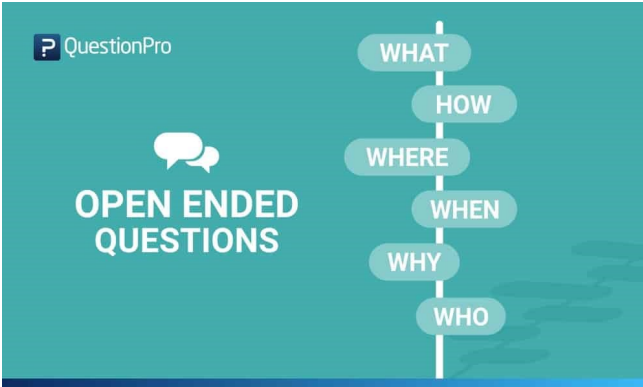
David Finnerty, Julie Podbury and Loretta Piazza deliver leadership programs in schools. Our Emerging Leaders Program has been very successful in five schools.

We are also Coaching the Leadership Team in another.

There are now limited Vacancies for 2024.



Please contact David on 0412 927 007 or Julie on 0419103 664 for further information



Admit your failures.

Too many leaders are afraid to admit failures, perhaps fearing a sense of weakness. But the opposite is true. When you admit to failures you are perceived as a stronger person, secure enough to share your mistakes.

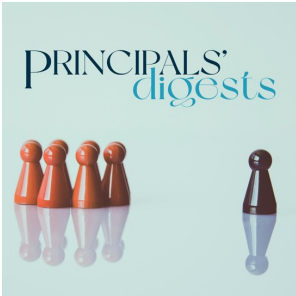
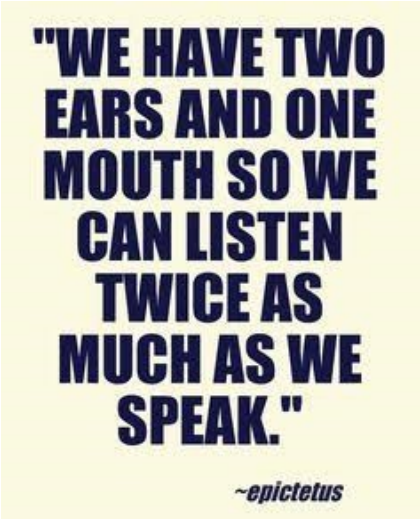
Ask open-ended questions.

Take the focus off of you and put it on others. An easy way to do that is to ask people what they think, how they feel or what they would do. Instead of a "yes" or "no," an open-ended question can draw a meaningful, thoughtful answer.

Listen more than you speak.

Once you've asked the question, it's time to listen. Listen without judgment or defensiveness. Don't listen while formulating a response. In fact, don't respond. Listen and ask more questions.

John Millen's blog can be found here: <https://www.johnmillen.com/blog/communicating-as-a-trusted-leader>



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The Union exclusively for the Principal Class