

Why the SSTUWA is the right choice for leaders



By Kim Dullard

I've been working in the SSTUWA for 10 months now and have had a firsthand look at how it works and what drives the staff.

My initial reason for accepting the position was because I'm not in favour of two unions representing teachers and administrators.

I believe having a union which supports a collaborative approach reduces a "them and us" mentality, which could lead to a lack of collaboration and good will on both sides.

There is nothing personal about this belief. I have good and close friends who have opted for the Principals' Federation of Western Australia (PFWA) but I believe a principal's job is to lead through empowerment.

Teachers can't be empowered if they are constantly told what to do – they must decide this for themselves. Our job, as leaders, is to ensure they get adequate opportunity to make good decisions; receive high-quality, evidence-rich, professional learning opportunities; quality data analysis opportunities and problem solving sessions.

You can't expect a student to get an A or a B grade if the teacher doesn't provide them the opportunity to get what's required for that grade. We can't expect staff to develop great planning for improvement documents if we don't give them the opportunities to discover what works and then take responsibility for having a go at getting it done.

When I read the transcript from the PFWA's case to attain union status, I was left feeling it wants to turn the principal's role into something other than an educational leadership role. Their witnesses said they don't have time to lead the education process, so they will delegate that to someone else.

Read the rest of Kim's article in the February edition of Western Teacher [here](#).