Stepping up to Leadership:
How to grow as a school leader and what steps need to be taken to be effective and successful.

Presenters:

Ros Curtis
Principal
St Margaret’s Anglican Girls’ School

Toni Riordan
Principal
St Aidan’s Anglican Girls’ School
Background to the two schools

An order of Anglican nuns, the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA), established St Margaret’s (1895) and St Aidan’s (1929) which continue to operate under the SSA Trustee. The “Trustee” acts like a Board of Directors.
Outline of Presentation

• Toni will talk about how an individual could grow as a leader

• Ros will talk about how schools can assist the growth of school leaders
Growing Senior Leaders of Schools
Why?

- Aspirational female staff are great role models for our students
- Strengthen the pipeline of potential female leaders of schools

Proportions of male and female teachers and leaders in Australian primary and secondary schools, SiAS 2013

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Growing Senior Leaders of Schools

We can grow senior leaders by:

• Specific programs

• Teachable moments

• Recruitment – for attitude and mindset, not always technical knowledge
Specific Programs

- Aspirant Leadership Development Programs
- Acting positions
- Shadowing
- Financial support for masters degrees
- Professional Journal – publication
- Nominate for awards
- Committee membership
- Coaching/Mentoring
- ‘Whole of school’ projects
Teachable Moments

Finkelstein, Sydney ‘The Best Leaders are Great Teachers’
HBR January/February, 2018

‘Exceptional leaders...routinely spent time in the trenches with employees, passing on technical skills, general tactics, business principles, and life lessons. Their teaching was informal and organic, flowing out of the tasks at hand. And it had an unmistakable impact: Their teams and organisations were some of the highest performing in the sector.’
Teachable Moments

Our role as leaders, is to develop our team members into leaders.

We do this through:

• Customized instructions
• Questions
• Modelling

‘If you are not teaching, you are not really leading!

Aristotle: The function of leadership is to produce more leaders not followers.
Think – Pair - Share

What could you do differently from tomorrow?
Recruitment

• ‘Can do’ attitude
• Psychometric testing/Strengths Finder
• Ability to take direction/feedback
• Responsive, open to new ideas, efficient

Aristotle: [S]he who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander.

Too often we employ for ‘technical knowledge’ – however, we need to promote ‘A performers’
The A Performer

• Strong teacher - Credible
• Willing to go the extra mile
• Good relationships – staff, students, parents
• Outward looking
• Solution focussed
• Manages upwards
The B Performer

• Some of the ‘A’ qualities – not all
• Average/competent teacher
• Mostly good relationships – but some examples when this is not the case
• Complains/works to rule
• Generally conscious of being part of a team
The C Performer

• Could be a great teacher but a difficult staff member
• Creates work for others
• Difficult to deal with, generally
• Doesn’t ‘play the game’ – doesn’t follow the rules or live up to expectations of the professionalism of a teacher
• Has personal issues impacting on work
Signs of Leadership Potential

TALENT = LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

• How a person thinks
• How a person works with others
• How flexible a person is
Signs of Leadership Potential
(Hay Group, 2008)

How a person thinks

This includes the ability to:
• understand the big picture and make connections;
• master the basics of a role and look for more challenges quickly;
• take the initiative, and be self-motivated and a self-starter;
• think differently, demonstrating intellectual curiosity, capacity and flexibility; and
• solve problems
Signs of Leadership Potential
(Hay Group, 2008)

How a person works with others

This includes:

• self confidence and credibility;

• the ability to inspire others, with caring and concern for others;

• empathy and the ability to learn from others; and

• a passion to make a difference.

Talented performers ‘create with’ rather than ‘deliver to’
Signs of Leadership Potential
(Hay Group, 2008)

How flexible a person is

This includes:

• resilience and knowing how to finish the job;

• craving action and getting involved;

• ‘confusion endurance’ and a willingness to embrace ambiguity; and

• opportunism.
We need to **grow** great leaders.
Growth is now a “given”.

Growth is not a “nice to have”.
Mapping the growth
Australian Principals Survey 2016

18.4 years as a Teacher
(excluding time spent as Principal)

Late bloomer = 27 years
(factoring in 7 years of maternity leave and part-time work)

*Census of 985
Think – Pair - Share

Can you map your growth over your career?

There’s no doubt about it – you are a woman on her way up.
Ros Curtis,
Stepping Up to Principalship: Advice to aspiring school leaders

Have competencies of leaders that the world demands changed since Ros’ step up from Deputy Principal in 2010 to Principal in 2011 to my step up to Principal in 2018?
Ros’ Top 10:

1. **Communication**
   Write, read, seek ideas, share with colleagues

2. **Seek feedback**
   It leads to professional conversation

3. **Trust**
   A leader needs to trust more yet is probably the least trusted
Ros’ Top 10:

4. Delegation
Elastic boundaries, sustainability

5. Relationship with the Principal Chair

6. Relationship with the Principal
Business Manager – increase knowledge of school finances/ensuring a ‘financial’ subject as part of further study
Ros’ Top 10:

7. Principal and Staff Relationship
No friendships but replaced by collegial relationships with other principals

8. Figurehead
Everyone is watching and judging
Ros’ Top 10:

9. Representation
Finding the balance between being present in the school with all the needs for external engagement

10. Authority
It is bestowed upon you by nature of the role. May not be ready for that
Toni’s Top 10:

1. Know your why

AHISA Principal:

“Leadership is a job that requires humility and creativity. If you know you have a tendency towards arrogance, be humble. If you think leadership is about power and privilege; choose another job. And if you think Principalship is about getting out of the classroom to do paperwork; go work in an office.”
Toni’s Top 10:

2. Further Study
Be discerning. Masters Degree; some modules of business and financial management / Action Research / Professional Writing and Presentations

3. Autonomy
Shadowing experiences / Learn the job ‘from the inside’

4. Leadership Development Courses
Leading people - hard conversations, performance management, structured coaching
Toni’s Top 10:

5. **Leading change**
   Critical for a rapidly changing world

6. **Strategic Planning**
   Strategic thinking and longer term visioning

7. **Understanding cultural ‘fit’**
   Cultural ‘fit’ (Smart, Humble, Hungry –Patrick Lencioni)
   Self awareness and self management
Toni’s Top 10:

8. Practice
Application, Curriculum Vitae, interview, (mentor, sponsor, professional networks

9. Well being
Managing the role and the ‘whole’, healthy person

10. Have a growth mindset
Learn... always!
What remains the same?
(from 2011 to 2018)

- Feedback and Self awareness – Values, character
- Life long learning – For growth
- Relationships – Leading people
What remains the same?

GROWTH!

Commit to growing... always!