

# ICP

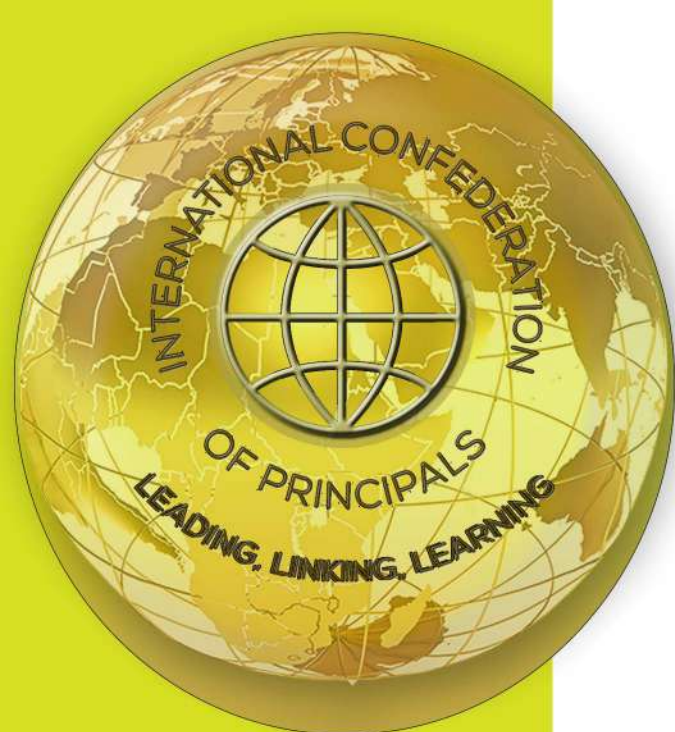


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# EQUITY



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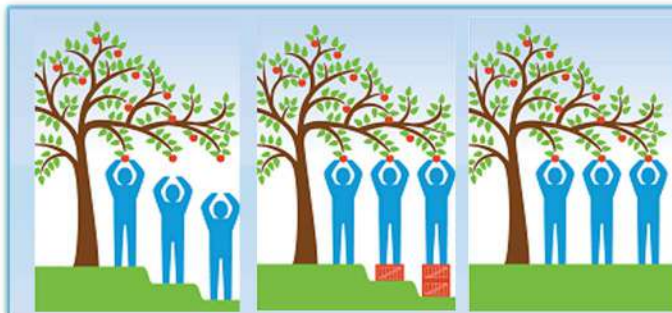
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# From the ICP President's Pen



The ICP hosted its first ever virtual council meeting in October. This was a leap of faith for the Executive, who had to relinquish their control and put their trust in GEMS, the conference company, to lead them through the uncharted waters of the virtual world to host a successful council meeting.

Many of the activities usually included in the programme of face-to-face council meetings continued: An Annual General Meeting, presentations by Steve Munby, Pasi Sahlberg and Anna Pons, members' snapshots from Brazil and Fiji, 'speed-dating' opportunities and even longer conversations between people from different continents. These all created memorable moments. Attendees' responses to this meeting have been overwhelmingly positive, which is encouraging should the ICP be required to host similar meetings in the future.

One of the questions requiring a response from delegates in the post-council assessment was 'What future ICP topics would be of value to you?' The topic of Equity was once again mentioned as a topic requiring further discussion.

Equity has been a priority in the ICP Strategic plan for a number of years. As a further step, the ICP Council drafted an equity statement in 2019 for members to use in their various jurisdictions and in an attempt to keep it on the agendas of principal associations across the world.

The call for Equity in Education has been reverberating around the world for a number of years and the continued impact of Covid-19 on Education Systems worldwide has amplified this call.

'Unlike educational equality, which may focus on school outcomes alone, equity is more justice-centered and tends to refer to school outcomes and structures in relation to access to opportunities, including health care, curriculum, and academic and social supports. School leaders often grapple with challenges to building equitable learning environments and opportunities for all students. When schools become more racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse, student needs may also change. These challenges can cause tension within school communities, requiring a concerted effort to effectively address them.'  
(Adam Alvarez: Educational Leadership)

This edition of the newsletter includes diverse contribution on this topic, which should lead the reader to reflect on their own personal practices and move them to action. Gianna Clark says that 'moving an organization toward greater equity and inclusion requires intentional, committed and often courageous leadership.'

The challenge to all in Education is to 'stop talking and start doing' more where Equity is concerned.

Alta van Heerden  
ICP President

# What's Fair, What's Right, What's Just?

Working with complaints as we seek to understand and interrupt systemic racism in our schools

By the Protective Services Team

Illustration by Pete Ryan

As we consider the complex demands on principals and vice-principals in leading their schools, none is more critical than the work they do to ensure a safe, equitable and inclusive learning/working environment. Recognizing and calling out discrimination and bias, both conscious and unconscious, remains necessary if we are to position our schools within the anti-racist, anti-oppressive framework. Collectively, the goal is to ensure that all students believe they can be successful and are supported within that belief.





The challenge to us – as individuals, school teams and leaders in education – is to grapple with our own belief systems. Research indicates that it is common for many to identify themselves as “colour-blind,” as someone who does not “see colour.” Significant concerns continue to be raised by those who feel the opposite:

The common idea of claiming ‘colour blindness’ is akin to the notion of being ‘not racist’- as with the ‘not-racist’, the colour-blind individual, by ostensibly failing to see race, fails to see racism and falls into racist passivity.

– Ibram X. Kendi

### [How to Be an Antiracist](#)

Within our schools, students and staff who experience offensive actions and comments – as well as the teachers and leaders who are charged with identifying, interrupting and standing up to this behaviour – may exhibit a wide range of reactions. Expressions of frustration, rage, anxiety, stress, and/or helplessness can result in dysfunction at both school and system levels. The dismantling of systemic racism requires that our school leaders educate themselves on what it means to lead anti-racist and anti-oppressive schools.

Over the past year, the turmoil experienced in our schools has been very evident to the OPC’s Protective Services Team (PST). We have responded to an ever-increasing number of cases from Members dealing with harassment and human rights concerns. Complaints have been made by Members facing harassment or discrimination, while other Members have responded to allegations of

harassment and discrimination from staff, students and community members.

Principals and vice-principals are duty-bound to do their best to ensure the safety and security of students and staff. Should you feel that you or others are being discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnic origin or ancestry, or facing bias, it is important to identify those concerns through the appropriate processes.

Alternately, those who come to you, as the school leader, with their concerns must be given an opportunity to fully express those concerns. It is then your responsibility to follow the appropriate process that will entail a reasonable, appropriate investigation and necessary follow-up actions. The goal of these processes is to ensure a safe, equitable learning and working environment.

Some administrators who have complained to their boards about discriminatory or racist comments and actions have also expressed frustration that their concerns were not treated seriously. Alternatively, others are fearful that they will make a misstep in the supervision of staff performance or behaviour, worried that an expression of concern could lead to an accusation of bias or racism. In considering your concerns or the concerns of others, it is important to ask:

- Are my actions or the actions of others consistent with appropriate behaviour as described in board policies and procedures (including Codes of Conduct)?
- Is my professional conduct or the professional conduct of others appropriate according to my board’s policies and procedures,

and the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) Standards of Practice?

- Is discrimination or bias present in the comments or actions of concern? Is there evidence to support the perception of bias?
- Is any of the behaviour in question consistent with [Regulation 437.97 Professional Misconduct](#)?

Administrators should always consult with their board personnel and respect board directives. All boards have developed Harassment and Human Rights policies and procedures, which school leaders are expected to know, understand and follow.

If you are unclear as to these policies, contact your supervisory officer for assistance in locating and discussing the relevant policies. As always, your PST consultants are here to assist you with questions or concerns that may arise.

PST support is available for Members during the investigation process, whether they are a complainant, respondent or witness. This involvement will be offered in the form of regular support and communication, either by phone, virtual meeting or meeting in person, and in meetings with investigators and board senior administration. In any case, Members will be advised by the PST to gather any notes, documentation, written evidence that might exist or witness names and contact information.

Members will be cautioned whether as a complainant or a respondent that the process is confidential, and there must not be communication with anyone involved so as not to influence the investigation. PST Consultants

confer with our Legal Team as needed to seek advice on how to best proceed, and whether direct legal assistance is needed.

When registering a complaint or concern, the process usually begins with the involvement of the administrator's supervisory officer, with the hopes of an informal resolution. If a resolution is not reached, the complainant may then draft a formal Harassment or Human Rights Complaint. The board will first conduct a threshold assessment to determine whether the complaint is within the scope of the policy and that it is not vexatious or frivolous. Once the threshold has been met, depending on the type of complaint, an investigator will be appointed, either internally or as an external independent source.

As an alternative to the internal human rights complaint mechanism within school boards, sometimes Members prefer to consider filing a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO). The HRTO has jurisdiction over violations of the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) (Code), which includes the right to equal treatment in employment without discrimination on a Code ground and the receipt of educational services without discrimination on a Code ground. An application to the HRTO must occur within one year of the alleged discrimination, outline the allegations that have occurred and state what remedy the applicant is seeking. Additionally, the applicant must identify whether or not they would be interested in participating in mediation.

