

## ST ANDREWS LUTHERAN COLLEGE T.A.L.L. PROJECT (TEACHERS AS LEADER-LEARNERS)

### *SEMINAR OUTLINE:*

#### *Developing teachers as leaders and agents of change through collaborative individualism*

At St Andrews core business includes the development of teachers as leaders in revisioning and renewing education within the College. During 2003-4 thirteen teachers have been engaged in a school-devised, funded project, called T.A.L.L., Teachers as Leader-Learners. The project has been built upon the work of Dr Frank Crowther et al in *Developing Teacher Leaders* (2002), the Educational Leadership Dimensions of LEA's Millennial Principals Project and the College's six Attributes of Lifelong Learning. In this P-12 school the teachers involved are diverse in terms of experience, year level and subject expertise but all have been engaged in the two elements of the programme:

- Specific development of teacher-leadership skills through workshops and mentoring
- Leadership of an Action Project Team within the College to research and implement a specific pedagogical or pastoral care initiative in the College. This project is one which is of interest to the teacher-leader but aligned to the vision of the College.

Through the T.A.L.L. project, significant changes to the student-learning environment at St Andrews are being accompanied by a positive increase in staff morale and cohesion. The contention of this presentation is that educational change is effective when it is owned and driven by teachers operating with, what Crowther calls, collaborative individualism.

This presentation will be conducted collaboratively by a number of teacher-leaders from the College, with multi-media support.

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#### ***Biographical Details: Because this presentation will involve staff talking about their own personal teacher-leadership journeys, here is a more personal introduction to us...***

*Ruth Butler* has been Principal of St Andrews Lutheran College for five years, having served in previous Lutheran Schools as Head of Curriculum, Head of English and teacher. She spent many hours picking the brains of Frank Crowther in his USQ office in 1998-9 while working with staff on a visioning project for Concordia College, Toowoomba. She says she is still learning to teach – most recently from her co-teacher in Year 12 English Extension – and how to lead – from the wise and wonderful people around her.

*Angela Brittain* was a graduate Science/Maths/Physics teacher when she arrived at St Andrews in 2000 and has been involved in many school projects. She currently co-ordinates Middle School Science, is a key teacher of MLATs and has the dubious distinction of being a flat-mate of Jodie Hoff.

*Stephen McGrath* is the Co-ordinator of the T.A.L.L. project and has been Head of the Junior School at St Andrews for five years. He was previously Head of an Anglican Primary School in

Sydney for nine years and the Gold Coast Co-ordinator of Red Cross...both roles having brilliantly prepared him for life surrounded by over 500 little people with their various educational needs and injuries.

*Elsa Onn* was a foundation member of staff at St Andrews in 1993 and has seen it all. Elsa has a passion for literacy learning and is the P-3 Co-ordinator at the College. A quiet achiever, Elsa always has a gracious, calm demeanour – and was pleased upon her marriage to change her name to Onn so she never had to remind another person to spell her maiden name Huf with only one “F”.

*Jodie Hoff*: A Primary/Drama teacher, Jodie was Deputy Head of the Junior School before taking up the roles of Head of the Middle School and P-10 Curriculum Co-ordinator. Her most important roles at the College, though, are Co-ordinator of Fun and Festivities and Keeper of the stop-watch whenever any of her fellow-leaders speaks.

### ***Summary of the Points Raised in the Presentation:***

#### **A. RUTH'S REFLECTIONS:**

##### **1. Introduction: Definition of “Collaborative Individualism”**

David Limerick, Bert Cunnington and Frank Crowther in their 1998 book, *Managing the New Organisation* assert that the world has changed and modern organisations must take note that today's workers, especially baby-busters, are committed to their own personal independence and self-realisation: they are the “Employees who Can Say No”. Effective organisations are thus characterised by “**collaborative individualism**”:

*“empowered, autonomous individuals who work together with others, often in groups, but who are not bound by loyalty to those groups as an end in itself. They are bound by a common mission and collaborate, as autonomous individuals, towards its achievement (p 104).”*

“**Collaborative**” usually refers to working together in teams and sharing decision-making. This element has been recognised for many years to be an essential ingredient of modern management, however, organisations can no longer be seen as being made up of interlocking teams and committees to which individuals are assigned in order to achieve organisational goals. They are made up of mature, autonomous, proactive individuals who collaborate to achieve personal and organisational goals.

