

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT, ACEL

DR JIM WATTERSTON, FACEL



Welcome to our first edition for 2012. Chances are that at this stage of the New Year many carefully crafted and well intentioned New Year's resolutions have started to slip or have been neatly placed into the too-hard basket until they are reconsidered for next year. There is something about the start of a year that makes it an ideal time for reflection and to take stock of the changes you want (or need) to make, whether it be losing the last five kilograms, learning a language or booking that much needed holiday.

From a work perspective, even the best intentioned commitments can fall by the wayside as the academic year kicks into full swing and the momentum that drives our schools and education sector ramps up. In a year that will be marked by changes to the way we go about our business, the first being the recent release of the Gonski Review into school funding, we can all be forgiven for getting a little side tracked.

So if your morning gym class is hampered by the snooze button, evening language classes replaced by the professional reading you could not get done during work hours and that cruise to the Mediterranean suddenly out of reach, I'd like to present you with some resolutions that are not only achievable, but could also make a difference to your life, and to those around you in 2012.

The ten resolutions or key messages below are those that we have reinforced in our work place and we think are crucial in ensuring quality teaching and learning in our education sector as well as fostering innovation and work/life balance.

- 1. DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF**
The compulsive desire to complete all manner of tasks no matter how mundane, procedural and bureaucratic is ingrained in many of us leaders in the education sector and often comes at the expense of more important things you need to be doing to add value to teaching and learning in your schools. Doing what will truly make a difference primarily includes supporting and acknowledging those frontline educators, working on improving opportunities for students and devoting your efforts to innovation and excellence.
- 2. STAY CONNECTED TO THE CLASSROOM**
It is in the classroom - not at your desk - where you can make the greatest difference as an instructional leader. It is from here that you can support and mentor teachers and lead from the front.
- 3. ENSURE YOU (AND YOUR STAFF) HAVE A SUCCESSION PLAN**
Having a strong succession plan in place across your organisation is not only important for leaders in education, but for all teachers and others in the sector. In a profession where a high number of leaders and key staff will retire in the next decade, it is vital that we equip our future leaders with the skills, confidence and experience to step up and succeed.
- 4. FIND A MENTOR AND BE ONE**
Everyone needs a coach who challenges, provokes and supports in order to perform at their optimum. Talking regularly with a trusted support person helps you keep perspective, focus on the 'right' issues and enables you to be more strategic. In 2012 invest in your leadership development.

5. PROVIDE QUALITY ONGOING PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR STAFF

It is vital to support and equip staff with the opportunity to grow and develop. As well as quality and structured professional development, regular conversation and feedback to your team is vital. This not only provides a sense of purpose and appreciation but also promotes a culture that celebrates achievement, hard work, dedication, excellence and innovation. As I've written previously, the more you invest in others, the more satisfying and rewarding your work will become.

6. CREATE CONNECTIONS

Creating connections, networks and partnerships is one of the easiest ways to share expertise and innovation. These partnerships can be at all levels – in your school, across schools in your region, state or even across the world. Technology is making networking easier than ever before. The mindset of competition should be replaced by furthering the opportunity for collaboration and innovation to improve teaching and learning and outcomes for all students. Make an effort to make new connections this year.

7. WORK AT AND MODEL WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Striking a work and personal-life balance is easier said than done, but it is vital to not only ensure your own health but also the health of your organisation. Your actions will give permission for those around you to do the same. Morale and productivity will be enhanced as a result.

8. ENSURE YOUR FOCUS, AND THAT OF YOUR TEAM, IS ON THE GROWTH AND OUTCOMES OF EVERY STUDENT

It is often easy to get caught up in numbers, be they targets of student cohorts or standardised data averages. This year make a conscious decision to return your key focus to the individual. It is up to every teacher in every school to ensure that every child achieves appropriate social and academic growth. Making sure that no child slips through the cracks should be a renewed priority for 2012.

9. READ WIDELY

Keep up to date with the latest research, issues and debates to keep your school at the cutting edge. Good leaders are good learners and this is the modelling that defines your organisational culture.

10. STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN EVERYTHING YOU DO

The higher the expectations and outcomes we set at a personal and school level, the greater the results and opportunities. Don't settle for mediocre, strive to be the best.

In 2012, ACEL is your key partner in supporting your professional wellbeing and ongoing leadership developmental needs. It is a year of invigoration and growth for the organisation as we support our new CEO, Aasha Murthy to broaden our support services and to provide additional membership benefits. We hope that you resolve to be a more active and involved member in 2012 and that you spread the word to other colleagues who have yet to enjoy the consolidated benefits that ACEL membership will bring.

Best wishes to all of you for a productive and exciting year ahead. Like every year before, may this be the best year of your life!

Until next time,

