

what's hot?



Term 4 Week 9 2011



Dear Colleague,

After a year of significant change I suppose it would be accurate to say that the life of a Principal is never boring. 2011 has certainly been a challenge for us in not only dealing with change but with trying to shape it so it's the right fit for our students and our schools.

Having said this, 2012 will be providing us with even more challenges, particularly in the area of Local Schools, Local Decisions and the expected changes to School Learning Support earmarked for Term 2.

At a national level, we'll have a clearer picture of the Federal Government's intentions early in 2012 re funding for schools. The Gonski review will have presented its findings which I have no doubt will highlight the current inequities in the funding of Public Education across Australia compared to the other sectors. The big question will be 'Does the government have the courage to make the changes?'

Maralyn Parker (Education journalist for the Daily Telegraph) reminded us in a recent article that Australia is ranked third-lowest of all OECD countries in the amount we spend on children in the public sector and that we are well below the OECD average in the percentage of our gross domestic product directed to education.

I'm not confident that the Federal Government will redirect funds from the Independent and Catholic sectors so what we will need to do is to continue to stress that Public Education continues not only to do 'the heavy lifting' but to do it well. We need the Government to understand that if we are going to raise the standards of student outcomes, particularly with our low SES, rural, remote and ATSI students, then we need the extra resources.

There appears to be extensive data from schools involved in National Partnerships that the additional resources provided have resulted in significant improvements in student achievement. Dare we hope that the politicians see the value of this!

Major Items

Local Schools, Local Decisions (LSLD)

Hopefully, you've been able to keep up to speed on developments with LSLD through the previous What's Hot and the emails you have received over the last few weeks. We would also hope that you have had time to read through our Association's LSLD Recommendation Paper that was drafted and then fine-tuned at our AGM and Business meeting at Annual Conference. Members of State Executive have personally briefed the Minister, Director-General, Deputy Directors-General and the relieving General Manager of the Better Schools Program Office on our paper.

At State Council in Week 7, our Recommendation Paper was again discussed and a motion was passed that 'the NSWPPA State Executive continue to execute the carriage of the NSWPPA's vision for the LSLD program'.

You will know that the consultation period was finalised on the 18th of last month and we will now be awaiting feedback on data gathered from the 29th of October. The LSLD Steering Committee will meet early in term one to review the data and begin developing a framework to present to the Minister early in February.



Interviews for the two CEO positions (one Primary, one Secondary) to support the LSLD initiative have been held and Paul Bates, Principal of Burwood Public School was the successful Primary candidate. Paul has significant experience as a Principal in a number of schools. Paul is currently also Relieving Principal at Strathfield South and has had experience as a relieving SED and relieving School Development Officer. We have great confidence in Paul's ability to present a strong Primary perspective as the implementation of LSLD begins in 2012.

Mark Webster, formerly Principal of Port Kembla Senior College, is the successful secondary Principal and is also highly regarded by his secondary colleagues. Paul and Mark will be part of the Schools Implementation Team for LSLD which will be led by Kerry Knox (rel Senior Manager Strategic Co-ordination).

NSWPPA INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT ZOOMERANG SURVEY

You would now be aware of the NSW Teachers Federation article in 'Education' on November 14th in relation to the NSWPPA Recommendations Paper for Local Schools, Local Decisions. You should also have received copies of our response to the article.

At our most recent State Council meeting our response was overwhelmingly endorsed by Delegates. A number of State Council Delegates expressed dissatisfaction with the current level of support being provided for Principals by the Teachers Federation. Following discussion, the following motion was put forward from the floor:

'That the NSWPPA establish a small Working Party to investigate the implications of establishing a union body for principals, with the Working Party providing a progress report back to State Council in Term 1, 2012.'

This motion was passed with a significant majority. The Working Party was established and in order to ensure they gain an accurate view of the feelings of all members around industrial issues, a survey was developed seeking feedback on a number of issues surrounding our current industrial position. This included such issues as:

- Satisfaction levels with current industrial support
- Support for Principals available from the Teachers Federation
- Professional relationship between the NSWPPA and the Teachers Federation
- Current reason/s for maintaining membership of the Teachers Federation
- Interest level in alternative industrial representation
- Maintaining the Public Education Alliance

I would stress that the purpose of this survey is to provide the Working Party with as much information about the views of Principals on these issues as possible. We are fully aware that there will be differing views around this issue, so it's extremely important that we have a response from all members. The information gathered from this survey will inform the Working Party's report to State Council in Term 1, 2012.