The PST has a number of cases where Members have been named as a respondent in an HRTO

case, along with the school board. Where this occurs, Members should notify their board that an HRTO complaint has been received, as well as notifying the PST. It is common for the board to provide legal support to the Member through the process, where the Member was acting appropriately according to the board policies and procedures. In some cases, the board may request that the HRTO remove the Member as a personal respondent, where it was not proper that they were named in the application.

The HRTO process is a lengthy and legalistic process. Members who would like to submit an application to the HRTO or who have been named as a respondent in an application are advised to contact the OPC intake consultant, and the PST will provide support as needed throughout process.

Regardless of whether the complaint is a harassment complaint or an HRTO application, it is very upsetting and anxiety-provoking to be a complainant or a respondent. It requires facing

## Recognizing and calling out discrimination and bias, both conscious and unconscious, remains necessary if we are to position our schools within the anti-racist, anti-oppressive framework.

concerns you may have expressed that were not examined in a fulsome manner, or concerns that someone has brought forward against you, and in which you still seek to understand why the complaint came forward. As previously noted,



**The dismantling of systemic racism requires that our school leaders educate themselves on what it means to lead anti-racist and anti-oppressive schools.**

examining behaviour and actions will be a significant part of the investigative process. Investigation findings are not always predictable, but they will serve to provide future direction for administrators as to what should be a focus in ensuring the school continues to build anti-racist, anti-oppression awareness and strengths.

The OPC has undertaken several initiatives to respond to the needs of Members. Protective Services and Professional Learning resources relating to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion as well as the HRTO [provide guidance on best practices](#). The OPC'S [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee](#), struck in June 2020, includes a diverse group of Members. Several anti-racism sessions were held as part of the [Just in Time](#), Professional Learning opportunities, and recordings of these workshops, panels and webinars are archived and available [to Members through the OPC website](#).

This is a challenging time for both educators and students. We are all looking to

find our place and to live a good life, and to teach our students to do the same. As we seek to build our awareness and provide unwavering support of those who have faced many obstacles in raising their children in environments that are less than fair, sending them to our schools to become the best they can be, and trusting in the world to be equitable, respectful and kind, we know our role as school leaders will be instrumental in making this a reality. The only way forward is for our schools to become anti-racist and anti-oppressive.

Ibram X Kendi, in [How to Be an Antiracist](#), describes this challenge as “the basic struggle we’re all in, the struggle to be fully human and to see that others are fully human. We know how to be racist, we know how to pretend to be not racist. Now, let’s know how to be anti-racist.” ▲

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# ICP Equity Statement

**The ICP respects and acknowledges the varied challenges faced by each member in our shared journey to ensuring equity of access and opportunity for the learners and the communities in which we lead. Every member of the ICP acknowledges their responsibility to shape, lead and advocate for educational equity at all levels in their own cultural, social and economic context.**

**The ICP is committed to lead open and meaningful dialogue world-wide, towards access to equitable, quality education for all.**



# WHY EQUITY



# IS CHALLENGING BUT ESSENTIAL

When ICP gathered in Shanghai for its 2019 Council we made an ambitious declaration about the importance of equity. The first part of it reads:

*The ICP respects and acknowledges the varied challenges faced by each member in our shared journey to ensuring equity of access and opportunity for the learners and the communities in which we lead. Every member of the ICP acknowledges their personal responsibility to shape, lead and advocate for educational equity at all levels in their own cultural, social and economic context.*

The relevance and importance of this declaration has been brought home to me by recent events in the English system.

When the Pandemic hit the country in March, schools in the UK, like many other parts of the world, were forced into a period of partial closure, during which they remained open only for children of key workers and those who were viewed as being vulnerable. In these circumstances the government judged that it was not possible to proceed with public examinations for students aged 16 and 18.

With the benefit of hindsight it is now possible to conclude that this decision might have been taken too quickly and that by the time we reached June or July it probably would have been possible for examinations to take place. However, at the time, no one seriously disputed the government's decision to cancel exams. The question that immediately arose however was what do we put in their place?

Looking back through my archives I see that in April I wrote to parents telling them that the government had decided that all schools should produce 'centre assessed grades' which were a *holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence. Teachers and heads of department will have a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compare to other students within the department/subject this year, and in previous years.* All schools in England followed a long process of review and moderation and at the end submitted both a grade and ranking to the examination board.

It was at that point that the issue started to centre not on teacher judgement but on various interpretations of the

word 'equity'. In the period leading up to the publication of results, the government's examinations regulator, announced that in the interests of fairness to past and future cohorts of students, the grades submitted by schools would be moderated by an 'algorithm' which would adjust results so that they were in line with those achieved in previous years. I must admit that when I read the announcement during my summer holiday I did no more than raise an eyebrow. Like everyone else, I had no inkling of the chaos that this quest for fairness was about to unleash.

A-level results for 18 year olds were published in August and within minutes of receiving them it was clear that something had gone very wrong. The algorithm produced a series of unexpected effects upon the results submitted by schools. For example, it was not uncommon to find that students who had been awarded a C grade by their teachers but given the lowest ranking in the subject would find that their grade had been adjusted to U instead. In many cases the past record of schools was factored into the government algorithm, meaning that bright students in disadvantaged areas found that through no fault of their own A+ or A grades awarded by teachers were adjusted to B or C. Many of us remember a Sixth Form student who had lost their university place to read veterinary studies calling a radio phone in and telling the Minister for School Standards 'You have ruined my life. How can this be fair?'

It then emerged that if a student was taught in a small class, as would be the case with many independent schools, the workings of the algorithm meant that it was much less likely that their grade would be adjusted. It felt as if those who were most disadvantaged were most likely to be penalised by what had been put in place. Ironically, in an attempt to create greater fairness the government had put in place a system that actively increased inequity and unfairness.

Thankfully, in the face of an increasing national outcry, the government abandoned the algorithm and reinstated centre assessed grades for all before the results of GCSEs for 16 year olds were published. The impact of all that happened continues to be felt within the English system. Senior civil servants including the head of the examinations regulator resigned and schools are still dealing with a series of complaints and

# WHY EQUITY



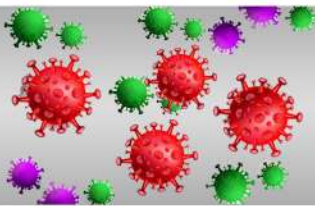
# IS CHALLENGING BUT ESSENTIAL

Freedom of Information requests from those who feel that the grades awarded by teachers were not fair or reasonable.

Was this just a complete mess or is there anything that we can actually learn from all that has happened? I would suggest that the main thing to take away is that achieving equity is not an easy or straightforward thing to do. At all stages, the intentions of everyone involved were honourable and designed to promote greater fairness. However, if equity was an easy thing to achieve we would have made greater progress

towards it a long time ago. That does not mean that we should simply give up, rather that we should re-double our efforts to achieve an outcome that is challenging but hugely desirable. Perhaps above all the events of summer 2020 in England remind us that in the search for worldwide equity in education, the interests of children and young people need to be put front and centre in all that we do.

Dr Peter Kent (ASCL)  
ICP President Elect



## Covid and Equity: lessons learned, and still learning

On March 16 2020 all schools in The Netherlands closed their doors as a result of COVID-19 interventions by the National Government. Students stayed at home - and a new journey of digital education, combined with 'old-school' homeschooling started. School closures lasted until May 10th (8 weeks) for primary and until June 2nd (11 weeks) for secondary schools.

Amsterdam, proud capital of The Netherlands with almost 900 000 inhabitants is the largest city of our country and my place of work. Just three weeks before the schools closed I changed my worklife from being a school principal at a public International School to Executive Board member for a group of 14 schools for Special Education. All our students have special needs in learning. Most have an IQ under 70 preparing for practical education or meaningful daytime activities. Our schools provide singular learning skills and necessary skills for life. What happens to these students in terms of learning when school is not the place they go to every day? Is there any difference to 'regular' students and what lessons did we learn in the past month?

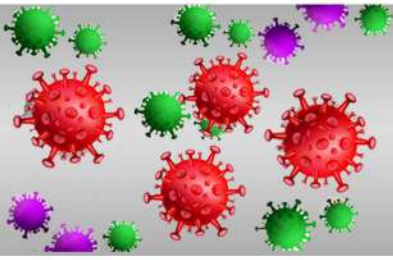
In Amsterdam almost 90 schools for secondary education and over 250 primary schools are responsible for the education of our youth. Fewer than 10 schools are private schools and amongst them there is one international school

a British school and a Japanese school. All other schools are public and run by over 70 different school boards!

Amsterdam is an international city with a lot of expats and immigrants from many nations: 45% of the population has a Dutch origin, 55% are first, second or third generation migrants. With an average income of 30 000 Euro per year Amsterdam achieves a bit over the national average of 36 000 Euro. But, of course - the differences are big. In the centre and south of the city incomes are much higher than in south-east and west. The same is also true for the level of education of parents and access to resources necessary for supporting students' learning.

