network principal . . .

Term 3 has brought to an end the wet and wild weather. There was also the wind of change blowing through our school communities this term. A federal election and the announced changes by the state government to education funding have no doubt given many of us food for thought. Staff and Community members need to talk to their school principal about the impacts the changes will have on their schools. As a network, school leaders will be working together to support each other and manage the challenges faced by the changes.

Much like taxes and grey hair, change is inevitable. There are a number of major reforms coming our way across the educational landscape-Year 7’s in secondary school, implementation of the Australian curriculum, new Senior Schooling courses, new funding models etc. 2015 will see these agendas come together in our schools. We need to plan and prepare together to “weather the storm”. A bit of rain never hurt anybody it’s the unexpected gust that causes the most damage.

Apart from our working group chairs as listed in our website the following staff are your conduits for the network. Send them an e-mail if you have an idea, concern or idea. You can also send in a query via the website by clicking on the contact tab. All employment groups will have dedicated distribution lists by early next term.

♦ Debra.brown@education.wa.edu.au for school support staff
♦ Linda.nicholls@education.wa.edu.au for non-teaching staff
♦ Hayley.ding@education.wa.edu.au for teaching staff
♦ Andrew.wilson@education.wa.edu.au for school administrators

The ESSN website continues to get a number of hits with subscriptions continuing to grow. It is never too late to subscribe. You will get individual e-mail notifications of news or posts added to the
network principal . . . (cont’d)

website. The latest news involved a brief survey asking for members to indicate their preferences for our next SDD in 2014. The network has access to Survey Monkey which is available to members seeking to collect information on behalf of the network. Let your principal know if you would like to access the resource. They can then contact me.

The West Australian Education Support Principals and Administrators Association or WAESPAA held their staff thankyou Sundowner recently. Many ESSN members attended and it was a great afternoon/evening. I heard some fantastic stories of success and some great ideas there. You know who you are—don’t be shy let everyone know! I often ponder that many staff think that what they do is not worth sharing or no big deal. Believe me it is – the issues we all face are the same and any little thing that helps is worth acknowledging and passing on.

Andrew Wilson

promotions group update . . .

It is often said that one picture is worth a thousand words and in accord with this view those visiting the web site recently will notice that a gallery menu has been added. Members may like to submit photos to the committee for possible inclusion in the gallery. Please note you need to have all the requisite permissions obtained prior to sending them in. Members are involved in a number of activities and that would be of interest to others.

There has been some discussion about the proper use of our chat lines and the web site with respect to advertising and as a consequence we have drafted a policy for members’ information which can be found on the ESSN website with other information from the Promotions Group.

ESSN User Guidelines—summary

Please refer to the ESSN website for the full guidelines.

Absolutely No Solicitation: Under no circumstances should you contact another member asking for money, help, or offering products or services - this includes friend requests and comments left on member posts.

No Inappropriate Content: Please keep all content you post focused on the topic of supporting the network and sharing your experiences. Content that is NOT APPROPRIATE includes but is not limited to, advertising, political endorsements, religious bias, material copyrighted by someone who isn’t you, any content that is vulgar or obscene or contains adult themes or images, abusive language, name-calling, insults, harassment, spamming, flaming, baiting and/or personal attacks. Further, members are prohibited from making posts or comments that encourage this type of behavior. Please also remember you need permission from the people in any photo before placing it on our site.

Please Refrain from Advertising: It is not appropriate to advertise your business, products or services on the Education Support South Network, through images or in comments you leave on other member’s blog posts.
Professional Learning Survey

On the 28th April 2014, the Education Support South Network will once again provide professional learning and networking opportunities for all members of the network. In order to make sure that we meet your professional learning needs we ask that you take 5 minutes to complete a survey asking what you would like to learn more about on the day. The survey link can be found on the ESSN Website.

Your contribution is important so please make sure you complete the survey before Friday 25 October, 2013.

Marion Wright

Level 3 Classroom Teacher Aspirants Group

Sharing knowledge and expertise is one of the many benefits of being a part of the Education Support South Network. In Term 3, through ESSN, a Level 3 Classroom Teacher (L3CT) Aspirants Group has been initiated. Aspirants have the opportunity to participate in a Professional Learning Community project specially designed for Education Support teachers who are working towards or considering applying for L3CT status in 2014. The project’s aim is to provide information, collaboration and various levels of support to L3CT aspirants. The Aspirants Group will meet twice a term at Canning Vale College and will offer multiple opportunities to hear guest speakers’ presentations, discussions on successful portfolio examples as well as to participate in L3CT mentoring and collegiate support.

The first meeting of the support group, held on August 5, 2013 attracted 19 Education Support teachers from 15 schools across the South Metro area. Our guest speakers, Merrilee Wright (Associate Principal at Canning Vale College) and Marion Wright (Principal at Koorana Education Support Centre) delivered informative presentations on the process of applying for L3CT status and gathering evidence for the portfolio stage 1.

