

A message from ACSSO Chair Sharron Healy



Lessons from lockdowns

The survey says...

Here we are halfway through the year and still in the throes of the pandemic. My home state, Victoria, is just winding up yet another lockdown and many families in NSW are now experiencing or anticipating major disruptions to work, school and school holidays with the highly transmissible Delta strain appearing in Sydney.

This has an unsettling effect on the continuity of school learning and placing further pressure on families. The ongoing effect on the mental health and well-being of all is significant and was evident in the recent follow up survey of families we did.

While we are still analysing the data we can see a clear indication from families that their young people are almost always much happier with the return to in-person school days.

Engagement must continue

It's of continuing concern for us, backed up by our preliminary survey results, that engaging with families has not been high on the agenda for so many school leadership teams.

In our survey, a large proportion of families indicated that schools now appear to want to leave many of the pandemic restrictions for parent access in place even when the rest of the community is 'business as usual'.

We understand the reluctance some schools are showing, but we fear it is founded more in administrative convenience than educational benefit or public health management.

We know from the results of our last year's survey, that students who had the most successful continuity of learning through lockdowns were those whose parents reported high levels of engagement from their school teachers and leadership. It was very clear that schools which had a strongly established family engagement strategy **before** the

pandemic were better able to maintain healthy relationships **during** the pandemic because their strong home school connections were already built.

A time of pandemic is not the time to start building home school partnerships; they should already be in place and a number one priority for every school.

[ACSSO Conference - join us!](#)

Please SAVE THE DATE for ACSSO's National Conference. This will be held Friday 29th to Saturday 30th October at the Mantra Legends on the Gold Coast, Queensland, however we also will be providing an opportunity for you to join online. The conference theme is *Equity and Inclusion*, and we will release more details soon – keep an eye on our social media and website for an opportunity to join us.

[Curriculum review](#)

Please don't forget to contribute to the [Review of the Australian Curriculum](#) – the review is open to all and I know ACARA welcomes your input. The consultation period closes July 8.

[NAIDOC Week 2021](#)

I know schools around the country will be preparing for [NAIDOC week 2021](#) from July 4–11, and that many schools mark the week either before or after their winter term break. This year's theme is *Heal Country!* – this is a time to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Keep safe.

Sharron Healy

Chair

Australian Council of State School Organisations

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