



SASSLA

south australian state school leaders association

The Voice for SA State School Leaders

Legal

Enterprise Bargaining

Advocacy

Support



Marion Coady

CHAIRPERSON
SASSLA Board

During the late 1990s it became apparent that the work of a school leader was growing more complex and with increased accountability. There was greater devolution of authority and autonomy to leaders and we needed appropriate personal and professional support available when situations arose.

A number of principals had started to experience examples of non-support from other organisations when there were issues with staff members. It was becoming more obvious that where there was any conflict of interest, full support would be given to the teacher and the leader was left to feel unsupported and vulnerable.

A group of principals decided to look at ways that we could get the specific nature of support that was required when a school leader was left isolated and uncertain of their rights and responsibilities.

In 2001 the Association was started by a group of eight principals and 60 members. We called ourselves The Leaders' Legal Fund. Gradually news of our existence spread and our membership base rapidly grew.

In 2011 our name was changed to The South Australian State School Leaders Association (SASSLA). 18 years on and SASSLA is a strong and robust organisation with around 500 members. The most important factor in the evolution of SASSLA has been the unfaltering support we have provided to and received from our members and the confidence that is built on the successes we have had.

SASSLA is enduring and successful. Our Board is active in planning strategically and ensuring that our prime focus always remains on supporting our members to undertake their complex and demanding work in the knowledge there is a professional safety net in place. We are an organisation created by school leaders for school leaders and we would love you to join us.



Phil O'Loughlin

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SASSLA is strong and effective in its representation, advocacy and legal defence of leaders. Now more than ever we need an organisation which is uncompromisingly dedicated to the support of leaders with the underlying principles of fairness and reason.

SASSLA meets with officers from the Department for Education and the Minister for Education regularly to advocate on behalf of school and preschool leaders. We maintain our independence from political parties and the Department to ensure we represent your views.

We provide support to our members who may need general guidance with leadership and human resources issues. We can give advice over the phone, outside of working hours or we can visit your site. We can also act as your support person in disciplinary or complaint meetings.

My prior role as Executive Director of Human Resources for the Department for Education has provided me with a wealth of knowledge for matters pertaining to human resources and the Acts, regulations, policies and procedures relating to school and preschool leadership. I am happy to give prompt and independent advice and guidance for issues raised by our members.

WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON WORKING COLLABORATIVELY WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM TO GET THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME FOR SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL LEADERS.

Leaders and the Law

Leaders are required to have a good working knowledge of the law and must ensure their school or preschool is operating within the law.

A major factor in the increasing demand and complexity of leadership roles is the need to understand the new and changing laws that apply to leadership roles. Leaders will be familiar with changes in the law in areas including:

- Child Protection
- Work Health and Safety
- Disability Discrimination
- The Code of Ethics

The increasing focus on education and child safety is also visible in recommendations flowing from the DeBelle Royal Commission and the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission.

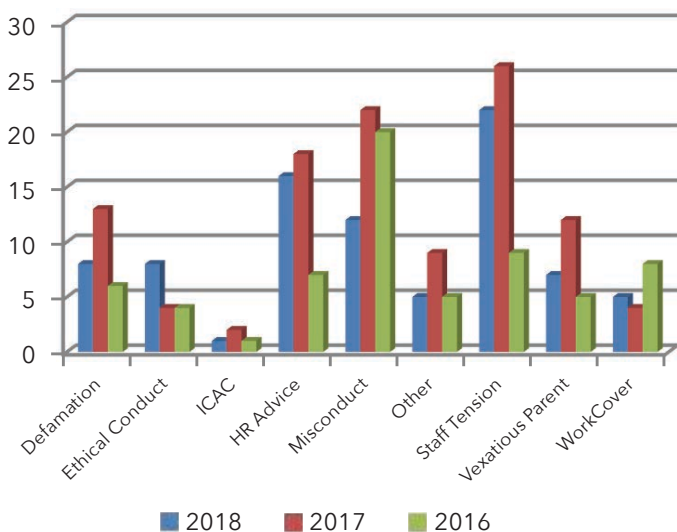
Accountability requirements on leaders have also substantially increased. These have been influenced by higher public expectations of accountability on government and public sector agencies, including the establishment of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC).

In recent years we have witnessed the Department place a greater emphasis on internal misconduct investigations against members. Some matters which would have been dealt with at the local level are now subject to formal investigation processes and findings that can lead to disciplinary action. Investigations and findings made through disciplinary processes have a deep personal impact and remain on an employee's record over the remainder of their career.

Leaders are now under the spotlight more than ever. They need quality independent advice, support and legal assistance to be successful and protect their reputation.

We can only provide you with legal assistance if you are a current financial member. It is crucial that you consider joining SASSLA now so we can assist you when you most need it!

SASSLA Member Assistance by Issue 2016-2018



SASSLA IN THE MEDIA



Principals “ruined” by long inquiries

Excerpt from Tim Williams, Education Reporter, The Sunday Mail 10 April 2016

Principals and teachers are having their careers ruined by police-style investigations into allegations of “relatively minor” wrongdoings that, in some cases, drag on for more than a year, school leaders say.