During the October school holidays, the L3CT support group will host a workshop on Applying for Level Three Classroom Teacher Status. The workshop will be run by a presenter from the Institute for Professional Learning. It aims to provide participants with the opportunity to:

♦ gain familiarity with the competencies and assessment rubrics;
♦ consider teaching experience and expertise and how it can be described to address the competencies;
♦ begin to develop written responses to one or more of the competencies;
♦ review examples of evidence.

All interested teachers are welcome to register online through the Professional Learning Institute and to attend the workshop on October 9 (Wednesday), 9:00-11:00 at Canning Vale College.

Agnieszka Miller, Canning Vale College, L3CT Aspirant Group Coordinator
Distinctive School

Rockingham Beach ESC was successful in its application to be a Distinctive School with the More Support for Students with Disabilities (MSSD) funding. Our project aims to strengthen the capacity of schools to improve outcomes for students with special needs by developing strong positive supportive and collaborative relationships with their families.

As part of our project, we approached schools in our local area to determine which schools needed the services we were offering and enlisted a range of partner schools including a mainstream high school, an education support centre and six mainstream primary schools. The schools were required to nominate a project coordinator from administration and an interested teacher to represent their school and attend four days of Professional Development with the Positive Partnership initiative. The training included an online module and introduced a variety of tools to assist with supporting student with special needs at school. The teachers were further supported through the online professional community forum consisting of the professional development participants consisting of approximately 50 other teachers, admin and key local professionals across all sectors of education for four months following the conclusion of the PD. This online Professional community provided schools with a forum to ask questions, post solutions, discuss topics and connect with other professionals. Each of the partnership schools were required to write a whole school goal that would enable them to strengthen their relationships with their families of children with special needs.

The next stage was to meet with our partner schools individually to discuss their whole school goals and complete a needs analysis for each school. From the needs analysis we were able to determine levels of support required by each school and create relevant resources to assist each school with achieving their professional development is delivered to staff. Children with autism respond well to visual cues and these can be helpful for teaching social skills.
whole school goals. Resources include various power points outlining the characteristics of autism and why and how to teach social skills to children with ASD. A visual audit was designed to assess the types of visuals being used in the classrooms.

Apart from these resources we have provided opportunity for work shadowing for teachers, collaborated with schools to assist them with whole school planning of professional learning, attended meetings with parents, admin, teachers and other professionals to model how to conduct planning meetings and provided advice regarding various issues that have arisen in schools. We have worked with groups of education assistants and modelled social skills teaching strategies, contributed to community group meetings with parents of children with ASD and provided ongoing support to all the partner schools throughout the year. The physical resources developed as part of our project will be available for all schools to access in the near future.

We will be able to support more schools in the coming year as the schools we have worked with become self sufficient. Contact Margaret Keen t: 9528 2912 or e: Margaret.Keen@education.wa.edu.au if you are interested in becoming a partner school.

Kalamunda Primary School ESC

I have been at Kalamunda PS ESC since 2003 and in the past 10 years I have seen significant changes both in our Centre AND the education options for students with disabilities. I am a massive advocate for the ESC model and see that it offers families the “Best Compromise”. It is my belief that parents of students with disabilities will always need to make compromises in trying to balance their desire for strong academic and social programs with their desire for their child to be educated in a mainstream setting alongside their neurotypical peers. Here at Kalamunda we have evolved quite organically into what we are today. In 2007 we opened our doors with 7 students and were in discussions with the Department regarding our ongoing viability. However, by the end of that year we had grown to 16 and employed a new teacher who bought with her an amazing skill and knowledge, TEACCH. Samantha Brassington walked into my office at the end of term 3 that year and asked me for a job. At that time she had just returned from teaching in North
Carolina and was working on the Autism VT team, but was super keen to get back into a classroom. Ironically, I had just started looking for a teacher to take over a maternity leave position starting day 1 term 4. This is what I now refer to as our “serendipitous” moment.

Whilst in North Carolina, Sam had participated in the full TEACCH training through the Institute of TEACCH. This was an opportunity not many Australian Special Education teachers get, so for her and, now for us it was life changing.

Long story short, Sam went on to set up the TEACCH program in her class and then took maternity leave herself. While on leave the 2 teachers who took over in her class realized the power of the program so when they set up their own classes in 2009, they took the program with them. We now have 5 class environments and 30 staff (all permanent) who embed the philosophies of TEACCH daily.

Our enrolment currently sits at 41 and people often ask me about how we managed to increase our enrolment so dramatically from 7 in 2007 to now. My response is that we did all of the standard advertising both in the media and through the variety of feeder PS’s, but it wasn’t until we implemented TEACCH and our families started talking to other families within their disability networks about it that we started to grow. We had something unique and different and the families who were already involved could see the value in it and started telling everyone else about it. Over the years we have had families drive to us from as far as Roleystone, Chidlow, Beechboro, Kelmscott and Gidgegannup all to access our programs.