School boards work together - by law (Appropriate Education-Act) to provide inclusive education, or offer all kinds of support for student with special needs in both 'regular' as well as 'special needs' schools. The main objective - of course - is to achieve equal chances and maximum opportunities for all students.

During our first COVID-19 wave (March-June 2020) school boards in Amsterdam worked very closely with the local government to keep in contact with students and parents to enable them to maintain as good as possible learning. Extra laptops, chromebooks etc. were paid for by the municipality.



# Covid and Equity: lessons learned, and still learning

Schools who were already innovative in digital learning became leaders providing others with examples of online tools, new pedagogical methods to bring the content to students and keep them captivated. Of course differences between schools that already existed prior to COVID became more visible, although most teachers worked hard to bridge that gap.

Traditional challenges on equity are universal: the educational background of parents, family-income, housing and access to resources all impact on students' learning. It was noted that children from a two-parent family with siblings often have an advantage as they have more people who can help them. Of course student ability, character, and general health and well-being also have an impact and seemed to have to become even more important in COVID-times where we spend most of our time at home and students become dependent on all of these factors. Teachers and school leaders do not need to undertake deep research to know that differences will grow and more students will fall behind compared to other students but the numbers will show the full impact of COVID on student achievement.

But there are upsides to point out. Some, and absolutely more than a few, students have benefitted from not being disturbed by classroom rumbles and teachers telling them what to do every few minute. In our culture of 'teaching to the test' is seen as a positive thing, but with a significant drop in the number of tests and the cancellation of the National Exams (only happened once before in 1945), there has been an increase in the number of diploma students and more students entering university in September! Of course it will take a few years to see what will come out of that, I can't wait.

The assumption was that students with learning disabilities would have more trouble staying in contact with their teacher being forced to use Google Classroom, Zoom, Teams and tools like that. However, after making sure all students had access to laptops or PCs, this was not the case. It did lead to interesting, or complicated meetings with parents who had to get acquainted with materials and the way their children are actually learning. In most cases this led to more respect for teachers in general and their child's teacher in particular. Some parents did however question the way schools serve their students' individual needs, especially

homeschooling. In some cases parents were disappointed about what their child had learned and sometimes they were surprised. In all cases parent involvement increased significantly.

## What did we learn from all of this?

### *At First:*

- All teachers and students improved their digital skills - no escape possible! The benefits and the downside of digital learning became clearer.
- There is more room for individual learning, differentiation and new skills. There are often more difficulties in engagement, variation and creativity.
- We learned that students who are not engaged, or not present in classroom situations, are also hard to reach in distance-learning.

### *After returning to school:*

- We saw what we expected - Corona is not good for equity.
- The differences increased although sometimes in unexpected ways.
- Motivation is hard when you are studying alone in your bedroom with no one to give you the right push.

### *Finally:*

- We learned that everything can be resolved in time, but it needs attention and a plan.
- Most schools extended the school year - just take more time to get everything in order.
- Real damage in 'not-getting-all-the-content-in-the-head-of-the-student' is not as important, as we can skip a lot of activities we do at school if we just do not have the time.

Only time will tell what comes out of this experience. The Netherlands schools will not close again. We are at the top of the 'second wave' of COVID, but no-one, really no-one, dares to suggest closing schools again. Students need their teacher - in person - in the classroom but we are using what we've learned. All kinds of 'hybrid education' using technology is becoming normal. What went well we keep on doing, what did not work we take back into the classroom. Maybe this was just the push we needed.

Leendert-Jan Veldhuyzen  
ICP Executive Member

# EDUCATION

# Disrupted



There are numerous well documented examples throughout history of when a global pandemic or seismic event has impacted critically on humanity. Many events have impacted the world with the same ferocity as COVID 19 but poor or non-existent communication systems at the time meant that many were blissfully unaware of what was unfolding. As humans, we possess an innate ability to move on from disaster or trauma to varying degrees but what we don't seem to have is an ability or indeed willingness to truly learn from our experiences and use that learning to influence real change.

As an educator, I am always looking for ways in which learning from our lived experiences can make for better outcomes for children. Yes, there are numerous examples of credible and insightful research papers and documents discussing and addressing the long lasting impact of trauma on not only children but the communities in which they live. Will the impact of COVID 19 teach us more than we already knew about our education systems or will we once again be slaves to rhetoric with little action? Will we once again squander a real opportunity to bring about meaningful change within our education systems globally?

There can be no denying the fact that inequity in education is a global issue that is NOT a new phenomenon. Many of our most learned academics have significant and credible work done in this area. Their work in trying to influence change globally can never be underestimated. If there is to be a positive highlighted by the impact of the current pandemic, it is the renewed spotlight and emphasis on just how inequity continues to have such a profound impact on families and communities. However, unless systems globally are willing to eliminate practices that consistently hinder equity within their own regions/countries, there will be no movement towards a more transformative future for our global citizens. We all know that inequity can be identified through race, gender, socio economic background and disability. There is significant data to support this. In the past, many of us as educators have used this data to influence policy within our own countries/regions using evidence from well documented high functioning systems. No global system holds the magic key or perfect solution. Borrowing from what is perceived to be 'the best', while it can be informative and thought provoking, completely ignores the fact that there is systems where we have the most influence and the best opportunity to make a difference. no perfect system and if it was that easy to develop a bespoke model of excellence it would surely have been achieved by now. There is no question that the answers to inequity lie within our own

individual systems. Of course we can and should collaborate with colleagues globally and learn from our collective experiences but ultimately the real change must come from within our systems where we have the most influence and the best opportunity to make a difference.

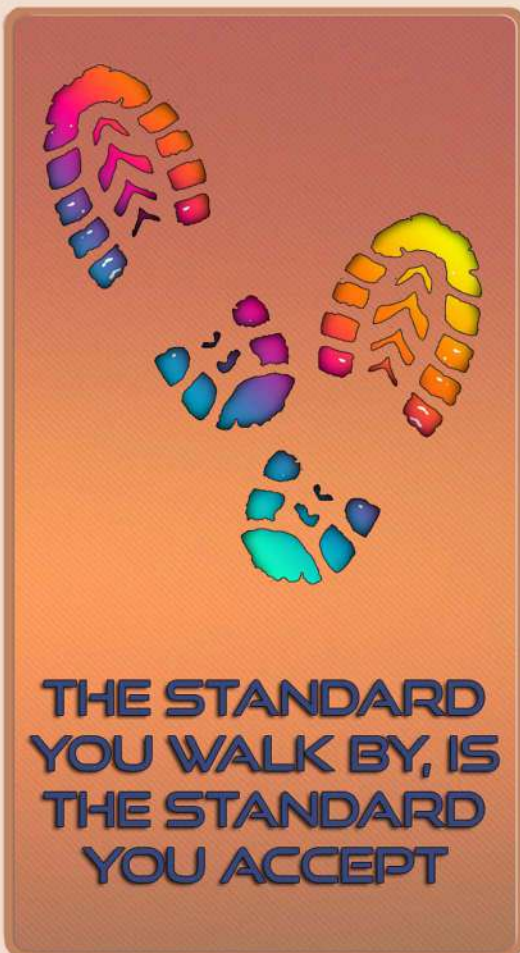
Many years ago, as a particularly naïve and somewhat reluctant newly appointed school leader I was acutely aware of my own working class background and was determined to never lose sight of what and who influenced my journey to principalship. I was blissfully unaware of the term 'inequity' in those early days but I was very aware of its impact having walked that walk! I quickly learned that as a school leader I had the ability and the responsibility to influence outcomes for all the students and teachers in our school and many times I pulled from my own lived experience to understand my pupils, their parents, staff and the whole school community. Now as an older and arguably wiser educator, I understand and appreciate how school leadership can transform school communities and impact positively on education disadvantage and inequity. Never has it been more critical that we support school leadership and strengthen coaching and mentoring available to newly appointed principals. We also need to strengthen professional networking communities both nationally and globally to support school leaders as they navigate their respective journeys. As a somewhat tenacious, wiser retired principal I see how the alignment of government policies in key areas such as housing, health, welfare, child protection and finance can make a real difference in how we tackle inequity. My deeper understanding and awareness of inequity in society has been influenced in no small way through my valued connections with IPPN in Ireland, ICP globally and over many years of working with amazing school leaders and academics. There have been many hours spent debating the merits of an equitable education system resulting in numerous 'flowery' definitions of what equity means or might mean. But ultimately we as educators and influencers need to be willing to commit to what we believe will make a difference for future generations. We can no longer rely on the enormous good will and resilience of our practitioners to continue to do what they have always done. If COVID 19 is teaching us anything it is to be better prepared to respond to the unexpected, to drive forward with meaningful change, to learn lessons from our on going experience and be willing to influence and be promoters of the 'next steps' to ensure investment in better learning outcomes for all our pupils both now and into the future.

