

In this Edition

- **President's Report**
- **ISEA Award for Potential Senior Administrators**
- **School Learning Support Program**
- **Review of Curriculum K-12 and Centre for Learning Innovation.**
- **Performance Management Scheme**
- **Leave Loading Back-Pay**
- **ISEA Study-Tour to Hong Kong and Singapore, July 2010**
- **ISEA Award for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education**
- **Financial Statement**
- **Book Review: *The Succession Challenge* by Dean Fink**
- **Season's Greetings**

President's Report

At the end of each year we say our good-byes to those we may not work with again, wish people a happy festive season and try to clear our desks in order to take a break.

In 2009 the education scene has been kicked along by the Commonwealth, or kicked down literally in some places by the Building the Education Revolution project. The Digital Education Revolution has kicked into gear with the delivery of laptops to Year 9 across the state. The National Curriculum is just over the horizon, ACARA is firing up and the Board of Studies is scratching its head. DET's Curriculum Support Directorate and the Centre for Learning Innovation are facing major changes. Learning Support is changing, we hope for the better.

Behind it all the sustainable future of our world and humankind hangs in the balance.

[It's enough to make you wonder if we will ever get time to breathe again...?]

Many of our members are in key roles in every one of these major challenges. The ISEA is graced as an organisation by having so many committed people in its ranks, working hard for a better future for our children.

During the year we have had many times when members have helped the organisation resolve an issue, reward initiatives, explore a possibility, give advice, negotiate better conditions and represent members in need. State Council members have given generously of their time and energy. We are all more secure financially after new awards were negotiated. Thanks to all of you who have contributed during the year!

On behalf of the organisation I wish you all a thinking person's Christmas and New Year; brimming with great ideas, eureka moments and joyful connections to your family and friends! I hope you can clear the desk and rest for a while.

Barry Laing, President

ISEA to Introduce New Award for Potential Senior Educational Administrators

The ISEA State Council has endorsed in principle the establishment of an award to recognise the potential of staff working in out-of-school positions.

Details of the award are yet to be finalised but it is expected that the first recipients will be members staff working in state or regional officers in positions junior to that of CEO and who, through their outstanding work, demonstrate the potential to be successful leaders in senior educational administrative positions. It is anticipated that the award/s will be presented at the same ceremony conducted to present the ISEA's Award for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education. Details and applications forms will be distributed to members in early 2010.

School Learning Support Program

The ISEA has been consulted on the DET's proposed School Learning Support Program, on 4 December 2009 ISEA's representatives, Kay Smith, Veronica Kapsimali, Cheryl Ballantyne and Barry Laing met with Wayne Parkins, the educational consultant assisting the DET design the Program and School Education Director, Ron Phillips. The ISEA representatives were informed that the two pillars of the proposed School Learning Support Program were 1) Capacity-Building and 2) Collaboration.

The aim is that communities of schools will set allocations, as is done regionally now for the Learning Assistance program. This will involve all principals, led by a SED, meeting to discuss the needs of the particular group of schools.

A key reason for the new model is that access to a diagnosis is inequitable, especially comparing city and regional areas. Another reason is to increase efficiency by moving itinerants out of cars into classrooms. The publication of notional allocations was intended to remove some uncertainties about which schools would lose in the new model. The ISEA was told the principals welcomed the prospect of less paperwork and increased support available to schools, as well as an increased flexibility in the use of resources.

Wayne Parkins indicated that a trial of the Program was needed and that the Teachers Federation was in negotiations with the DET over a trial.

The ISEA representatives raised some concerns about the Program that had been gleaned from the field:

- Expertise in autism & behaviour will be lost.
- Many schools think they will be losers
- A basic issue that in this kind of model of integrated provision, it often becomes the accepted baseline and people don't see the resource any more. They start looking for extra solutions and resources again.
- Training the STLA flagship staff will be essential
- Evaluation strategy is needed
- 'Behaviour' teachers will be difficult to convert to 'generic' positions.
- Autism teachers are well respected and there will be concerns if they are harder to access
- How will the regional tutors support the trainees 12 at a time?
- Online training is not at trainer-level whereas the Positive partnerships from the Commonwealth is at a higher level and should be considered.