The SA State School Leaders Association says the Education Department is employing private investigators as part of “special investigations” which involve principals being stood down.

Association Chief Executive John Gregory said there should be a clear distinction between serious criminal matters such as allegations of child abuse or serious fraud that should be dealt with by police, and lesser matters that should be resolved by local education directors.

Instead, he said a special unit in the department – partly staffed by former police officers – was treating their targets as “guilty until proven innocent” over “relatively minor” issues.

Mr Gregory said sometimes the issues were as minor as preschool directors breaching policy by removing a shared laptop overnight to keep working at home.

Other accusations included sexual harassment, overworking or bullying staff, nepotism or conflicts of interest in hiring or making of school payments, and bringing inappropriate material to school.

“What you get is someone who is dark on the principal putting together (a list of) a few of these sorts of things and an investigation is launched,” Mr Gregory said.

“We’ve had people taken out of schools for more than a year, nothing found against them but their careers are in tatters.

“The cloud doesn’t lift.”

Our Legal Team

Our legal team at Tindall Gask Bentley have been assisting SASSLA members for 18 years. They are experts in South Australian education law and skilled in industrial relations.



Morry Bailes

MANAGING PARTNER

Areas of Expertise:

- Defamation
- Associations Law
- Industrial and Employment Law
- Criminal and Disciplinary
- Royal Commissions
- Litigation



Amber Sprague

PARTNER

Areas of Expertise:

- Workers Compensation
- Defamation
- Workplace Issues and Unfair Dismissals
- Industrial and Employment Law



Andrew Clare

SENIOR LAWYER

Areas of Expertise:

- Industrial and Employment Law
- Workplace Issues
- Restraint of Trade
- Disciplinary



Luke Officer

ASSOCIATE

Areas of Expertise:

- Criminal and Disciplinary, including ICAC investigations/inquiries
- Workers Compensation
- Industrial and Employment Law
- Guardianship and Administration
- Detainment and Orders under the Mental Health Act

Legal Assistance

tindallgaskbentley
lawyers



We give you immediate access to free professional legal advice when necessary.

Our legal team will represent you individually or collectively before relevant courts, tribunals, authorities or government departments. We also provide peer support, advice, mediation and workplace visits. We can help you with any legal matter in your leadership role including:

- Workplace injury, public liability injury and Return to Work SA entitlements, processes and representation at case conferences and tribunal hearings.
- Ethical conduct of staff members.
- Allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct and disciplinary action resulting in misconduct investigations.
- ICAC investigations, including being called as a witness.
- Unfair dismissal and reinstatement of entitlements.
- Defamation and vexatious allegations by staff members or parents.
- Assault and restraining orders.
- Harassment and bullying in the workplace.
- Police investigations relating to your site.
- 10% discount on fees for personal legal matters, including Wills and Estates, and free initial advice.

HOW WOULD YOU DEAL WITH UNFORESEEN CHALLENGES?

A group of teachers submit a grievance that you are bullying them. A directions meeting is called. **Who represents you when the AEU is representing staff?**

You are told to leave your site immediately and suspended pending a misconduct investigation. You receive no information about the allegations and no assistance from the Department. **How do you afford the cost of legal representation? How do you protect your career?**

A parent defames you on Facebook. The Department does not assist with defamation as it is a civil matter. **How do you have the material removed? How do you seek damages to your reputation?**

Enterprise Bargaining



SASSLA arranges and offers representatives to act as your Bargaining Agents and advocate in Enterprise Bargaining (EB) negotiations to secure improved employment conditions for preschool and school leaders and to raise your concerns with the government.

Our priority is to improve your employment conditions and focus on leading learning in schools and preschools. You can view our EB proposals in our Leadership Policy Paper and supplementary Workload Paper on our website or contact us for a hard copy.

Membership concerns and our analysis of flashpoints, leadership density and workload suggest the following areas for improvement:

- A substantial salary increase to recognise higher accountability requirements and demands.

- A reduction in the number of classifications. We are overclassified with nine categories when five to six would be fairer. We have too many distinctions to override common responsibilities.
- Being actively supported to do the work that makes the most difference to student achievement and outcomes; leading the learning in our schools and preschools.
- Access to professionally driven learning structures for leaders including sabbaticals.
- Improved structures for workplace consultation with wider representation of views and interests.
- Implementation of significant changes to workload demands and provision of quality support services to all Preschool Directors.

We invite you to consider adding your voice to the growing numbers of school and preschool leaders who want the EB to make a difference. You have a choice of who represents you in the EB negotiations!

Journey Insurance

Return to Work SA (previously WorkCover) no longer insures employees for injuries suffered while travelling to or from work. SASSLA has secured an insurance package to provide limited cover to members for journeys to and from work. This includes a maximum benefit payable of \$1500.00 weekly accident benefit, \$2000.00 broken bones payment and \$75,000 death cover. For full terms and conditions, please see our website.