Maria Doyle  
Past President IPPN 2015/2017  
Executive Member ICP (European Representative)

# PERSONAL REFLECTION IN

*“The standard you walk by, is the standard you accept.”*

‘The standard you walk by, is the standard you accept...’ a quote that was referenced by Steve Munby in his presentation to the ICP Council. Steve used the quote in reference to Vivien Robinson’s Four things that Effective Leaders do: use our knowledge, solve complex problems, build relational trust and demonstrate virtues. The fourth thing – demonstrate virtues – or the way you live your values – resonated with the work of ICP especially now during the pandemic. As members of a professional association we are guided by values but the bigger question is how do we demonstrate those values through our virtues?



In 2013 Lieutenant General David Morrison AO, (Australian of the Year 2016 used the quote – ‘the standard you walk by, is the standard you accept,’ in reference to some extreme behaviour within the armed services. His point was that by walking by or being a bystander, you are endorsing or normalising a certain behaviour. Morrison was speaking about

about leadership – leaders have the power, the sway or the experience to take a lead, to lead from the front and change unacceptable behaviours, contexts and cultures.

Although this quote was used in relation to workplace conflict, bullying and harassment, in this reflection I use it in relation to how school leaders and education sectors might respond to the tsunami of inequity (Steve Munby) and the widening gap created by the pandemic. Anna Pons also spoke about the inequities that have become more obvious during the pandemic and the data collected by OECD. For me the quote is a conversation starter – ICP members regularly raise issues related to equity but we rarely settle on how ICP can respond to these issues or how we can work together to address the challenges that contribute to the equity gaps. Dealing with equity challenges on a day to day basis is not a new phenomenon for some school leaders. In recent months the ICP has heard so many powerful stories of teachers, principals and communities who have done so much to help students in need of food, shelter, IT equipment, a place to learn and so on, all in response to the impact of the pandemic. But one school leader asked the question – why did we need a pandemic for the global community to respond to homelessness, poverty or starvation and inequity when we have known about it in our country for decades or perhaps forever?

It’s a big question; some may say it’s too big, but it is a question that warrants a response. As a collective the ICP has the potential and perhaps the power to work together to clear the mist and to keep the focus on closing the equity gap both within and across countries. We know that some communities and countries will ‘snap back’ quicker than others. In some context, life may return to something similar to pre-COVID times and in our busy lives we may forget about those who will continue to struggle long after the virus has passed. It is human nature to want things to be how they were but as Steve Munby said – now is the time to review our collective efforts to tackle inequity, after all leadership is a task with humanity at its heart.

So the next time you are confronted by the reality of the equity gap and what it really means in our schools and communities – will you stop or will you walk on by?

Sheree Vertigan AM  
ICP Executive Secretary

# SUPPORTING ALL VICTORIAN STUDENTS COVID-19 AND BEYOND.

2020 has been a year like no other and one that we undoubtedly do not want to endure again. We have experienced a year of prolonged uncertainty and extraordinary challenges that have required us to constantly make adjustments and modifications to what we have typically called business as usual. It has forced us all to reflect on how we lead from within, ensuring that we continue to move in a consistent direction with clarity, while being true to our values and shared vision.

The year has seen educators stretch their talents to guarantee the best care and learning for all students under such adverse circumstances. The disruption to learning started early in March with many parents and carers beginning to keep their children home from school as little was known about COVID-19. The increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Victoria saw students start their Term 1 school holidays earlier than planned and provided time for leaders and their staff to prepare for the introduction of Remote and Flexible Learning (RFL) for Term 2. Students returned to the classroom from June only to pivot back to RFL for the entire third term and part of Term 4. The opportunity in Term 2 to return to face-to-face allowed schools to review the impact of the RFL 1.0 period on students, families and staff and also provided time to undertake a deep reflection of their school's approach to RFL. This proved to have significant benefits, as schools were better prepared for RFL 2.0 and made adjustments to reflect the needs of their students, families and staff.

The question on many of our lips now is 'What will be the new Covid-19 normal for education?' We already know that 2021 School Annual Implementation Plans continue to be amended to allow schools to focus on three priorities:

1. Learning catch-up and extension
2. Happy, active and healthy kids
3. Connected schools.

We know that some of our students have thrived in the RFL environment, others have maintained their learning progress and some have fallen behind despite the best efforts of their teachers and families. It is imperative that we all work together to support both those who need catch-up and those who thrived to continue their learning. We also need to support the cohorts who were most affected by the lack of usual transition and establishment practices in 2020 to ensure successful transitions through their schooling and beyond.

It is vital that we continue to address the issue faced by some of our students who experienced a less than perfect learning experience during RFL. Early research indicated that the greater barriers faced by students from disadvantaged schools did not diminish or disappear during RFL and these students had

higher absences. Factors impacting on these students include:

- Limited or no availability and access to IT equipment, internet connectivity and technical support.
- Lower levels of English.
- Poor home-learning environments.
- Specific health and wellbeing needs but unable to access the necessary support.
- Access to teachers with adequate skill to manage the requirements of RFL.
- Supporting out vulnerable cohorts including those in out of home care, students with a disability, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders and disengaged students.
- Parent and carer engagement, capability and capacity to provide support.

Whilst the Victorian system made many adaptations to support our most vulnerable during the RFL period with prioritise access to devices and internet, the option for students to attend on-site when required and access to quality online learning tools and activities, the experience has still yielded less than positive outcomes for some students.

To address this, the Victorian government has announced an extraordinary \$250 million spend on additional support for the 2021 school year to support student learning through tutoring. This is the largest spend of its kind and is very much welcomed by all. This funding has the potential to deploy an additional 4100 tutors across Victorian schools and provide additional support to 200,000 students. Schools will determine how tutoring support is best implemented in their school. The tutors will provide targeted teaching to students, with a focus on literacy and numeracy as these are the foundational skills.

We are still navigating our course through this unpredictable period in our lives, but what we do know, is that Victorian school leaders have been remarkable. Each leader approached this period of time with the best intentions in mind for their students and school communities. While RFL may have varied from school to school, the form it took was a decision made to reflect the particular context and circumstances of each school. School leaders have worked tirelessly for their school communities and staff to provide a sense of calm whilst preserving a clear focus on wellbeing and learning. Whatever the new normal brings, school leaders know that they are flexible and can pirouette as required to face the next challenge head on. Congratulations Victorian Government school leaders, the education community applauds your work, effort and tenacity!

Anne-Maree Kliman  
President  
Victorian Principals Association



# School feeding programme in Cape Town, South Africa during COVID-19

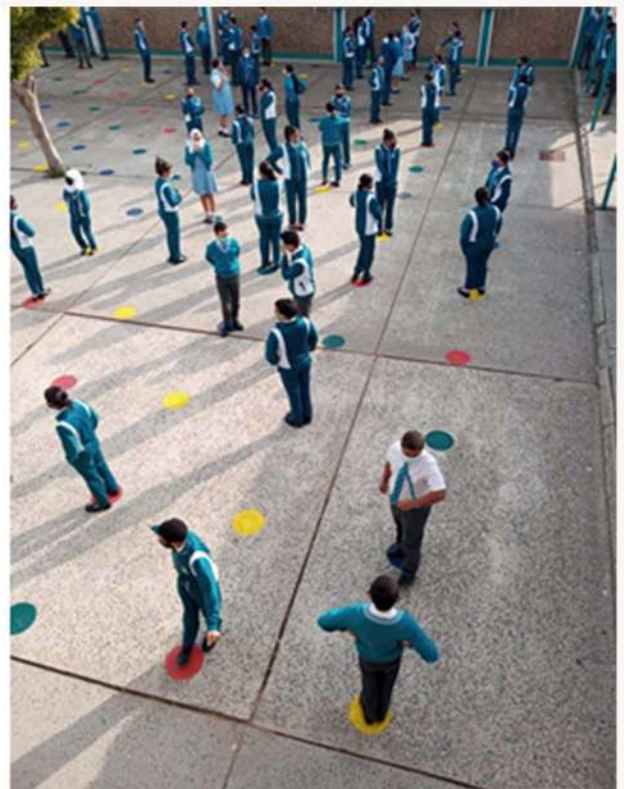
The year 2020 had us all thinking about 2020 vision and every school had their specific vision planned for 2020, but then COVID-19 happened and everyone had to change their vision.

I am the Principal of a lovely primary school in Cape Town, South Africa, namely St Anne's RC Primary School. As in other countries schools are divided into districts as this helps with planning in a broader spectrum. In our district we have some schools that form part of the National School Feeding Scheme (NSFS) this feeding programme is funded by Government and provides meals to learners from under privileged communities. Staff and volunteers prepare and distribute these meals at their respective schools throughout the year.

During the national lockdown in our country the need to continue with the feeding programme was identified as many of our children depend on the meals provided by the school daily. These practices had to take place under strict conditions and protocols. These protocols were mapped out clearly to the school leadership by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

Principals and teachers of schools that form part of the NSFS were issued with permits to travel during the national lockdown in order to continue to provide these services from their respective schools, to the learners in our under privileged communities. Teachers used this opportunity to distribute subject workbooks to the learners that could be completed while they were at home during lockdown.