“**Individualism**” does not refer to “anarchy and social atomism” but “personal independence and self-realisation” (p. 103). Bailey of the ANZ Bank, argued: “I do not want a team of football players: I want a team of cricketers.” He did not want employees who feel that if they missed the tackle someone else in the team would make it. He wanted someone who would confront that 100km an hour ball on their own. Yet that person had to be collaborative. The person who normally batted flamboyantly, for example, had to be willing to dig in when things got tough for the team. The head of a government utility said: “I want a team of individuals” (p 106).

## 2. Teacher-Leadership at St Andrews

The TALL Project was based upon the idea of harnessing the power of “collaborative individualism” to further improve life and learning at the College. The aim was to encourage individuals with passion and a strong sense of responsibility for areas of school life (regardless of whether they had positional responsibility for that area) to develop teams and undertake projects pertaining to their areas of interest.

We first adapted the Millennial Principals Project’s **Dimensions of Educational Leadership for teachers**. These dimensions align well with the notion of “collaborative individualism” (see attached).

Prior to TALL, teacher-leadership was already well-developed at St Andrews.

(See attached - teams operating in 2004)

In addition, a number of the projects were already “in the pipeline”. The TALL Project gave them a stronger focus and resources to enable them to proceed.

## 3. Personal Reflection – Ruth

*How do I foster collaboration?*

- Believe in it at a deep level. Know that I cannot do it on my own
- Model it in my relationships with fellow-leaders
- Listen to others, especially dissenting voices: “Seek first to understand, and then to be understood” (Covey)
- Affirm team-members
- Challenge people who inhibit collaboration and “ideal speech conditions”
- Publicly promote teamwork – use celebrations, symbols
- Avoid delegation – encourage ownership
- Support – know when to do dirty work yourself, know when to let the fledgling fly.
- Make teams accountable – feedback meetings, time constraints, evaluation

*How do I foster individualism?*

- Try to model passion and responsibility
- With people, to avoid square pegs in round holes, start with the pegs. Make the holes fit the pegs.
- Maverick, gifted individuals are valuable. Learn how to support and structure them without constraining and discouraging them.
- When ideas are being presented, listen, be positive, then ask the probing questions
- Don’t clone yourself – build teams of people with different strengths.

*How do I help to bring about change?*

- First gain trust. Build up Emotional Bank Account (Covey).
- Dig drains before you build the building. Gain agreement on values and philosophy before making structural changes.
- Select staff carefully – a few chosen for their special giftedness/brilliance whose flaws can be tolerated and moulded; most chosen for their character (Wayne Bennett).
- Talk around an idea for a long time before letting it loose.
- Take risks – know when to push through an obstacle, and when to turn back.

## *B. STEPHEN'S REFLECTION*

# A TALL Story (in a nutshell)

Once upon a time in a tropical paradise known as the Gold Coast, there was a small but growing community of people in a school located in the hinterland of the Burleigh Heads area. The members of this community were very committed to the principles of shared leadership, in fact they were so committed to the principles of exercising every one's gifts and talents that their motto was *Never Underestimate Teamship*, and it was this motto that led to them become affectionately and widely known as NUTs.

The Head NUT of the school was a very enthusiastic Principal, who recognised that amongst her staff were many innovative and committed teachers who in a variety of ways were leading many aspects of life at the school. Within the school, there was already a strong sense of teamship, and a growing number of people who were developing projects to further the educational objectives of the school.

People were coming from far and wide (some as far afield as Toowoomba) to join the ranks of the NUTs. Some included people with designated positions like the Head of the Little People, the Head of the Middle Sized People and the NUT who looked after the Really Big People, also known as the Assistant Principal – Senior School. Many others, however, did not have designated positions of responsibility, but were developing innovative programs within the community, and were actively reaching out to exercise their interest and expertise amongst other team members.

