

## **Submission to House of Representatives inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession.**

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### **School Leadership and the Enhancement of the Teaching Profession**

Leadership is important in schools with consensus now that, of school controlled factors, leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Whilst the principal role is the one that has the most responsibility, expectation and opportunity to exercise leadership, there are many other roles including senior leaders (leadership role with no teaching or a small teaching allocation), middle leaders (leadership role with a significant teaching allocation), and teacher leaders (no leadership role, full teaching allocation, yet widely influential) (De Nobile, 2018; Gurr, 2015, 2018). The leadership roles often have a pastoral, curriculum or administrative focus, but there are also roles that include multiple foci.

We know from motivational and aspirant research that key drivers for teachers to sustain their work and progress their careers relate more to internal motivational factors such as sense of achievement, personal growth, moral purpose and so forth (Lacey, 2002; Thompson, 2018). Some external motivational factors such as recognition, responsibility, interpersonal relationships and so forth, are also important. The key drivers for promotion, however, are to do with the outcomes of work, such as the opportunity to impact on teaching and learning, to motivate others and to shape an educational vision (Lacey, 2002). One way to address all of these motivators and to enhance the teaching profession is to acknowledge the many leadership roles that already exist in schools and to help teachers to construct a career by considering how and when to access these roles.

When talking to teachers about their work. it is too often the case that they have had to self-manage their careers (Gurr & Drysdale, 2015). We can do this better by explicitly supporting teachers early in their careers to develop the appropriate characteristics, qualities, skills and knowledge to be educational leaders. We could, for example, promote more leadership development in pre-service courses, develop explicit pastoral, curriculum and leadership career tracks like Singapore does (Gurr & Drysdale, 2017; Wong, Hairon & Ng, 2019), include certification points such as in the USA (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson & Orr, 2007), and link these to explicit statements of expectations. The obvious choice in regard to expectations would be use of reconsidered versions of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) teacher standards and principal leadership standard, and development of a standard, or standards, that bridge the gap between these. A helpful initiative is to identify leadership aspirations early as some education departments are doing. For example, in Victoria, to address concerns about career development (Gurr & Drysdale, 2015), Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership is developing a program to identify principal readiness that includes a 360 degree leadership survey, construction of a leadership portfolio and behavioural interviewing (Gurr & Drysdale, 2017) and which is supported by a range of leadership development programs ([www.bastow.vic.edu.au](http://www.bastow.vic.edu.au)). In terms of supporting those with leadership aspirations, Watterson's (2015) review for AITSL arrived at five recommendations:

- Adopt a systematic, standards-based and coherent approach.
- Identify and nurture talent through structured, transparent career pathways, and clear selection prerequisites for promotion.
- Match learning to an individual's capabilities, career stage and context.
- Use evidence-based adult learning techniques.
- Evaluate programs for impact including participant readiness, impact on initial principal practice, and growth in the number of well-prepared aspirants.

## Recommendations

1. Focussing on the leadership opportunities existing within schools will enhance teaching as a profession and career, and help to ensure there are quality school leaders to meet future needs. Actions associated with this could include:
  - Leadership development included in pre-service courses.
  - Develop processes to identify readiness for leadership roles associated with teachers, middle leaders, senior leaders and principals.
  - Develop explicit pastoral, curriculum and leadership career tracks.
  - Develop standards for middle leaders.
  - Introduce leadership certification (middle leaders, senior leaders, principals).
2. AITSL, in cooperation with systems (government, Catholic and independent), system-sponsored educational leadership institutes (e.g. the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership) and universities, would be well-placed to develop the leadership focus suggested in this brief submission.

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