Bronwyn Fisher  
SAPA Western Cape – President



# EQUITY CHALLENGES MUNI GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL FACED/CONTINUES TO FACE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Muni Girls' Secondary School is a Government Aided Secondary School founded by Anglican Church of Uganda in Madi and West Nile Diocese in 1983 in the Arua District. It became grant-aided in 1984 as a Grade One School with the Code 020096 and UNEB Centre Number U0420.

**Location:** 7 Kilometers away from Arua City on Kampala High way in the Muni village Oluko Division.

**Vision:** Educate Self-Reliant and God Fearing Girl-Child.

**Mission Statement:** Provide Quality Education and Instill Fear of God for the Empowerment of the Girl Child to Face the Challenges of a Dynamic Society.

**Motto:** "I Will Try Come What May".

**Population:** 613 students with 90 staff members and offers both Sciences



The school is not a beneficiary of free education program of government. The Government only pays its appointees and the parents are responsible for the wages of its staff not Government appointed.

*Equity Challenges* refers to a difficult situation that tests somebody's ability and skills in life under which every actor receives equal treatment.

Due to the lockdown occasioned by Covid-19 from 20th March 2020 it started facing challenges.

- Negatively Covid-19 led to loss of revenue due to student's absence which has rendered it impossible to fulfill our loan obligations.
- It suspended payments of utility bills and wages to its locally recruited staff. It had no other income generating projects.
- Public relations became a very big problem.
- Some staff were suspended.
- Development projects were halted.
- Management was concerned about the student's safety from pregnancy and elopement at their various homes and feared to lose their teachers to other livelihoods.
- For the first time in the history of the school, the staff not on government payment were paid using dry ration. There remains huge unpaid suppliers' debts.
- Huge fee arrears remain unclaimed leaving the school bankrupt.

*However, there were also some positive impacts of the lockdown;*

- My staff and learners adopted the new e-learning methods of teaching using Telegram and meeting through zoom as means of collaboration.
- They resorted to farming as an alternative means of livelihood.
- Family re-union and cohesion was experienced making parents get to know their children better.
- We learnt to live within our means.

Surprisingly when candidates were called to resume studies for their Second Term on 15th October 2020, the girls reported back very fast at a 98% rate in the first week, showing holiday fatigue and were ready to study.

In a nutshell, equity challenges my school faced became an opportunity to learn from how to survive in good and bad times. This will never be forgotten in our lives.

I would wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the ICP Executive for the golden opportunity of entrusting me to share the schools experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. May God continue to use you in his service.

"For God and My Country".

MS. DRARU GRACE MANASEH  
HEADMISTRESS.



# ICP Council Synthesis of presenters' contributions by Steve Munby

## Steve Munby: Imperfect Leadership in a time of Crisis and Uncertainty

- We should be proud to be 'imperfect leaders' rather than try to be 'perfect leaders'.
- If we try to be perfect, then we will make ourselves physically and mentally ill and we won't distribute or empower teams.
- If we try to be perfect, we will not encourage others to step up into leadership – we will put them off because they will think that they have to be perfect.
- In times of crisis it is especially important not to think that you know it all.
- Imperfect leaders know they don't know it all in times of crisis and uncertainty
- They focus on leadership as a service – it's not all about them
- They show up and walk into the wind, even if they may need some help
- They ask for help, internally and externally – building trust and collective responsibility
- They are decisive, but review and then admit mistakes. Sorry isn't the hardest word.
- They deal with the urgent but give space for the strategic
- They lead with empathy and authenticity and do the right thing – they know that everyone is fighting a hard battle.

## Sylvia Scuracchio – Sao Paulo, Brazil

*5 Principles to Guide Adaptive Leadership (based on a Harvard Business Review):*

- Ensure evidence-based learning and adaption
- Stress-test underlying theories, assumptions and beliefs
- Streamline deliberate decision-making
- Strengthen transparency, inclusion and accountability
- Mobilise collection action

In Sylvia's school in Sao Paulo they have used these principles to enable teachers to feel more motivated, empowered and confident about the use of technology to support learning and have developed a highly collaborative culture in the school.

## Pasi Sahlberg: Social Isolation, Relationships and the Power of Play

### 1. *The State of Play*

- Play can help children to overcome loneliness and social disconnection
- But children play less than they used to
- Many systems have increased their hours of schooling and reduced the amount of time for play

### 2. *The Power of Play*

- Play can support physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.
- Doctors recommend more play.
- Play can help communication, negotiation and co-operation

### 3. *Learning through Play*

- Play can help to re-build connections and relationships
- Play can enhance well-being and health
- Play can help us learn to cope with uncertainty.
- We need to consider a range of context-specific ways to build more play into the curriculum for all ages.



# ICP Council Synthesis of presenters' contributions (Continued)

## Anna Pons Equity Challenges for School Leaders During and After Covid-19

- Inequity is already very significant and Covid-19 will make it worse*
  - Fewer children in developing countries have access to a quiet place to work from home or access to the internet
  - 1 in 5 children across OECD do not have access to a computer
  - The economic impact of Covid-19 will be worse for disadvantaged children
  - Learning loss will be combined with loneliness and mental health issues for young people.
- Extraordinary actions are being taken by schools and systems to overcome the inequity challenges:*
  - Improving connectivity
  - Improving training for teachers on use of technology and blended learning
  - Online learning platforms
  - Free access to devices
  - Use of radio and TV where internet was not freely accessible.
- The professionalism of school leaders and teachers is more important than ever*
  - Prescriptive and top-down approaches are likely to fail
  - The front line is the best place for decisions to be made
  - We need to help leaders and teachers to find solutions that work in their context
  - If teachers are more confident about using ICT then their students are more likely to be empowered and supported on the use of ICT
  - Exciting prospect of using technology to build a giant open source community where teachers and leaders can teach each other, exchange ideas and learn from each other.
- The three most promising innovations are:*
  - Creating emotional safe spaces and building resilience
  - Tackling learning gaps
  - Building classrooms for the future
- Teachers and principals collaborating with other principals and teachers is the key system issue*

It is more important than ever for novice teachers and novice leaders to have mentors, especially since many work in the more challenging schools.

CLASSROOMS FOR THE FUTURE

INNOVATIONS

EMOTIONAL SAFE SPACES

RESILIENCE

MIND THE LEARNING GAPS



# ICP Council Synthesis of presenters' contributions (Continued)

## Emosi Kuli Kalouwarai-President of Fiji Principals Association

There are very significant challenges in remote areas, even without the added difficulties caused by Covid-19, eg:

- a) inconsistent water supply
  - b) lack of internet connectivity
  - c) attracting good teachers to remote areas.
- The challenges provided by Covid-19 are significant even for schools in cities – new procedures for social distancing, emergency planning, school assemblies, use of ICT.
  - Professional development of leaders is vital. It has never been more important for school leaders to collaborate at local level, at national level, and through ICP, at international level.

## Four Common Themes from the Council Meeting

### 1. *The importance of Collaboration*

- Within schools (distributed leadership, developing collective responsibility, empowering teachers)
- Between schools at local level. Every child matters. Supporting each other. Community engagement. From Fishbowl to the Lake.
- Between schools at national and international level. Professional Development. Open Source Community Learning. The Role of ICP.

### 2. *The importance of Professionalism*

- Empowering front-line professionals to make decisions that are right for their context.
- Supporting school leaders and teachers (especially those who are teaching in remote and challenging areas) through mentoring and professional support.
- School leaders need to be involved in policy development – top-down prescriptive approaches don't work.
- It is not a sign of weakness to ask for help.

### 3. *The importance of adjusting our leadership to fit our changing context*

- Adaptive Leadership – adapting our leadership to the changing context
- Developing the confidence and expertise of teachers in ICT and in the role of play so that students can be more empowered.
- Leadership as Service. Putting the needs of children and the community first. Un-learning old habits. Asking ourselves, kind of leadership is needed from us now?

### 4. *The importance of renewing our collective efforts to tackle inequity and to do the right thing.*

- Some fabulous examples of how schools and whole systems have been pro-active in addressing the equity challenges during Covid-19.
- The importance of addressing both the learning and the social/emotional aspects of inequity. Being willing to do things differently.
- 'The stands we walk past are the standards we accept' – Steve Munby. We will not walk past these challenges. We should stand together to make sure we build something. We should stand together to make sure we build something

The last slide used by Steve was based on a greeting that the Masai warriors sometimes use when they greet each other. Sometimes they don't say hello, they say Kasserian Ingera, which means how goes it with our children, because they believe that unless it's going well with our children, it's not going well with the whole community. They don't know how it goes with your children. They say, how goes it with our children. Steve believes that this was the most important message of the day that we as leaders in our schools and systems should always be asking ourselves 'how goes it with our children?'