At the time of writing we have had approximately 600 Principals complete the survey. If you haven't already done so, please take the time to complete the survey before the end of this term. We need your guidance and opinion to determine the direction/s we take on this issue in the future. The survey can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

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www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22DYW93HMN7/

or by copying and pasting the link into your web browser. The survey will remain open until COB on Friday December 16th. All enquiries should be directed to NSWPPA Vice President Grahame Morgan at gmorgan@nswppa.org.au

Early Childhood & Care

Our Early Childhood Working Party (ECWP), led by Cheryl Tate and Phil Seymour, has been working tirelessly to convince the Government that the policy regarding charging fees for government pre-schools is flawed. A submission has been completed and Phil and committee member Jo-Ann Lock spoke to this during State Council.

While we are convinced that a percentage of children may miss the opportunity to attend pre-school as a result of this policy, the Minister has publicly stressed that no child will be refused entry based on their family's inability to pay the fee.

We are therefore focusing, politically, on the other concerns about the policy; particularly the issues of resourcing for schools to maintain a quality program, access priorities and staff support. We continue to seek financial data from the DEC to inform our position.

The ECWP also has put in a submission to the State Government's review of Pre-School Funding focusing on increasing the number of positions in our pre-schools, funding for students with disabilities, additional funds for pre-schools to meet the new Federal requirements, additional time for teachers and the creation of a Director position in our pre-schools.

Phil Seymour, Jo-Ann Lock and I will be meeting with the Minister next Tuesday afternoon to discuss our concerns once again.

OOSH

As of January 1st 2012 new legislation will bring into law regulations that relate to the management and operation of Out Of School Hours facilities.

Community services have at this point in time held several very well attended information meetings of interested parties in the Sydney region (with one to go early next year) and will be commencing regional information meetings early next year. They will also be contacting and having talks with the Parents and Citizens Association.

All Principals with an OOSH facility at their school, be it outsourced to a private contractor or run through their school's P&C, should be aware of the new regulation. To support a smooth transition for schools to the new legislation there are many safety clauses in the regulation relating to waivers and extensions of mandatory requirements. Below are links which effectively explain the changes that are occurring in 2012. The Early Childhood Working Party has been in talks with Department of Communities and continue to support this process in schools.

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/what-we-offer/early-childhood-education-and-care>
<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/>.

Many thanks to Brent Kunkler, Principal, Chester Hill PS and a member of our Early Childhood Working Party, for this report.



Assisted School Travel Program

Garry Brotherton, Chairperson of the SSP Reference Group and his team have done some great work on this issue. You will remember there were some significant concerns about the application forms and Garry, Tony Brain, Grahame Morgan and I had a meeting with members of Administrative Services Transport Unit on the 18th of November.

As a result of the meeting in Bridge St the following agreed outcomes were reached;

- Negotiating/Co-ordinating video-conference link ups with ASTU staff (as required) when Principals have Regional meetings.
- NSWPPA Reference Group co-ordinates invitation to ASTU staff to attend Regional NSWPPA Conferences to provide a brief 5/10 mins overview, then to network with Principals over lunch
- Frequently Asked Questions to be finalised by ASTP staff and available via the Internet/Intranet
- Review of page 8, dot points 5 & 6
- NSWPPA to encourage Principals to use the new application forms and advise that the confirmation concerning page 8, dot points 5 & 6 are not a mandatory requirement during the review.
- Consideration of generic training packages for Travel Support Officers (TSO)
- ASTU to continue to liaise with PEOs/Placement Panels regarding guidelines and eligibility for transport

Many Principals were concerned about signing off on points 5 and 6 on Page 8. Principals can sign off on the new forms without ticking those points. ASTP staff have been directed to process the forms without those points being ticked until further discussions resolve the issues. Principals, while encouraged to use the new forms, can use the old forms while this review is underway.

You need to be aware that this is not just an SSP issue. All schools with support classes (mine included) or students requiring transport are affected by this policy change. ASTP personnel are keen to talk to Principals directly about the forms and would look forward to those opportunities early next year. There will be further discussions/meetings with ASTP personnel about aspects of the guidelines. Meetings dates are yet to be confirmed.

Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy

At State Council, Vice Presidents Phil Seymour and Geoff Scott reported on their meeting with the Advisory Group where they presented our submission paper. Phil and Geoff report they had a good hearing and that the Advisory Group Chair, Dr Ken Boston, responded positively and demonstrated a clear understanding of our position.

One of the major themes of our submission is that any rollout of funding and resources should focus on early identification of need and should be focused on individual students and recognise that 'one-size fits all' programs are not best practice.

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PPDP/ PARS

A number of concerns have been raised with us regarding the rollout of the Principal Performance and Professional Development Plan and its subsequent inclusion in the PARS process. There was once again, significant inconsistency across SEGs throughout the state.

The original intention of Greg Prior, Deputy-Director General Schools, was to look at the professional development needs of Principals and that any plan developed should include a negotiated, collaborative, aspirational process. While the elements from Leading and Managing the School and the National Professional Standards for Principals formed the basis of the plan, it was never intended that Principals needed to address all 6 issues. A Principal may concentrate on 2 or 3 elements over a year or in the case of a very experienced Principal, 1 or 2 elements.

State Executive raised our concern about consistency of implementation with the DD-G Schools and he responded by forwarding a memo to all Regional Directors to reinforce with their SEDs, the need to use a consistent and negotiated process with all Principals.

This issue was also raised from the floor at the recent State Council meeting with the DD-G Schools, resulting in a workshop where Delegates discussed incidences of inconsistencies in implementation across the state. The DD-G agreed to use this feedback in his meeting with SEDs on the following day. Vice President Desley Morgan collated the workshop findings and sent them on to the DD-G schools at the end of the day.

We believe there needs to be further development in regard to the PPPDP/PARS process. The issues of the role of SEDs, their level of knowledge and familiarity with individual Principals and schools, the level of negotiation between the SED and the Principal and the reduction of unnecessary documentation are yet to be fully resolved and we will continue to work on behalf of Principals to ensure they are.

If you have any concerns about the process in your SEG area, please contact the NSWPPA State Executive so we can investigate on your behalf.

Rural Education Forum

This was held over two days on the 9th and 10th of November. We had the majority of members of our Rural Education Working Party present, as well as a representative from both our Teaching Principals and Human Resources Reference Groups. Our secondary colleagues also had 10 representatives.

The Minister, Adrian Piccoli, opened the Rural Education Forum and there were a number of senior DEC officers and 3 Regional Directors present throughout the two days. A significant comment was made by the Minister, in his opening address, *'the data on performance of rural students is humiliating'*. He informed us he was intending to pursue this matter at a national level. He did follow this through and shared his presentation (to his fellow State and Territory Ministers) with us at State Council.

Presentations at the Forum were followed by a series of workshops to identify the factors/issues that are responsible for underachievement –five main areas were identified as being very significant:

1. Teaching quality - staffing

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2. School leadership
3. Educational provision
4. Service provision
5. Students - what they bring with them

The workshop then moved towards looking for solutions /strategies and specific actions that could bring about improvements.

The Director-General, Dr Michele Bruniges, was present at the final session of the Forum and was presented with the initiatives and directions developed over the two days.

As a follow up to the Forum, a small Working Party consisting of NSWPPA, NSWSPC and DEC staff will meet in Sydney in early December to work on the findings of the five groups and develop this into a working paper that would include short, medium and long term goals to be presented to the Director General and to the Minister.

I'd like to acknowledge the work of Ralph Taylor and our Rural Education Working Party and Bernie Roebuck, Principal of Finley High School and his team for their continued drive and passion for our students in rural and remote schools.

We also had a special guest for the two days, Professor John Halsey from Flinders University. John is a champion of the role that rural communities play in the world. During his presentation he stated that populations would grow by close to 50% by 2050 and that creating long term sustainable rural communities was in the best interests of everyone. He certainly made an important contribution to the discussions over the two days, including 'a big picture' perspective.

School 'closures'

You are probably aware that a number of school 'closures' have been announced this week. The viability of schools in the Public Education system appears to be an ongoing challenge for the DEC and State Government. Where enrolments and future predicted enrolments indicate that a school will not be able to operate effectively and where the local community is in agreement, the DEC may suspend the operations of a school or recommend its closure.

