

Farewell to a much loved colleague



There are few people who have had such a positive impact on education and educators in Western Australia as Kim Dullard. We grieve his loss as a friend, colleague and mentor to many.

Prior to joining the SSTUWA in 2015 as leadership organiser, Kim already had a wonderful track record in developing, mentoring and leading teachers and system leaders in best practice since 1977 when he began his union membership and teaching career.

In 2015 Kim had just completed three years as principal of Woodlands Primary School. His leadership saw Woodlands PS grow as a teacher development school in the areas of English and the Early Years Learning Framework; using Kagan structures for guided practice sessions and a coaching approach based on the GROWTH (Goal, Reality, Options, Will do, Tactics and Habits) Model to support staff.

Immediately before that Kim had been a private consultant specialising in Educational Leadership and working predominately in the East Kimberley mentoring and coaching principals in the Catholic sector.

As an accredited coach Kim also worked for GROWTH Coaching, supporting teachers and leaders across Australia, as well as running professional learning sessions.

Before working as a consultant, Kim was a director in the West Coast and Fremantle/ Peel Education Districts. He was also principal at Middle Swan PS, Beckenham PS and Katanning PS over a period of 14 years; all of which gave him both a school and system perspective on the work of principals.

As a school leader Kim was widely respected and acknowledged for his pedagogical innovativeness in areas such as multi-age grouping, implementing the Curriculum Framework, learning safety and instructional intelligence.

When the SSTUWA decided to implement a different approach to working with school leader members, through the school leader organiser, Kim was the natural choice. His commitment to, and experience in, collaborative approaches was the perfect vehicle for resolving the tension which sometimes arises between principals and teachers in schools.

A key part of his role was to support leadership team members of the SSTUWA, as well as ensuring the union gave an opportunity to those leaders not in the union to fairly present their side of a dispute within their school. He led and deeply believed in collaborative school cultures.

Among Kim's aims was to increase leader membership in the SSTUWA and to make sure more training and support was provided to school leaders.

He succeeded in every sense. Kim's work was absolutely crucial in establishing the base from which the SSTUWA, through his work and that of others, could secure recognition from the department and government of the vital need for better mentoring, broader networks and improved support for leaders across the WA education system.

Kim said of himself:

"Leadership for me is the ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively with staff to provide the best possible learning environment for the students. Good leaders build the effectiveness of their staff by utilising processes and strategies to develop whole of school approaches that provide a consistent and continuous learning environment from one year to the next.

"They empower staff to make decisions based upon current research that reaffirm the principles of teaching, learning and assessment from the School Curriculum and Standards Authority.

"My advice to leaders is to stay connected to your staff, trust them and most importantly, support and guide them."

This wisdom was imparted not only to teachers and leaders across the education sector; it resonated with everyone he worked with.

Whenever you passed Kim's desk you saw pictures of his children and grandchildren. There was no doubting who was at the centre of his life.

We were privileged to know him. He will be remembered as a fierce and passionate public education leader who genuinely left a legacy and we will miss him dearly.

Vale Kim Dullard.

A tribute from Barrie Bennett:

I've been teaching in classrooms now for 48 years. In that time I've met a lot of great teachers, school administrators, ministers of education, change agents, parents, etc and I would say unequivocally that Kim was the best of the lot. He got it all; he sensed the big picture, the grand quilt, the players, the politics.

He could smell schlock a mile away. He never shied away from confronting bad decisions or no decisions.

He was always willing to confront and resolve conflict. He was assertive, but always guided by powerful beliefs and values. His passion for kids and the classrooms was genetic and groomed by observation and conversations.

Kim understood that if not for kids we would have no faculties of education, no ministries of education, no teacher unions...he understood the need for them to all work together to make a difference in the lives of kids.