# Final Report 2020 ICP Council Meeting



## Final Report 2020 ICP Council Meeting

Report prepared by GEMS

### Delegate Attendance Snapshot

Registered	160
Live	75
Recorded	78
Successful login to the platform	142
Users of the meeting hub	21
Attendees exporting contacts	6
Attendees exporting Notes	17
Updated Profile on Platform	95
Number of help requests	23

### Session Attendance Snapshot

Session Name	Presenter	Live Attendance	Watched Recording
AGM	Committee	23	6
Presidents Welcome	Alta Van Heerden	42	77
2021 ICP Convention	Nancy Brady	40	17
Imperfect leadership in times of crisis and uncertainty	Steve Munby	55	63
Virgin Pulse	Jay Boudou	42	26
Equity Challenges for Leadership	Anna Pons	57	33
Member Snapshot Adaptive leadership	Silvia Scuracchio	40	29
Social Isolation	Pasi Sahlberg	47	32
Member Snapshot Fiji	Emosi Kuli	28	36
Synthesis	Steve Munby and Alta Van Heerden	27	37



# Final Report 2020 ICP Council Meeting (Continued)

## Social Function Attendance

Session Name	Session Duration	Live Attendance	Conversation Groups
Online Meet and Greet	60 minutes	57	70
Get in touch with your peers	30 minutes	23	11
Meet with your peers	30 minutes	26	21
Post Council Networking	60 minutes	26	15

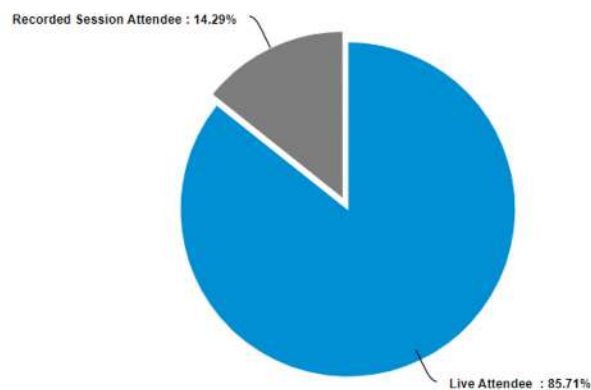
## Resource Gallery Views

Resource	Number of Views
2021 ICP Convention Registration	18
2021 ICP Convention Welcome	23
EDUMAG	14
Find out More about ICP	11
ICP MAG - Adaptive leadership	19
Learn About VP GO	8
New findings reveal massive impact of COVID for children and young people in Victoria	8
ONLINE TEACHING IN INDIAN SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19 TIMES	9
View From My Window	19
Welcome to Durban South Africa	10

## Survey Results



### How did you watch the Council Meeting?

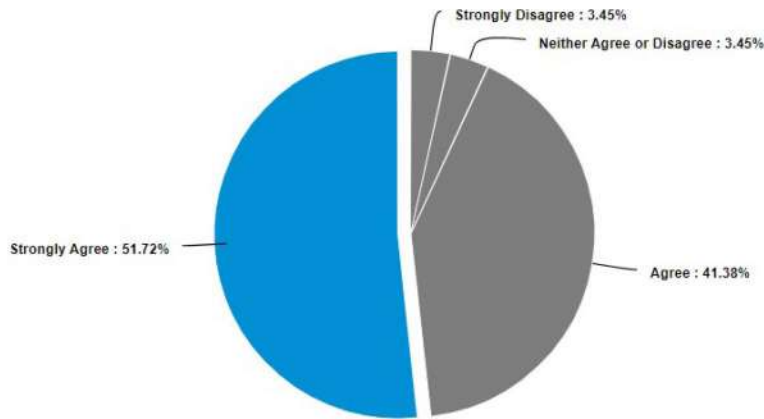


Answer	Count	Percentage
Live Attendee	24	85.71%
Recorded Session Attendee	4	14.29%
Total	28	100.00%



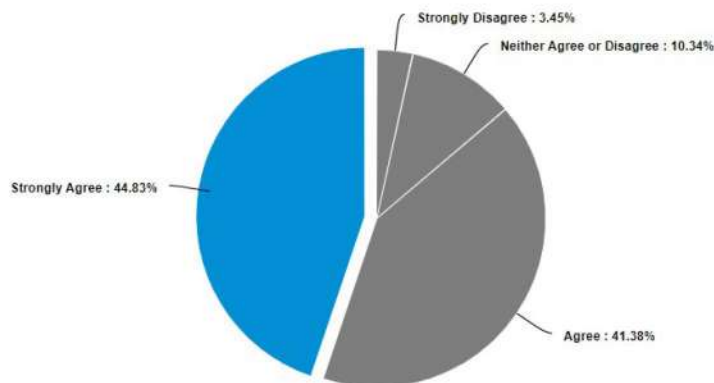
# Final Report 2020 ICP Council Meeting (Continued)

## The topics covered were relevant to my work



Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	3.45%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	3.45%
Agree	12	41.38%
Strongly Agree	15	51.72%
Total	29	100.00%

## My needs and expectations were met by the Council Meeting

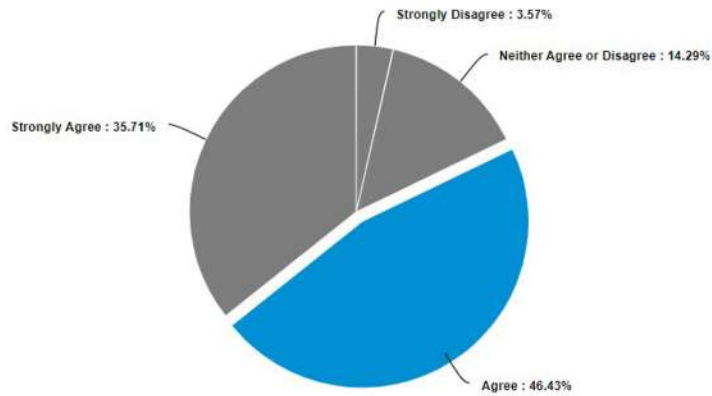


Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	3.45%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	10.34%
Agree	12	41.38%
Strongly Agree	13	44.83%
Total	29	100.00%



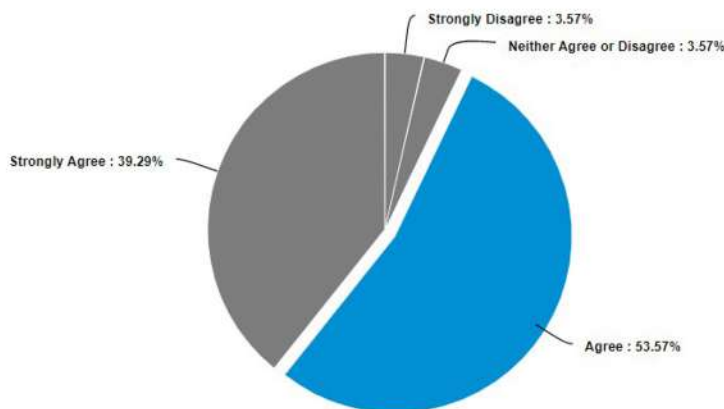
# Final Report 2020 ICP Council Meeting (Continued)

**There was sufficient opportunity to ask questions**



Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	3.57%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	14.29%
Agree	13	46.43%
Strongly Agree	10	35.71%
Total	28	100.00%

**The information covered was presented in sufficient detail**

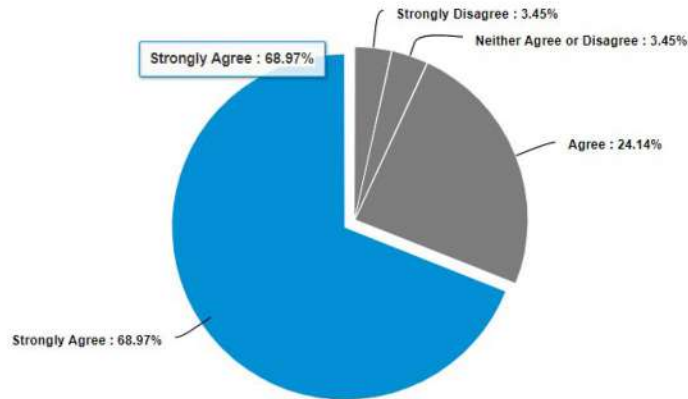


Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	3.57%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	3.57%
Agree	15	53.57%
Strongly Agree	11	39.29%
Total	28	100.00%



# Final Report 2020 ICP Council Meeting (Continued)

## The Meeting was well structured and logically presented



Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	3.45%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	3.45%
Agree	7	24.14%
Strongly Agree	20	68.97%
Total	29	100.00%

## Summary of Responses to Survey Questions

(Full report will be sent to delegates)

### 1. Do you have any comments about the Council Meeting Content?

The comments were mostly positive, with delegates expressing their appreciation to the ICP Executive for a well-organised event. Delegates found the content relevant, enjoyable and informative.

### 2. Do you have any comments about the Virtual Event Platform?

The following comment by a delegate sums up the comments of everyone, who responded:  
'Fabulous platform with very easy to use interface. My first time ever using OnAir but I would recommend it to others.'

### 3. Please indicate which session/ speaker was most valuable to you and why?

Delegates found great value in all the presentations, but Steve Munby's presentation on Imperfect Leadership resonated with delegates.