As result of the meeting the ISEA will be invited to a "Think Tank" in February 2010.

Review of Curriculum K-12 and Centre for Learning Innovations

The ISEA was notified by the DET on the 26 October 09 that a review, led by Lindsay Wasson, would be conducted of the Curriculum K-12 Directorate and the Centre for Learning Innovation in order to:

- Identify the critical curriculum services, the innovation capabilities and the products that are required for supporting NSW public schools into the future; and
- Propose an appropriate merger of functions and staff across the two directorates

We were told that an interim report would be completed by the end of 2009 and a final report in early 2010 and that the ISEA would be kept informed of the progress of the Review. It was predicted that the new merged unit would be in operation by the beginning of term 3 2010.

In response the ISEA contacted the DET and posed the following questions:

- 1) What is the process by which Mr Wasson will review the functions of the 2 units?
- 2) Will the ISEA be invited to contribute to the review?
- 3) Are other organisations such as the Teachers' Federation and the PSA to be invited, or have been invited, to contribute to the review?
- 4) Is an unstated objective of the review to save money?

After several weeks, and in the absence of a reply, the ISEA sought and was granted a meeting on the 4 December with Des Gorman (General Manager, Learning and Development) and Kate Sheehan (Director, HR Services and Systems). Unfortunately the meeting threw very little light on any of the questions raised by the ISEA. There was however an undertaking to provide the ISEA with an indication of the process by which the review is to be carried out.

Given that there had been no consultation with the staff of the 2 units the ISEA representatives asked what consultation was planned before the final report was released. Des Gorman undertook to provide the ISEA with an answer to this question.

Another important question referred to the access staff may or may not have to the interim report, apparently due by the end of this year. Des Gorman informed the delegation that he was not sure whether the interim report would be made available to the staff or to the ISEA but he would find out and let us know. Several personnel issues were raised by the ISEA delegation, and especially the case of the CEOs who have been held in temporary positions for several years. The absence of consultation, the lack of a transparent process and no guarantee of access to the interim report was seen only to heighten the anxiety and frustration felt by the staff concerned.

As of the publication of this newsletter the ISEA, despite assurances, still has not had answers to the questions raised in writing on 26 October or at the 4 December meeting. Given the implications for the staff in the 2 units under review this is an appalling state of affairs which the ISEA will seek to rectify.

Review of Proposed Performance Management Scheme for Chief Education Officers

Members will be aware that in the course of the recent negotiations for a Salaries and Conditions Award for Chief Education Officers, the ISEA agreed to work with the DET in developing a new performance management scheme for CEOs. The scheme was to be based on an existing scheme currently applicable to a range of DET staff.

After several meetings the DET has provided the ISEA with a draft document. While generally acceptable the State Council has some reservations about the document & in particular how specifically it reflected the positions, qualifications & responsibilities of CEOs. The ISEA has provided the DET with an amended document which it believes is more in line with the basis of the agreement reached with the DET during the Award negotiations and which will satisfy the intentions of both parties. We await the DET's response to our suggestions.

Leave Loading Back Pay to CEOs Completed

It appears as if the DET has successfully identified and paid the vast majority of CEOs who were due back-pay for underpaid leave loadings over the period of the last two salaries and conditions awards. The ISEA took up the very few queries received from members about the payments and, with the exception of 2 that are still pending, all were resolved to the satisfaction of the members concerned.

ISEA Tour to Singapore and Hong Kong

The ISEA is in the process of planning a study-tour to Singapore and Hong Kong to be conducted during the 2010 NSW second term school vacation which extends from Monday 5 July 2010 to Friday 16 July 2010.

The intention is to visit schools, education systems and universities while leaving sufficient time to take in the cultural attractions of both locations. The visit to Hong Kong will coincide with a leadership conference to be conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Education in cooperation with the Peabody College of the Vanderbilt University. Arrangements for the tour in Hong Kong are being assisted by Allan Walker who is Chief Professor of Educational Administration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In January 2010 Allan is to become the Co-Director of a new Centre for Educational Leadership at the Hong Kong Institute for Education.