One day as our Head NUT, a keen advocate of collaborative individualism, was wading through the paper warfare on her desk, she noticed an offer of funding to further the skills and expertise of teachers around the country. Being a person who recognised a good bargain when one came along, and never daunted by the enormity of any task, the Head NUT went about the task of applying for the grant and submitted it to the powers that be. She used her passion for collaborative individualism to submit a very creative application that would meet all of the criteria set down to further the skill development of her growing team of leader-learners.

At the same time, the Head NUT was sharing some of her experiences with some of the other NUTs, known as the management team. She even managed to convince one of the NUTs that he should consider facilitating the leadership project, a task that seemed almost overwhelming for this little NUT. However, inspired by the leadership of the Principal and the enthusiasm of the other NUTs around him, he agreed to do so.

And then the big day came – the NUTs received news that the application had been successful and that money would be allocated to further the growth of other NUT members. But that wasn't the end of the story. The community in the hinterland of tropical paradise had its own share of shady and questionable environmental influences, like the dastardly TIME element (or lack thereof) so prevalent in schools today, the ever-

lurking TIGHT TIMEFRAMES that add pressure to people's already busy lives, and the evil attitude of NOT SOMETHING ELSE TO DO !! The threat of such influences led the NUTs to adopt a very close and united front throughout the process, and together they commenced the process of organising events and opportunities that helped the NUTs to continue growing themselves and others as strong and vibrant members.

The process looked like this :

2003

- August – invitation extended to all members of the community to find out more about the leadership project and 33 staff attended a dinner and considered their own involvement in the project
- September – 13 leader-learners committed to developing and implementing a variety of action projects based on an identified need within the school
- October – evening workshop on Leading Effective Teams and Project Management (Dr Fran Steer)
- November – evening workshop on Effective Teaching and Learning Workshop (Dr Fran Steer)
- Ongoing – release time for project team meetings and mentoring by members of the management team

2004

- March – evening workshop on Managing Change – led by teachers from Trinity Lutheran College, Southport State High School and St John's Lutheran Primary School, Bundaberg
- Friday April 23 2004 : Celebration Dinner for all participants

Some of the projects initiated or developed were:

- Introduction of the Primary Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate into the Junior School
- Development and introduction of a whole new range of elective choices for Middle School students (Years 7-9) integrating key learning areas and based upon St Andrews attributes of Lifelong Learners and the new QSA Outcomes-Based Syllabus
- A new programme for Year 10 students linking subjects more closely to those in Years 11&12 and introducing a range of lifeskill units, along with Outdoor Education
- Pastoral Care programme for Middle School
- "Building a Caring Community" framework to underpin our student welfare, anti-bullying and mediation processes in the College
- Maths development at Year 8 using the MLATS model
- Introduction of new Year 7 course linking Science and Technology called SciTech
- Senior Leadership development (Years 11-12)

The process also involved extensive accountability to the Government through the use of teacher entry and exit surveys, the submission of case studies from all project leaders and ongoing evaluation of the process.

In many ways the TALL project was a resounding success: many of the projects made significant progress and consolidation has occurred throughout 2004. A couple did not get off the ground very successfully for various reasons. An unexpected result, though, was an unusually positive and enthusiastic staff morale at the end of 2003, despite the normal and extra-normal pressures.

The story does not end there ! Leadership teams are still operating within the College and reporting back to Teaching/Learning Committee and whole staff meetings. The concept of collaborative individualism permeates throughout the community and is one of the guiding principles of all that we do. We continue to see new people take up the baton in the race for education excellence, and run with it, supported in earnest by the other runners.

### ***C. ELSA'S REFLECTION***

#### **What is the PYP?**

- Inquiry based
- Child centred
- Constructivist philosophy
- Integrated units of inquiry
- Forward looking
- Education for the 'whole' child
- International focus
- Responsible citizenship

#### **PYP Student Profile. PYP Students are...**

- Inquirers
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Risk takers
- Knowledgeable
- Principled
- Caring
- Open-minded
- Well-balanced
- Reflective

The staff at St Andrews was already examining and refining aspects of the teaching/ learning process and developing the College's Attributes of Lifelong Learning. The Primary Years Program of the International Baccalaureate provided a consistent and logical framework for structured inquiry and effective questioning to make learning more significant and more meaningful. It also allowed students to think and act personally, locally and globally.