### 4. What future ICP topics would be of value to you?

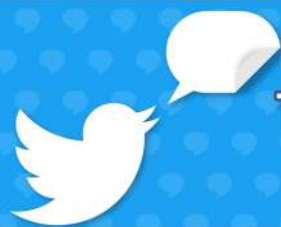
A wide array of topics was mentioned.

### 5. Do you have any feedback about the Meeting Organisers – GEMS Event Management Australia?

Very complementary comments were received. The following comment sums them up:

'What an amazingly professional team! You obviously possess very advanced skills. Jess has this very calm demeanour which makes one trust her immediately.'





## The ICP Council through the lens of twitter


ICP @ICPConnect


September 30, 2020


### Snapshot of ICP online Council 2020

Key moments from our first online Council






Photo via @ICPConnect

-  **ICP** @ICPConnect · 29 Sep






ICP invites leaders worldwide to join us to hear [@steve\\_munby](#) [@pasi\\_sahlberg](#) [@OECEduSkills](#) [#ICPcouncil2020](#)  
[instagr.am/p/CFurFFgH325/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CFurFFgH325/)
-  **Oulu University Teacher Training School** @unioulutts · 30 Sep

The International Confederation of Principals has the 30th anniversary. Congratulations [@ICPConnect](#)! The [#ICPCouncil2020](#)-meeting is about to begin. Thank you for organising. We are excited to learn more about the theme of Adaptive Leadership. [#educationprofessionals](#)
-  **ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep






A time of crisis calls for servant leadership [@steve\\_munby](#) [#ICPcouncil2020](#)

  2  1 
-  **Gavin Keller** @gavinkeller · 30 Sep





[@ICPConnect](#) "Schools leaders must show up and walk into the wind". Steve Mundy. [@kellerthinking](#)

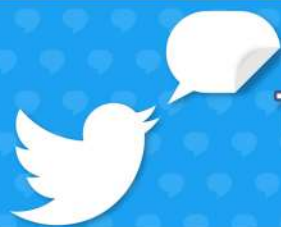
  1  1 
-  **ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep

Deal with urgent but leave some space for strategic [@steve\\_munby](#) [#ICPcouncil2020](#)

  1  2 
-  **ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep

[@OECEduSkills](#) we have an opportunity to use the current disruption to create a future with a 'silver learning'. [#ICPcouncil2020](#)



## The ICP Council through the lens of twitter

**ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep  
@OECDeduSkills 'these extraordinary times require collaboration with our colleagues' - highlights crucial role of @ICPConnect #ICPcouncil2020

1 retweet 1 like

**ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep  
@pasi\_sahlberg shares powerful video from Sir Ken Robinson 'play is not a waste of time' #ICPcouncil2020

1 like

**ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep  
@pasi\_sahlberg 80% of parents in USA believe that children are under pressure to grow up too quickly #ICPcouncil2020

**Pasi Sahlberg** @pasi\_sahlberg · 30 Sep  
Great pleasure to keynote at the @ICPConnect 2020 Council Meeting today. Thanks for your questions, my slide deck is here for you: [pasisahlberg.com/presentations-...](https://pasisahlberg.com/presentations-...) #ICPcouncil2020 @Gonskilnstitute

1 comment 6 retweets 23 likes

**Sheree Vertigan AM** @ShereeVertigan · 30 Sep  
Some very powerful messages delivered by @pasi\_sahlberg - we need to change people's thinking about play and how important it is to student development- perhaps play will be a feature of reimagined education #ICPcouncil2020 @ICPConnect

**steve munby** @steve\_munby · 30 Sep  
Replying to @pasi\_sahlberg, @ICPConnect and @Gonskilnstitute  
Great to watch your speech Pasi. An important message.

1 retweet 1 like



## The ICP Council through the lens of twitter



**ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep

@steve\_munby top down does not work- it is a good thing to ask for help##ICPcouncil2020



**ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep

@steve\_munby need to un learn old habits- instead ask what is needed I now? #ICPcouncil2020



**ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep

@steve\_munby the standards we walk past are the standards we accept: we cannot walk past inequality #ICPcouncil2020



**ICP** @ICPConnect · 30 Sep

@ICPConnect President Alta van Heerden now closing a wonderful and inspirational online Council. Particular thanks to @steve\_munby @pasi\_sahlberg @OECDeduSkills #ICPcouncil2020



## Innovative school responses in the Covid-19 context

Schools are playing a frontline role in the world's efforts to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers, school leaders, educators have responded in innovative ways to serve their students and their communities. Identifying and leveraging these innovations is key to:

- Supporting other teachers who are facing similar changes and challenges around the globe.
- Shaping society's efforts to build stronger classrooms for the future.
- Recognising the unwavering dedication and commitment of the profession.

The OECD invites partners to join a campaign to support schools to have their innovations heard at a global scale and to foster a cross-country dialogue around rebuilding education out of these challenging and testing times.

### Crowdsourcing school innovations

From **16 November 2020** to **15 February 2021**, teachers, teacher educators and school leaders can upload a two-minute video to share their insights on three important questions:

- **What innovations in your teaching are you most proud of?**
- **What new forms of collaboration with your peers have been most helpful?**
- **What have you learnt and what will your teaching look like in the future?**

### Identifying and leveraging the most promising innovations

The international teaching community will be able to watch and engage with videos through the OECD's [Global Teaching InSights](#) platform. Alongside an international panel, teachers will also be able to identify the innovations that can have a long-lasting impact at scale.

A series of global events and opportunities will bring together teachers, school leaders, policymakers and researchers to discuss the leading ideas and innovations of these videos and what they mean for education going forward.

Please contact us at [globalteachinginsights@oecd.org](mailto:globalteachinginsights@oecd.org) to find out more about collaborating.



# PRINCIPALS' WORK IN AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

AMANDA HEFFERNAN (MONASH UNIVERSITY)  
ANDREW PIERPOINT (AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION)

The Australian Secondary Principals' Association partnered with Dr Amanda Heffernan from Monash University to investigate the current issues facing secondary school in Australia's public schools. We wanted to better understand principals' work today, with a focus on how policies of autonomy and accountability were impacting on principals' work around the country. The project findings highlighted issues of concern relating to principals' workloads and wellbeing in particular, as well as their ability to focus on what they saw as their core business – 'giving the gift of education to young people' (in the words of one participant). In this article, we share some key findings of the project and share the questions they raise for us about the future of principals' work, and Australian schooling more broadly.

## The Role of the Principal

A consistent theme running through the findings of the study was that the role of the principal is continuing to grow in complexity and breadth. Participants spoke about their rising workloads, and the ways they have picked up new responsibilities, been tasked with additional accountabilities, and taken up oversight of community services that other departments might have been responsible for in the past (most notably, health and wellbeing of students, staff, and communities).

We saw evidence of work extension (into traditionally 'personal' time) and intensification (increasing in pace and intensity), due to the sheer amount of work the breadth of focus for principals in the study. This holds implications for principals' personal lives and their own health and wellbeing. While these issues are not new, the intensity, and the complexity of the issues being faced by schools and principals is at a critical point. Principals are continually being asked to do more, with less resourcing, funding, and support.

Participants spoke most about the significant amount of administrative workload involved in leading schools today, which was described as a threat to being able to focus on leading the school, and being able to (in the words of one principal) 'give the gift of education to young people'.

## Principals' Workload

Principal health and wellbeing is of critical concern. Evidence from the study shows that many principals are reaching a breaking point, with multiple participants describing that they did not see themselves as being able to maintain the pace, intensity, and emotionally demanding work involved in leading schools.

Principals described their commitment to ensuring their students and staff were adequately supported. One issue of great concern is the number of reports we heard of middle leaders. (e.g., Deputy or Assistant Principals, Heads of Department and Heads of Curriculum) and aspiring leaders seeing the effects of the Principalship and questioning whether they wanted to take on the workload involved in leading a school. Given that we are already seeing shortages of applicants to lead and teach in hard-to-staff schools, this holds significant implications for equity and access to high-quality education for all students.

We also think it is important to raise concerns about equity implications for leaders themselves, who largely entered the Principalship to make a difference for young people. They keep working through challenging circumstances to make a difference for their communities and to ensure their students and staff are supported to address the challenges that arise every day. We completed this study in early 2020 and have been reminded each day over the past year just how significant and wide-ranging the work of school leaders is. Principals have responded to the COVID-19 crisis with creativity, tenacity, and empathy. We have seen principals respond to multiple shifts to and from remote learning, leading their communities through an exceptionally difficult year, and ensuring that students were engaging in high-quality schooling regardless of where they were learning from. We believe it is paramount that their own wellbeing is recognised as critically important and that they are supported and nurtured to thrive.

## Implications for Equity and Schooling

The findings of this study hold important implications regarding issues of equity, and the purpose of schooling more broadly.