The NSWPPA however, is committed to supporting Teaching Principals and small schools serving their local communities. Following representations to Hon Richard Torbay by Chisholm Bloch, Chair NSWPPA Teaching Principals' Reference Group, about any general proposal to close small schools, Minister Piccoli has responded, ' I can assure you that there is no policy to change the status of teaching principals. There is certainly no policy to close small schools which are led by teaching principals.'

We will continue to monitor the situation and re-affirm with the Minister and Director-General our position that "the fundamental principle must be a quality public school being the 'first-in' and last-out' educational provider in every community across the State. It is essential that access, equity and building social capital underpin this principle." (NSWPPA Recommendations Paper – Local Schools Local Decisions Page 4)

Treasury Estimates Committee

At State Council we asked Hugo Harmstorf, Deputy Director-General Finance and Infrastructure (Hugo was relieving in this position at the time but was successful in being appointed to the position last week) to

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outline the process the DEC has to go through when negotiating the Education budget. What we learned from Hugo's presentation is that dealing with Treasury is both challenging and at times frustrating when trying to bring a schools' perspective to Treasury deliberations.

It would appear that Treasury officials are not fully appreciative of the complexities of education and look at narrowly-focused data and results. In most recent negotiations Treasury took the line that their evidence showed no improvement in student outcomes over a number of years, during which time student/teacher ratios had decreased and teacher salaries had increased. Their argument therefore was that more investment hadn't made a difference.

Hugo also presented some good news in regard to a \$20 million increase in maintenance funding over four years and the \$40 million Public Schools Upgrade Program. The bad news was in relation to supplementation. He estimates the bill for 2011 will be \$35 million – a significant increase over the \$13 million of a couple of years ago. Unless savings can be found in other areas, the full \$35 million may not be paid out to schools.

We continue to stress to Hugo that schools have little or no control over the two components of supplementation – utilities and short term relief (STR). In the case of STR, it is an industrial entitlement that Principals have no real authority over.

Garry Key, Manager, School & Regional Financial Operations has informed Daryl McKay, Chair of our Finance and Admin Reference Group, that supplementation arrangements for 2011 have been approved and the application process will be similar to previous years. Garry informed us that paperwork should be sent to School Finance and not to SEDs. He further stated that after all the applications have been received, payments would be based on the amount of supplementation reserves available at that time. This amount has not been finalised at this stage and formal advice will be sent to all schools shortly.

While on the subject of Hugo, we offer him our sincerest congratulations on his appointment as Deputy Director-General, Finance and Infrastructure and look forward to continuing the already strong and professional working relationship we have with him.

While on the subject of money

Schools will continue to receive the \$50 Australian Government School Recurrent Cost (AGSRC) funding grant in 2012 (you remember, Primary Schools donated the other \$50 dollars to the salary case). It will be included in our second semester global budget allocation under Specific Purpose Grants.

Kylie Donovan Shadow Administrator Conference Committee

Congratulations to Kylie on winning the role of Shadow Administrator of our Conference Committee. Kylie will spend the next 12 months shadowing the legendary Mary Lambert in her role. Mary will be retiring at the end of 2012.

Kylie is currently on the Conference Committee and has worked in a variety of roles, including the challenging job of finding sponsors. I have no doubt Kylie will do an outstanding job after spending 12 months with Mary.

John Laing Awards

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I had the pleasure of attending the 2011 Principals Australia John Laing Awards in Sydney and would like to congratulate Lance Marsh, Kanwal Public School as a most worthy winner. Many thanks too, to Lyn Davis, Principal of Umina PS, for nominating Lance.

These awards are highly prestigious, cross sectoral and presented in all states and territories and recognise school leaders who have made an extensive contribution to the professional learning of other school leaders. In listening to Lance's accomplishments in this area, it was certainly no surprise he won the award.

APPA Report

Norm Hart, President of the Australian Primary Principals Association, has asked me to forward a copy of APPA's December newsletter. It includes an update of the latest research produced by APPA, the Trans Tasman Conference in Melbourne next September, AITSL and ACARA updates, Principals Australia Council and Principals Australia Institute. The newsletter can be found as an attachment to the What's Hot email.

The Leadership Learning Program

The Professional learning and Leadership Development Directorate have developed a suite of online/blended courses for aspiring, newly appointed and current school leaders. Two courses were launched this term and over 200 participants have enrolled.

These and a number of new courses will be offered in Term 1 2012. Each term additional courses will be available.

