

## APPA Newsletter – May 2009

Dear Colleague

This Government continues to create firsts for primary education – we have the Building the Education Revolution, National School Pride, government primary school funding anomaly eliminated and last Thursday the Federal Minister came and spent just over an hour with APPA's National Executive Council in Melbourne. This was a great opportunity for us to discuss a variety of issues face-to-face with the Minister including the Government's Accountability and Transparency agenda, Building the Education Revolution, the \$50m Professional Learning Funding for Principals, the Funding Review in 2010, etc.

It was an excellent discussion and there will certainly be some follow up to several of the points raised. You can be assured that we thanked her for her support and recognition of primary schools. The Minister gave us some homework which I have highlighted later in the newsletter.

### NEWSFLASH

Need some *little* literacy snippets for your newsletter?  
**Scholastic**, our major sponsor, has written 10 weekly literacy parent newsletter items for you to use. Week 1 starts this week on our website [www.appa.asn.au](http://www.appa.asn.au).  
Did you know that May is **Family Reading Month**?  
This is fantastic and you would be silly not to use them.....

### Accountability and Transparency Agenda

As you know, the Minister has regularly talked about the establishment of the new Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) which will be responsible for publishing relevant, nationally comparable information on all schools.

APPA has now completed its position paper on the publication of nationally comparable school performance information and will be releasing it this Friday (8 May). We are supporting the principle of transparency but only if appropriate safeguards are put in place to ensure the release of school data has a beneficial impact in primary education as we do not want to go down the US / UK path. Our paper recommends eight safeguards. We are however, not supporting the comparison of like schools as there are far too many anomalies for this to be fair.

### \*\* HOT OFF THE PRESS FROM THE UK \*\*

At the annual conference of Head Teachers in the UK, 94% of delegates have just voted to ballot all members about boycotting their national test next year.

We presented the Minister with a confidential draft copy of our paper.

Our position paper will be a must read for you given the State / Federal governments' agreed agenda. Your executive representative will be sending you a copy and will also be available from the APPA website [www.appa.asn.au](http://www.appa.asn.au) from Friday.

### Primary School Narrative

Last year, Professor Max Angus challenged us to develop a new primary narrative; a short, compelling story that replaces the tired outdated message that everyone repeats about primary. You know what is said...*It's easier to teach in primary; the curriculum isn't demanding; just about anyone can do it*, etc.

Our new narrative captures four strong messages:

- Middle childhood
- Closing the achievement gap
- Return on investment
- Sustained intervention (Years 4 – 6/7)

Our new narrative will only become reality if every primary principal *talks it up* with parents / local members, etc. The new narrative is going to be sent to you and will also be available on the APPA website [www.appa.asn.au](http://www.appa.asn.au). This is the start of our next resourcing campaign and the Minister was given a copy of our new narrative at our meeting.

### **\$50m Professional Learning Funding for Principals**

The \$50m that this Government has allocated for principals' professional learning was also raised with the Minister.

Whilst we were delighted with the funding, we did express our disappointment because we understand that there is not one primary representative on the sub group making recommendations to the key committee. We expressed our desire to do a survey to find out from you how you believe the money should be spent. We will wait to hear the Minister's response about this because it's pointless bothering you if it's not going to influence the agenda.

We are a tad nervous that the money will be spread around the States / Territories and have very little sustained impact. More about this later...

### **Lobbyist**

Last year we employed a lobbyist to assist us get primary on the Federal agenda and I think you will all agree that it was money (lots) well spent.

Well, your executive asked the lobbyist to draw up a plan for the next budget, election and funding review to be conducted in 2010.

It was agreed by executive to employ the lobbyist for two months this year to develop what is called in the political world a *Parliamentary Friendship Group*. The lobbyist feels it is time we expanded our parliamentary network to include Liberal, more Labor and Independents. There are a significant number of groups who already do this. We must keep up the momentum.....

### **NEWSFLASH**

We are about to sign up a brand new sponsor... **Wattyl Paints (Solver in South Australia)**.  
A totally Australian owned company.  
Please, please insist on **Wattyl (Solver)** when you paint your beautiful new hall or library, etc.

### **Building the Education Revolution**

Executive raised five issues at the meeting and we have sent them to the Commonwealth for a response.

The five points are:

1. Why some projects are not being funded.
2. We want more flexibility with the building templates.
3. Costs for country areas.
4. Lack of dates other than when submissions need to be in.
5. State / Territory commitments to maintain levels of funding.

As soon as we receive a reply, we will put a Building the Education Revolution report on the APPA website.

## Government Primary Funding Anomaly

We are working closely with the Australian Government Primary Principals Association and keeping a lot of pressure on States / Territories to make sure the \$100 (approximately) per student actually gets to your school. The Minister is very sympathetic about this and has certainly been doing her bit. We will be writing to her for an update about the funding.

## APPA Conference 2009 Gold Coast: 16 – 18 September

APPA's next conference on the Gold Coast from 16 – 18 September could be the largest in history. So far, 525 people have registered and there's still four months to go. Why don't you register? All the information is available on our website [www.appa.asn.au](http://www.appa.asn.au).

## Press Release

We recently sent out a press release declaring the Phonics versus Whole Word debate to be officially over. The research is clear that it is not 'either / or', nor is it *one size fits all*. The release is on our website [www.appa.asn.au](http://www.appa.asn.au). We received a few nibbles from the media but at least we have made a stand.

## Homework

Phew! At the end of our executive meeting, the Minister set us some homework.

Could we please explore some practical ways to help close the widening gap for Indigenous students in our primary schools? We have a month to hand in our assignment.....

## Study of Asian Languages in Schools

The Minister has announced grants under the \$6.24m *Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools* program. Schools can access **up to** \$20,000 for individual schools / \$25,000 for a cluster of two schools and \$40,000 for a cluster of four schools. Visit [www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/NALSSP](http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/NALSSP) for more information or keep an eye on our website [www.appa.asn.au](http://www.appa.asn.au).

## Sponsors

Gosh, where would we be without our sponsors? Employing a lobbyist would be impossible!

So, thank you to



...and now



Don't forget to go to our website and use the literacy newsletter snippets for the next 10 weeks.

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One day the Federal scene will calm down.....hmm.....I'd like to see that!

Regards

Leonie Trimper  
President