In Singapore the ISEA tour will be assisted by Catherine Seah a principal of a large Singaporean secondary school. Catherine led a study-tour of senior Singaporean administrators, consultants and principals to NSW in 2007, during which time the group met with ISEA members and visited DET schools and offices. Catherine has arranged for the ISEA group to meet with the Director-General of the Singaporean Education Authority and with the Director of Educational Leadership Development. A visit to one of Singapore's state of the art Polytechnics is a part of the tour.

The ISEA has conducted successful tours to the UK and Germany (2004), the west coast of USA and Canada (2006) & the east coast of USA and Canada (2008). Members are invited to express initial interest in joining this tour. No firm commitments will be expected until the details of the tour are developed and published.

ISEA Award for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education

The interview phase for the ISEA's Award for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education is almost complete. It is expected that the recipient for 2009 will be announced early in the New Year. Now in its third year the Award recognises ISEA members for their outstanding work in the administration of public education. Previous winners have been Pam Ryan and Laurie Murphy in 2007 and Robert Corday in 2008.

Financial Statement

For organisations such as the ISEA the financial year ends on 30 November of each year. This year it is pleasing to report that the organisation's financial situation has improved since last year due to improved investment outcomes and a steady flow of membership applications. An increase in the bottom line of in excess of \$15,000 is expected when the ISEA's accounts are audited.

Book Review: *The Succession Challenge* by Dean Fink

The Succession Challenge, written by highly regarded Canadian teacher, principal, administrator and researcher Dean Fink, is due to be published by SAGE Publishers in early 2010. Dean, who until recently was on the staff of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), has worked with distinction in Canada, the USA and Europe as well as in several Australian states and for the ISEA. His research and writing is based on 34 years as a teacher, principal and district superintendent. Of his motivation to write the book Dean says:

In my own career I have succeeded others and been succeeded by others in various leadership jobs over time, and frankly I had not thought much about it. In some cases I found moving in very easy because I was replacing someone who was not particularly popular, while in at least one situation I found it difficult because my predecessor was justifiably admired and mourned. Similarly, some who followed me built on my work and never looked back, while in other cases my efforts were totally undermined within short order. My PhD thesis, which had dealt with an innovative school that over the 30-year period had experienced a number of succession episodes, some successful but many poorly planned and inadequately supported by the system, forced me to examine issues related to succession in depth. As I discovered, unsuccessful leadership transitions went a long way towards extinguishing the light in the "lighthouse" school that resulted in its "attrition of change."

Dean's colleague and mentor Professor Andy Hargreaves in his foreword to the book says:

Make no mistake about it. One of the most significant events in the life of a school is when it undergoes a change in leadership. Yet few things in education succeed less than leadership succession. We repeatedly mismanage or overlook it – often with disastrous consequences for students, teachers, and the likelihood of lasting improvement. Inspiring leaders often lift their schools, only to see the gains disappear when mediocre successors follow them. Heroic leaders may perform miracles in turning schools around, but there is often no broader capacity to maintain the improvements after the leaders have gone.

In providing the first book based on detailed data that have been specifically collected for the purpose of understanding succession, Dean deepens the exploration of the planning, management, timing, and emotional intensity of succession, and adds a vital fifth dimension – its politics. Using his great skill as an oral historian and experienced ethnographer, as well as capitalizing on the rapport he is able to establish with his subjects due to once having been right in their shoes, Dean Fink draws them out magnificently so they speak with candour and clarity about the succession experience. Among the many strengths of this book is its comparative dimension.

Succession processes vary depending on the specific systems that are used for hiring & replacing school leaders. England, for example, is an open national market & school leaders are hired by the governing bodies of individual schools. Many smaller school districts in North America keep leaders in place for many years, as they are grown in the district & tend to stay there, with few options for movement. In a number of larger districts, however, regular rotation of principals, in a way that Dean Fink himself helped pioneer, is employed as a strategy to move schools in the desired direction & keep individual leaders fresh and challenged.

In the end though, despite the differences between one policy system and another, what stands out in Dean Fink's careful study are the universals of succession – an emotionally intense and politically controversial process that carries immense importance but suffers from vast neglect.

Seasons Greetings

The President, State Council and Executive Officer of the ISEA wish members, your families, colleagues and friends a peaceful, safe and enjoyable Festive Season and look forward to supporting you again in 2010.