#### ***10 Ways to Encourage Positive Attitudes during the Process of Change***

##### **1. Embrace the passion and develop the vision**

- don't wait too long to begin; keep the momentum traveling
- form a nucleus of people with a variety of skills, talents and abilities who meet regularly to develop a clear strategy and provide ongoing ideas and support for implementation of the project
- excitement is not only motivating and energising, it is also contagious

**2. Call in the outside experts - even if you are an expert yourself**

- a wise Man once said “I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his home-town” (Luke 4:24)
- equip all staff with professional development in the latest research, skills and strategies and provide time to work on these within Year Level or Planning teams

**3. Teachers will always want to know “...but what does it look like?”**

- as part of the PYP team’s research, schools were visited and photo and video footage was taken to show staff examples of various ways in which classroom environments were set up and Units of Inquiry were implemented
- sample Units were collected to show staff as examples and an introductory Unit was developed by the PYP team in consultation with the teachers to help introduce the PYP concepts into classrooms
- each teacher was provided with a “holiday pack” containing ideas, visual aids, games and practical hands-on strategies and resources they could use in the classroom to peruse at their leisure over the holidays

**4. School structure and culture play an important role**

- make creative timetabling your forte. The success of the PYP was dependent upon the collaborative planning and evaluation of Units, so teachers’ release time is concurrent with the others in their Year Level team -  
there is a strong emphasis on team building, staff cohesion and encouraging positive staff morale at St Andrews
- time is allocated during Assemblies to explore the PYP Student Profiles and celebrate individual and class achievements and experiences within the PYP Units

**5. Remember that diversity keeps life interesting**

- some people want to dive in and “have a go“, others want to “get it right” or test the waters before they get in
- get to know your staff and identify their strengths
- allow people time to take on board information at their own pace and provide support and short cuts along the way as necessary
- encourage the “collaborative individualism” of staff and exercise your confidence in each of them to take action in their unique way as a member of a team of individuals

**6. Provide plenty of sharing time**

- to discuss thinking and learning beliefs and values, share trials and tribulations and let them know that they are not alone in the journey
- celebrate student and staff achievements and learning share and reflect on ideas and Units of work
- devote time in Assemblies and staff meetings to do this

**7. Be approachable and available**

- don’t pretend it’s going to be easy, acknowledge the hurdles and possible setbacks that may be encountered and offer support and affirmation



- encourage, listen and respond to feedback, both positive and negative
- remember that this is a growth experience for all involved (including yourself!)

**8. Be flexible** - this is self explanatory, but be prepared to negotiate

**9. Keep your sense of humour !**

**10. Encourage and support risk taking** - PowerPoint presentation - a snapshot of risk taking at St Andrews

#### ***D. JODIE'S REFLECTION***

##### **Joys and challenges of the Change Process (Ramblings of an erratic mind)**

- Important to acknowledge that change is a process and doesn't happen overnight. Because it is a process you need to be aware and explore the stages, emotions and psychology of change. Once you are able to do this it helps you to celebrate the joys and approach the challenges in a different light. People often start keen and enthusiastic then the reality of what is involved / work load strikes and a feeling of overload or lack of control or questioning why are we doing this?
- Celebrate everything even the small successes, how people / team members overcame obstacles and how they've moved forward.
- Maintain the vision – the pathway may vary along the way with detours, complete stalls etc but always review, reflect, listen and create new pathways if possible
- Joys- teacher and student learning improved, hearing people talk about teaching and learning – people wanting to share, students talking about learning in a meaningful and positive manner
- Blockers- listen and acknowledge view
- Them and us mentality (blaming- sense of loss)
- Very rarely get whole group consensus to do something – identify and work with what everyone essentially agrees upon and work from this...

