

A message from Kevan Goodworth – June 2019

ACSSO President and Chair



Advocacy and equity

For many years we have been proud to be an advocacy group in all matters relating to public education, the essential equity that it provides, or should provide, and the benefits that flow to families and thence to the community at large.

The field of advocacy is huge, and the issues are many of course, and we are an entity largely comprised of volunteers and often occupied with matters in our own jurisdictions where we also contribute.

While funding is always significant to what we can meaningfully achieve, and to what we can adequately research and provide meaningful advice around, it is nevertheless imperative that ACSSO develops and refines policies around the key educational domains.

What's our why?

I constantly remind myself of the Simon Sinek model of placing our *why* at the centre of what we do.

I would strongly suggest that the answer to the question of ACSSO's reason for existence is to provide a national voice to the imperative of family engagement in our children's education. Where family engagement is understood, valued, and practised, children's potential has a far greater chance of realisation.

If the pursuit of equity for all the nation's children is a core value, then family engagement, to follow Sinek's model, needs to become a *how?* To quote the adage, *A vision without a plan is merely a dream.*

Reference groups

ACSSO's board has put a great deal of thought and effort into developing a model whereby we determine some of the key areas of educational practice and invite interested persons from around the nation to contribute to the conversation.

To date these include the development of reference groups around:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
- Funding for our schools
- Rural, Regional and Remote Education
- Additional educational needs
- Early Childhood
- Student Wellbeing
- Information Communication Technology.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it certainly provides us with a meaningful beginning.

Just as importantly for me, it provides the opportunity for real and distributed leadership, where we can glean thoughtful advice and perspectives from individuals with knowledge and informed perspectives around key themes.

Rich conversations

The results of rich conversations around substantive issues always lead to the development of position statements and arguments for informed advocacy that are mature and informed. These can be taken to government with confidence. Nor are we alone in this enterprise.

I continue to have conversations with numerous agencies, and professional associations who are keen to share the enterprise, and these certainly include principals' associations and unions.

There can be no substantive family engagement, no addressing the key domains and issues, without what I choose to call an "equity alliance" of those with similar and strongly held values that every child in our nation deserves every chance.

This is the reason that we will continue to seek a broad alliance of all those kindred associations and agencies with a passion for the merits of public education system.

Kevan Goodworth

President and Chair

Australian Council of State School Organisations

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