Of critical concern is the sustainability of the Principalship, and the wellbeing of school leaders. Australia, like many other countries around the world, is pursuing a 'school improvement' agenda, and the work of principals has been



# PRINCIPALS' WORK IN AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

AMANDA HEFFERNAN (MONASH UNIVERSITY)  
ANDREW PIERPOINT (AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION)

shown to be a fundamental pillar for long-term improvement of student outcomes. If principals are being pulled in multiple directions and affected by heavy workloads focused on administrivia, their ability to focus on leading for sustained and meaningful improvement will naturally be hindered.

Australia's principals hold many years of experience, knowledge from formal and informal study and professional learning, expertise and dedication. The pursuit of school improvement would be strengthened by supporting principals to draw on their expertise and experience, as well as their networks and supports, to make decisions that best meet their local community's needs.

## Where to from here?

Our research raised concerns regarding attracting, supporting, and retaining principals in Australian schools. In 2021, we are beginning a research project that focuses on issues of who chooses to be a principal and why, as well as how they can be better supported to remain in the Principalship. These are critical elements of understanding how we can address issues of attraction and retention, as well as how we can ensure that every principal is supported appropriately to be able to do their vital work.

## More about the authors

### Andrew Pierpoint

Andrew Pierpoint is currently the President of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association, the peak body for School Leaders across Australia. He previously was President of the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association for four years.

Andrew has had extensive experience, over 35 years, in High Schools as a science teacher, Head of Department (Science), Deputy Principal and Principal as well as having several system positions in the support of Principals. Throughout his career, Andrew has worked in complex rural and remote communities through to large

regional and metropolitan schools. He has led communities and reference groups at district, regional, state and national levels.

Andrew's special interests are the provision of high quality professional learning for school leaders, school leader wellbeing and is personally highly active in school sport – particularly cricket and golf.

Andrew has demonstrated a passion for State education in Queensland for many years and possess an excellent understanding of the Principalship from first hand experience. Most importantly, Andrew has a genuine desire to make a meaningful difference for school leaders in the application of their ever increasing, complex roles in schools and the broader communities they work in.



Andrew Pierpoint

### Dr Amanda Heffernan



Dr Amanda Heffernan

Dr Amanda Heffernan is an expert in educational leadership in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. Her research focuses on the contemporary challenges of principals' work, and what that means for how we can better attract, support, and keep school leaders within the profession. She has a particular interest in leadership in complex school settings, including those in rural and remote areas, and the skills and knowledges that are needed to successfully lead those schools.

Amanda is a former public-school principal who now works with future and current leaders, policymakers, and international researchers to highlight the important and complex work of educational leadership today. She is an award-winning researcher and public speaker.



@chalkhands.



## ESWATINI PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION (EPA) ELECTIVE CONFERENCE

On the 23rd of October 2020, EPA prepared for an elective conference which was postponed from June 2020 because of the lockdown due to Covid-19. On this day the elective conference committee was introduced by the EPA President. EPA is going to polls in January 2020 to elect the Executive members for the new term of office.



EPA President Mr Welcome Mhlanga introducing the Elective Conference Committee

This was followed by the year-end meeting of the present executive members who are led by the EPA President Mr Welcome Mhlanga.



# The Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) in Ghana, hosted the 58th Annual National Conference, 25 October - to 1 November 2020 at Wesley Girls' High School, Cape Coast.

The Conference theme was: “The Role of Stakeholders in Ensuring Quality Education in the face of the Covid -19 pandemic.”

The National CHASS President, Alhaj Yakub Abubakar with his executive team took a courageous decision against all odds to host and gather all Headmasters from the Republic of Ghana to discuss critical issues facing education in the country. The Conference was officially opened by the National President of the Republic of Ghana, on Wednesday, the 28th of October 2020.

Conscious of the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on combating the spread of the Corona Virus (Covid -19), the conference organisers ensured that all delegates were wearing their masks, sanitising and observing social distancing.

CHASS delegates pride themselves with their cultural apparel which separates them from the rest. On each of the eight days of conference members were seen in different colourful garbs. CHASS members enjoyed listening to different speakers who covered among others, the following topics: Stress Management, Financial Administration in Schools, School and Community Relationships, School Heads and staff relationships.

CHASS enjoyed the support of the National Education officials, including the Director General who attended the conference with his staff to interact with heads of schools from around the country. The conference was a great success.



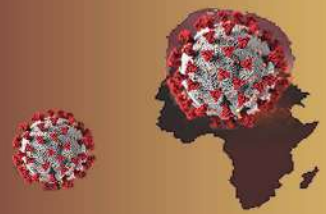
CHASS members in their colourful cultural apparels at the 58th CHASS National Annual Conference in October 2020







# The Effect of the Pandemic on Education in Africa



The Covid-19 pandemic led to the closure of schools across the African Continent in the fight to disconnect the infection chain. A few countries like Tanzania did not close at all but very little is known about the effect of the pandemic in this country. Most countries across Africa resorted to online teaching and learning, but this was not very effective as some of the learners in the remote parts of the countries could not be reached let alone afford the cost of internet connectivity. It is evident that African Countries must invest in ICT infrastructure to enable teachers to integrate the use of technology in the teaching and learning processes.

The majority of African countries decided to go for a phased re-opening of schools, targeting the candidate class to enable them to complete the curriculum and sit for their final examination. Ghana and Nigeria opened in July and the candidates have already done their final examination. Malawi opened in September and Kenya opened in October and the examination classes will take their final examinations in March 2021, for Kenya.

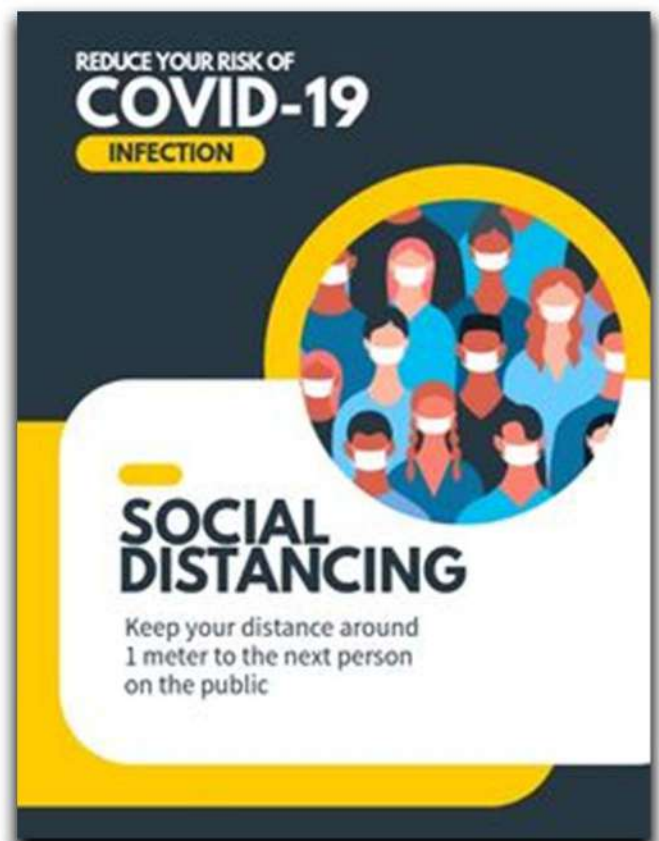
What is clear is that the emphasis on high stakes examinations in Africa made it difficult for learners to transition from one level to the next. Education systems in Africa must reimagine the assessment process to include a greater emphasis on formative assessments rather than allowing summative assessments to take the centre stage. In the current situation in Education in Africa, the issue of students transitioning to the next class appears to be a pipe dream. In the Kingdom of Eswatini classes resumed using the phased-in model, but not all students have returned to school apart from the candidate class. Currently a few countries like Ghana are recording a drop in the infection of COVID-19, however in Kenya the infection rate indicate an upwards trajectory, making it difficult to confidently ask other classes to return to school. Amid all these challenges, school leaders have continued to share their best practices in the management of schools amid COVID-19 pandemic:

- Ghana held its 58th Annual Conference with the theme "The Role of Stakeholders in Engineering Quality Education in the Face of COVID-19 Pandemic" on the 25th of October to the 1st of November 2020. The of October to coincide with World Teachers' Day to honour its teachers.
- Principals in the Kingdom of Eswatini held its Election Conference on the 23rd of October, to elect the officials, who will serve the Association going forward.

- Nigeria announced the increase of the retirement age from 60 to 65 during the World Teachers Day.
- Members of the ACP participated in the Launch of the EL Africa magazine on Saturday, 31 October. The event celebrated the launch of Educational Leadership Africa (EL Africa) magazine and discussed among other topics the importance of strong school leadership, growth mindset, the impact of COVID-19 and lessons learned and the importance of Technology in Education. Members, who participated as presenters at the virtual launch event included Mr. David de Korte, Principal of Camps Bay High School and President of South African Principals Association (SAPA), Mr. James Onyait, Principal of Nebbi Town Secondary School, West Nile, Uganda and myself.

The African Confederation of Principals' Conference, which was scheduled for August 2020 was postponed to February 2021. We look forward to another successful event for Africa.

Indimuli Kahi  
President ACP and KESSHA



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