This year, following a conversation during Sam’s performance management we decided that she should develop a number of PD modules in understanding TEACCH, as without the philosophy of ‘why’, we just ‘do’. Up until this point in time we have been accessing this PD through the Autism Association, but they have now stopped delivering it in Perth.

Evolving further, Sam wrote a MSSD grant to assist us in the costs of developing the modules. Another long story short, Kalamunda PS ESC is now recognized as a “Distinctive School” in the area of TEACCH and Sam negotiating with the TEACCH Institute in North Carolina to be recognized as a train the trainer.

Sam and I have just returned from our first “Distinctive Schools” information days and we are a little overwhelmed by the task of sharing our knowledge of good practice, however we are up for the challenge and our entire staff team of 32 are keen to be included in sharing what we know has worked so well for us. At this stage all I can say is watch this space!

Jarna Wright, Principal
First stop, once we had settled into our cottages, was to head off to the Farm to get reacquainted with all the lovely animals and Farmer Sandra. It was good to be back! Then it was for some fun at The Great Escape.

What a way to start the day! First thing on Thursday morning the students all got up and ready and headed off at 7.50am to help Farmer Sandra feed and let out the animals for the day. They all had a great time and worked hard. After the hard work they all got to have a rest and a cuddle with the baby rabbits.

Day 2 also saw the arrival of Rooms 2 & 3. After setting up their beds everyone headed back to the farm to talk with Farmer Sandra, spend time with the animals and have Billy Tea and Damper with Farmer Ted. After lunch we all headed off to the resource centre and spent time looking at the different resources, playing games and learning about all things to do with the farm and food groups. This was very educational and the students all really enjoyed it. Afterwards we had sports time before dinner, free time for the students on the playground and trampoline before getting showered and going for dinner, campfire and then the disco. Everyone had fun dancing and playing games and waving their glow sticks. Once they were all pumped up it was time to wind down with a movie before heading to bed to recover from the fun packed day.

As the final day of camp arrived it was time to fit in as much as possible before we went back home. Another visit to the farm to see our favourite animals and say goodbye until next time. Then it was time for cart rides before going back to the resource centre and embarking on the gnome trail. It’s always a great way to spend our time. Then it was time to have some lunch before packing up the bus and boarding for home. Another great year at camp was had by all and not we have it all to look forward to again next year.
The East Victoria Park Education Support Centre is located on the campus of the East Victoria Park Primary School and provides the benefit of shared facilities, integration opportunities and a combined P&C. Each student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is designed in consultation with parents, teachers, specialist teachers and therapists. Individual Programs are designed for each student to maximise independence, communication and life skills.

Special programs operating to add value to the students accessing the curriculum are a specialist Music program, Community Access Program, Perceptual Motor Program, Cooking, Gardening, Brain Gym, ICT and Swimming. The LOTE program studies the language and culture of Italy. The priority for our students and staff is health and well being with a focus on fostering the development and understanding of an active and healthy life style.

Values are embedded throughout the curriculum delivery and a high ratio of staff to students provides maximum individual instruction and support.
Coolbellup Learning Centre - X-Factor Performance

Two teams went head to head each performing their version of *Puff the Magic Dragon* at the Coolbellup Learning Centre X-Factor competition on Thursday September 26th.

The event was the culmination of the term’s music program lead by final year practicum student Holly Forbes. Miss Forbes worked with the students during afternoon music sessions motivating them with her enthusiasm.

Students, having worked with the Sensorium last term, were keen to continue to develop their skills in art, drama and music. The afternoon’s performance was a huge hit with students asking for X Factor style competitions to remain part of their learning program. Students won prizes in a range of categories including, best singer, best musician, best performance, most improved instrumental and best supporting star.

Handy hints . .

Working in the classroom, it can be frustrating when you want to get a message to another staff member that is on the other side of the school. You don’t want to ring through as it often disrupts the classroom activities and often e-mails don’t get checked till later in the day. I wanted an internal chat program where I could send a pop-up message that staff could see on their computers as they walked past it. After some researching I found LAN Messenger. It is a free p2p chat application for intranet communication that does not require a server.

LAN messenger by Sourceforge is very lightweight and easy to use software. Drag and drop file transfers and group chat are awesome features.

A variety of handy features are supported including notifications, personal and group messaging with encryption, file transfer and message logging. It has certainly saved a lot of running around and interruptions in our school. It's a been a welcome success.

- Features
- Personal and group messaging
- File transfer
- Message history
- Notification alarms
- Message encryption
- Multilanguage user interface

Download link: [http://sourceforge.net/projects/lanmsngr/?source=dlp](http://sourceforge.net/projects/lanmsngr/?source=dlp)