##### **How do I foster collaboration?**

- Keep your ear/s close to the ground- be open to the vibe and what is going on around you
- Continually reflect and review with team members... keep momentum going
- Work alongside people/ in the group... get in on the action yourself
- Share openly challenges / joys and how you have overcome them
- Plan together plans / timeframes etc

##### **How do I foster individualism?**

- Listen carefully to what people say and observe what they do (interact with a variety of people )
- Be encouraging ( eg I've noticed you do this ..... really well, come my friend, drink with me and let's talk ideas... )
- Share your passions with people
- Be myself

##### **How do I help to bring about change?**

- Encourage and support honesty amongst the people I work with
- Try not to take issues / situations personally. If there are concerns about the changes occurring remember it's the 'change' that people may be having a go at and not you - be strong but not defensive

- Understand and know the people you work with, strangely and fortunately people are not all like you or have the same world view. Take the time to get to know the team members ( personally and professionally- formally and informally)
- Acknowledge that the team members are individuals and like students in your class have different needs and ways of learning- encourage, support and work with this ( eg some people like to talk, while others want to dive in and go for gold). Use those doers to work along side others etc
- Listen, support and encourage risk taking
- Clarify process / confusion / boundaries/ essential agreements, address issues of concern together and individually ( strengths and growth areas)
- Be real about what is possible but dream at the same time

## ***F. DISCUSSION***

### **1. Think, Pair, Share**

*Share a strategy you have used, or seen used to foster collaboration, individualism Or to effect change.*

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Limerick, D., Cunnington, B., Crowther, F., *Managing the New Organisation: Collaboration and Sustainability in the Post-Corporate World*, Warriewood, Business and Professional Publishing, 1998

## ***ST ANDREWS LUTHERAN COLLEGE***

### ***TEACHER LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS***

#### ***Teacher Leaders:***

##### **1. Embrace and promote the Mission of the School through:**

- Reflecting critically on practice; aligning practice to school's mission (ie.celebrating the Gospel of Christ, nurturing the individual, empowering lifelong learners)
- Articulating, personally modelling and influencing others to uphold the values underpinning the school's mission
- Demonstrating Gospel principles and Christian qualities such as forgiveness, reconciliation, trustworthiness, service
- Taking personal responsibility for behaviour and performance.
- Showing a genuine interest in students' lives
- Contributing to an image of teachers as professionals who make a difference
- Gaining respect and trust within the school and the broader community

##### **2. Strive to develop in students lifelong learning attributes through effective practices of teaching, learning, assessment, behaviour management and pastoral care by:**

- Seeking a deep understanding of knowledge, skills, attitudes and strategies relevant to purposeful and productive teaching and learning.
- Evaluating current practices, identifying areas where improvement is desirable; exploring and trialling alternative or innovative approaches to curriculum and pedagogy.
- Creating effective learning experiences related to students' needs and in accordance with the School's mission

##### **3. Facilitate communities of learning through teamwork and networking by:**

- Encouraging a cohesive, schoolwide approach to pedagogy (teaching, learning and assessment)
- Helping to develop a culture of shared decision making and working harmoniously with others towards the achievement of shared goals.
- Approaching professional learning as consciousness raising about complex issues
- Establishing and enhancing project and pastoral teams to achieve effective implementation
- Listening with openness and attention; speaking with courage and consideration
- Facilitating understanding across diverse groups while also respecting individual differences; being sensitive to unspoken voices; responding to concerns
- Synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' discussions and activities

