

NSW Teachers Federation

Principals Conference Friday 18 March 2016

The 2016 Principal's Conference was attended by 215 principals from around the state, including leaders of the major principal organisations in NSW. The conference provided an opportunity to explore and seek advice on various topics of interest to principals, network with colleagues and discuss emerging school-based issues.

Keynote Speakers

Angelo Gavrielatos, Project Director at Education International, a presentation in which he examined local and global trends in the education sector. Of particular concern was the exploitation of the education sector by edu-businesses and the need for Australian principals to be aware and vigilant of the course this has taken in other countries – where global corporations essentially own the standardised tests, influence the curriculum and create professional development for teachers.

Maurie Mulheron's very timely update on key issues and campaigns in the President's Address which included reference to the value of the work of Principals as they grapple with the current depleted Department, particularly in relation to the devolution agenda and the "command and control" approach where the dialogue is about local decision making but the reality is they command through constant requirements to do more.

Philip Riley, Associate Professor at the Centre for Teacher Quality and Leadership in the Australian Catholic University informed the conference about the Principal Health and Wellbeing Study and discussed the Longitudinal Research Results. This short presentation provided principals with up to date information about the health and wellbeing of principals across the country. This short presentation was followed up in a workshop with a practically based session on how to manage the stressful work of a principal.

The afternoon presentation by Peter Johnson, Retired Executive Director at the Department of Education & Maurie Mulheron entitled Staffing Agreement – Critical agreement to protect teaching and learning conditions informed principals of the updated staffing agreement and the protections provided to the profession as a result. Principals were provided an insight to the agreement from two key negotiators of this agreement between the Department and the Federation.

Workshops

The workshops were well received. Many principal's appreciated Phil Riley's workshop discussing strategies to manage stressful work. Additionally, positive comments were made about the difficult conversations workshop and the manner in which to navigate this issue. The practical nature of the workshops was well received with principal's feeling that could take something helpful away from the conference.

Summary

Participants appreciated the breath of topics and reported that they found the conference to be of high standard and informative. Our ongoing commitment to public education as a profession, as a union and as citizens was a common theme throughout the day and well appreciated by those in attendance.