



Using the knowledge we have

Hello!

As Parents Victoria's nominated director to ACSSO, I am sincerely honoured to have been elected to the position of ACSSO President at our recent AGM.

I look forward to taking up the national challenges and continuing my working relationship with our CEO, staff, and board of directors on behalf of Australian families.

Learning and growing

It is certainly an interesting and exciting time in the education sector, as we contemplate what learnings we can take forward from the Covid-19 remote schooling experience.

Our [recent parent survey](#) showed a variety of experiences, but the common denominator through it all was how the pandemic highlighted the need for true family engagement. Those schools already actively engaged with their families found it much easier to support their students to learn from home.

Many families reported that their schools were engaging with them for the first time, with mixed results. It's a reminder of what ACSSO has been saying: that it is much easier to commence family engagement strategies in more peaceful circumstances!

Another common theme was the highlighting of ongoing inequity within and between our schools, particularly in terms of devices and connectivity.

These are all issues we will continue to discuss with the Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment, and other stakeholders in the sector.

Welcome support for positive mental health

Mental health in schools has taken a higher priority with governments at the moment, as well it should. We have recently attended several conferences and stakeholder consultations addressing all areas of mental health and will continue to share the learning from those sessions.

We are keen to have our families' voices heard in discussions pertaining to students' improved mental health, and are pleased by recent announcements committing extra funding and resources for schools to support the positive mental health and wellbeing of students.

Cheers for volunteers

[International Volunteer Day](#) is fast approaching on 5 December.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of people who volunteer their time and expertise in our public schools and associated organisations. These are the people who take our great public schools to the next level, providing support, governance, funding, and improved social and academic outcomes to our students.

It's also an opportune time to thank all the ACSSO member organisations and our Board directors for all the work they do in their volunteer capacity. Their work makes such a difference not only in their own states and territories, but nationally, too.

Free family webinar on NAPLAN

As you'll read in this newsletter, ACARA and ACSSO have partnered to present a free, evening webinar for families where the CEO of ACARA, David de Carvalho, will answer questions on NAPLAN and MySchool.

This will be held on Wednesday 2 December at 7.30pm (AEDST) and I urge you to share this link with as many families as possible so they can save the date and register attendance.

Participants can ask questions 'live' but may also submit their questions in advance to us at contact@acso.org.au. A recording will be made and we hope to share it in our next newsletter.

The webinar is an extraordinary opportunity for any family to connect with the leader of our national assessment and curriculum agency. We are very excited to be able to bring you together in this way.

Sharron Healy

Chair

Australian Council of State School Organisations

November 2020