**4. Manage improvement initiatives (change) successfully through:**

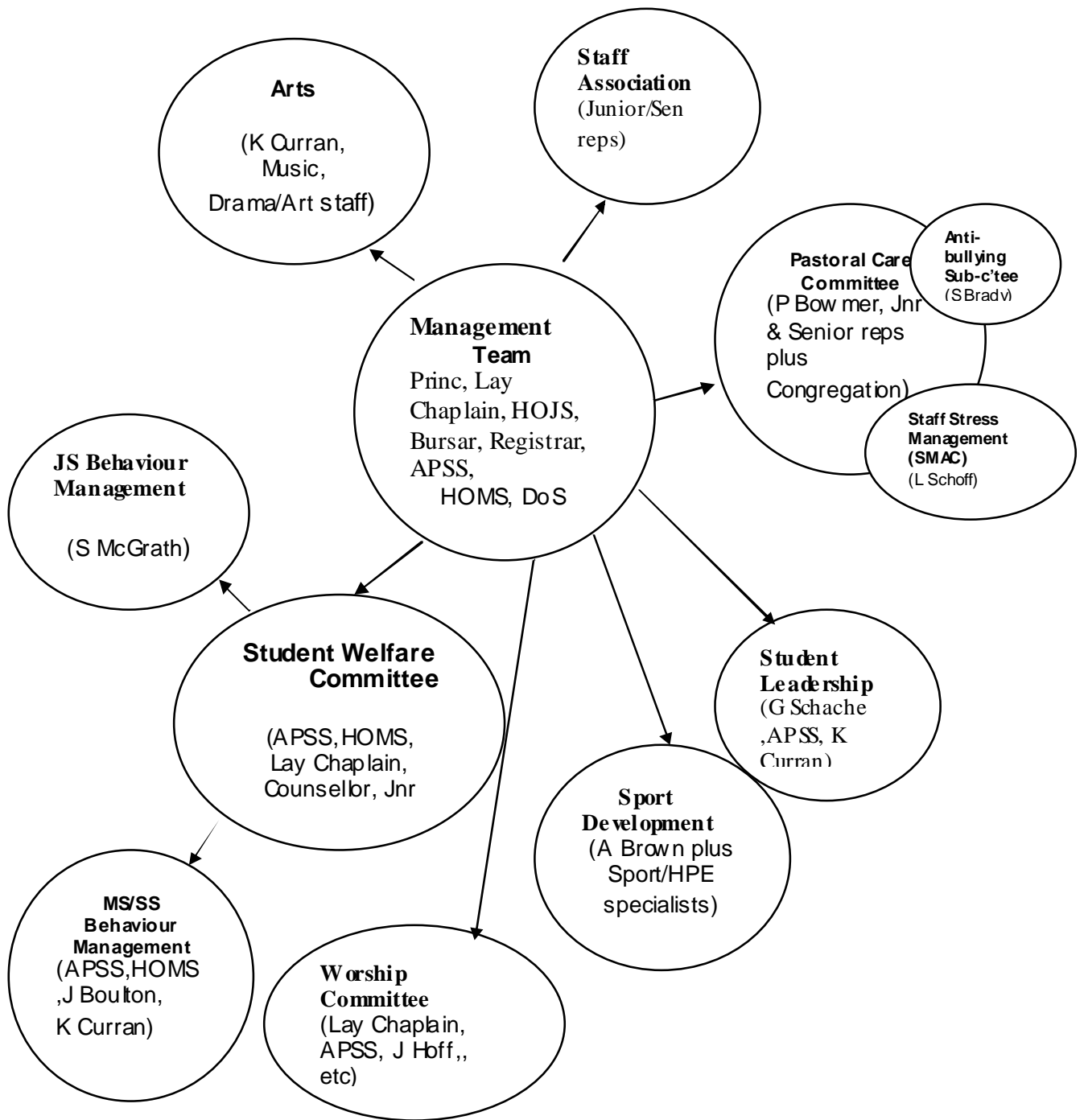
- Recognising and valuing own strengths, and being prepared to address areas for growth
- Being sensitive towards and acting on the challenges and opportunities that arise within the school and the wider context
- Assessing and confronting barriers to change in school's culture and structures
- Thinking laterally; considering the human, structural, political and symbolic dimensions of issues
- Accessing political processes in and out of the school
- Being persuasive and influential; mobilising people and resources for mutual benefit; negotiating and resolving disagreements, building alliances for strategic bases of support
- Designing action plans; maintaining focus on issues of importance
- Managing improvement initiatives to completion: organising complex tasks, identifying and allocating resources, managing issues of time and pressure through priority setting
- Monitoring progress; evaluating outcomes; reporting results to stakeholders

**5. Help to build a positive school culture through:**

- Striving towards standards of excellence; being constructively critical, being persistent in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks.
- Acting on opportunities for others to gain success and recognition
- Using symbols, ceremonies, rituals and stories to achieve meaning and commitment and to celebrate success
- Adopting a no-blame attitude when things go wrong
- Creating a sense of community identity and pride

# STAFF TEAMS 2004

## STUDENT/STAFF WELFARE & ACTIVITIES



**ST ANDREWS LUTHERAN COLLEGE  
TEACHING/LEARNING TEAMS 2004**

*JUNIOR SCHOOL*

*P-12*

*MIDDLE/SENIOR SCHOOLS*