The SASSLA Board

SASSLA engages a private voting company to conduct a yearly election of Board Members. Members are elected for a two year term. Four members are elected one year and five members the next to ensure continuity on the Board. SASSLA Board Members act in a voluntary capacity and give their time and commitment to influence positive change in the system for all leaders.



Marion Coady

CHAIRPERSON
Principal
Aberfoyle Park High School



Briony Brooks

BOARD MEMBER
Preschool Director
Cowandilla Children's Centre



Sharon Goldman

BOARD MEMBER
Principal
Blackwood High School



Steve Freeman

BOARD MEMBER
Principal
Woodend Primary School



Tracey Davies

BOARD MEMBER
Director Primary Learners
Department for Education



Craig Duguid

BOARD MEMBER
Deputy Principal
Aberfoyle Park High School



Tyson Grinham

BOARD MEMBER
Principal
Lockleys North Primary



Sue Burtenshaw

BOARD MEMBER
Principal
Stuart High School, Whyalla



Patrick Moran

BOARD MEMBER
Principal
Elizabeth Park Primary School

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

or join online at sassla.asn.au

Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss, Dr (please circle)

Given Name:

Family Name:

Home Address:

.....

Street Address:

.....

Suburb:

Postcode:

Contact Number:

Email:

ID Number:

Current Site:

Partnership:

Position:

I hereby apply for membership of the South Australian State School Leaders Association and understand that if my application is accepted, my membership will be effective from the date of the first payroll deduction. I certify that the information I have provided above is correct and my position equates to band B2 or above.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION AUTHORITY:

I authorise a payroll deduction of \$29.59 (GST inclusive) per fortnight to be paid to the South Australian State School Leaders Association. I understand that my membership will not be effective until the first payroll deduction. I understand that this deduction may be increased in future years to an amount in proportion to any increase in the annual membership fee set each year at the Association's Annual General Meeting.

Date:/...../.....

Signed:

Please post to the address below.



SASSLA's Business Manager, Leanne James, with Phil O'Loughlin

Membership is open to:

- Principals
- Preschool Directors
- Deputy Principals
- Assistant Principals
- Senior Leaders (band B2 and above)
- Education Directors, Principal Consultants and Early Childhood Leaders
- Managers of Support Services and Leadership positions in the Department (if a substantive school leadership role has been previously held)

Why SASSLA?

- Protect your career, reputation and wallet with fully funded legal support provided by our highly experienced legal team.
- We focus exclusively on school and preschool leadership to give you advocacy without compromise.
- Our membership is excellent value for money compared to other sources. Membership fees are \$29.59 per fortnight and are tax deductible.
- Regular email, web and social media updates about leaders' work and legal matters affecting education.
- Conferences and seminars dedicated to school leadership issues throughout the year.



Our Annual State Conference is always well regarded as giving pertinent and practical advice.

Designed and printed by:
Snap Lonsdale, 77 O'Sullivan Beach Road, Lonsdale SA 5160.



Testimonials

Former Coober Pedy Area School Principal Sue Burtenshaw wins \$40,000 over defamation

COURT REPORTER ANDREW DOWDELL

“The Department of Education had acted unjustly and unreasonably in transferring Ms Burtenshaw from her position as principal in July 2010.”

Excerpt from AdelaideNow July 30 2012

“Without the support of SASSLA I would not have stayed connected to and be continuing in my chosen and much loved career. It is so important that Principals have the full support and confidence of the Department. My very public legal case highlighted the fragility of the system when support and confidence dissipates in the face of political interference, media attacks and intolerance. SASSLA gave me support and encouragement during a very difficult time and when it seemed that no-one else would listen.”

Sue Burtenshaw
PRINCIPAL

“Joining SASSLA has afforded me the greatest level of professional support I could possibly have hoped for. It provided me with the opportunity to be heard meaningfully and with the assumption of good intent. The Association has shown great expertise in both legal and departmental processes, as well as holding clear understandings about management and site context. I will continue to appreciate their professional network and membership.”

Betty Elsworthy
PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR, PROSPECT KINDERGARTEN

“Whilst other associations and the Department talk about leader well-being, SASSLA was the only one to provide the care, concern and professional guidance for me over the past two years. As leaders we often hear of others enduring stressful times and it is easy to gossip, dismiss or think it won't happen to us. I hope no one has to endure what I have, but if you do, you can't afford not to be a SASSLA member. They shine the light in the darkness.”

Lynne-Maree Hastings
PRINCIPAL, HEWETT PRIMARY SCHOOL

“As a principal, we can find ourselves in unexpected circumstances. One such event occurred to me creating much concern and pressure. Fortunately, SASSLA ensured a positive outcome which has seen me back doing what I love; educating our state's future.”

Travis Bartlett
PRINCIPAL, HEATHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

“I see my SASSLA membership as a type of insurance policy. It's my support network to fall back on in possible times of crisis. Knowing that I have legal assistance a phone call away and financial assistance with legal costs gives me peace of mind. It's reassuring to know that I have genuine peer support now and throughout my future career.”

Ilia Tsoutouras
PRINCIPAL, VIRGINIA PRIMARY SCHOOL