Inquiries: Annette Udall 9886 7720; Jennie Fogarty 9886 7745

Thanks Sue Estens

A big thank you to Sue, Principal of Tea Gardens PS for being on the ball. Sue quickly brought to our attention that the DEC had planned a Network upgrade for the 20th of November, a peak usage time for Primary Principals and teachers.

Stephen Loquet, Chief Information Officer of the Information Technology Directorate, contacted me to discuss the issue and when the situation was explained, he had no hesitation in postponing the upgrade. I'd like to thank Stephen for his understanding and fast action on this issue. The timing problem originated earlier in the year apparently when the list of 'peak usage times' was established and inadvertently, late November missed a guernsey. I have no doubt it will be in the list for 2012!

State Council dates for 2012 - reminder

The proposed dates for 2012 State Council (all to be held at the Citigate, Sydney) are:

- Term 1, Week 7, March 8th and 9th
- Term 2, Week 6, May 31st and June 1st
- Term 3, Week 7, August 30th and 31st
- Term 4, Week 7, November 22nd and 23rd

We would ask that all Area Council Executive ensure there are no clashes between Regional Conferences / Area Council Meetings with State Council dates.

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Since the previous What's Hot in Week 4 this term the Executive and representative activities have included:

- ❖ Meeting with Minister re Local Decision making, Pre-Schools, SLSP, Rural Education
- ❖ Addressing NSWPPA regional and area meetings and conferences across the state
- ❖ Meetings with D-G and Senior DEC executive
- ❖ Meetings with AGPPA and APPA
- ❖ Selection Panel for LSLD CEO positions
- ❖ Meeting re AEEYSOC briefing
- ❖ Meeting re Years 6/7 transition with PLO Strategic Initiatives Directorate
- ❖ Meetings with LSLD Steering Committee
- ❖ Meeting with National Partnership Student Disabilities Steering Committee
- ❖ Futures Alliance meeting
- ❖ Meetings with NSWSPC senior executive
- ❖ Meeting with DD-G Workplace Management and Systems Improvement
- ❖ Meeting with DD-G Finance and Infrastructure
- ❖ Attendance at Quality Teaching Awards, Government House
- ❖ Meeting with rel General Manager, Better Schools Program Office
- ❖ Web Filter Control Group Meeting
- ❖ Meetings with NSWPPA Reference Groups and Working Parties
- ❖ Responding to a variety of media enquiries on radio and in the print media on a variety of issues.

IN BRIEF

I saw this gag and it firstly tickled my funny bone and then made me reflect on what often happens to us in spite of our efforts!

There was a man who worked for the Post Office whose job was to process all the mail that had illegible addresses. One day, a letter came addressed in a shaky handwriting to God with no actual address. He thought he should open it to see what it was about. The letter read:

Dear God,

I am an 83 year-old widow, living on a very small pension. Yesterday someone stole my purse. It had \$100 in it, which was all the money I had until my next pension payment. Next Sunday is Christmas, and I had invited two of my friends over for dinner. Without that money, I have nothing to buy food with, have no family to turn to, and you are my only hope. Can you please help me?

Sincerely,

Edna

The postal worker was touched. He showed the letter to all the other workers. Each one dug into his or her wallet and came up with a few dollars. By the time he made the rounds, he had collected \$96, which they put into an envelope and sent to the woman. The rest of the day, all the workers felt a warm glow thinking of Edna and the dinner she would be able to share with her friends. Christmas came and went. A few days later, another letter came from the same old lady to God. All the workers gathered around while the letter was opened. It read:

Dear God,

*How can I ever thank you enough for what you did for me? Because of your gift of love, I was able to fix a glorious dinner for my friends. We had a very nice day and I told my friends of your wonderful gift. By the way, there was \$4 missing. I think it was those bast**ds at the Post Office.*

Edna

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Please remember to contact your Association, through either your local Area Primary Principals' Council President or State Executive members, if there are any matters with which we can provide support and assistance.

On behalf the Executive, Jackie Malecki, Jennie Fogarty, Steve McAlister, Desley Morgan, Grahame Morgan, Mark Pritchard, Will Randall, Geoff Scott, Phil Seymour and myself . . .

We hope you have a terrific break, Santa is good to you, and you don't put on too much weight!

Best Regards,

Jim

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President**

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