



# ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

*The parent voice on public education*

13 May, 2020

To: All Canberra public school principals, teachers, learning-support assistants & all school staff

## An open letter from the ACT Council of P&C Associations

Over the past weeks, we've gathered a lot of feedback from ACT P&C associations and parents about how they are faring, preferences about returning to school, and how remote learning is going.

While most of what we say publicly is advocating for parents, sometimes what gets lost is the importance and value that parents place on teachers and school staff, and how grateful parents are for the enormous efforts made to support students and families during this pandemic.

We wanted, on behalf of our members, to thank all our school staff, and share with you some of the feedback from ACT P&Cs.

- There is overwhelmingly strong support for our teachers, LSAs and principals:  
*"Teachers are doing a great job - all they can."*
- Parents value direct communication from principals and expressed trust and faith in their leadership. One P&C noted:  
*"When our Principal says it's safe to return to school, we will do so."*
- Parents recognise that teacher safety is fundamental to considering schools safe places
- There are very positive examples of remote learning working well – many P&Cs emphasised the connection with school and classrooms made via video. Remote learning has generally worked better for older students, while parents of students in younger years have struggled with the mode of delivery and support requirements, rather than the content.
- P&Cs recognise and understand the enormous effort required to develop, re-design and deploy remote learning to all our students. They also acknowledge that teachers are not able to teach via both remote and face-to-face learning at the same time.
- Parents welcomed and valued the efforts that school staff have made to engage and support communities. It was heartening to hear of the funny dances, drive-bys, video calls, contacts and online activities driven by both schools and P&Cs working together.
- Parents valued a remote learning option to continue during the pandemic.

We would like to thank the teachers and staff who volunteered to work at the hub schools. This was an important option. While this solution hasn't really worked for families, the feedback has been insightful - pulling families away from the support network and safe environment of their local school has left them feeling bereft. It underscores how much value and reliance is placed on our school community networks by families and students – from the familiar friendly face at the front office, to the well-known teacher, the much-loved LSA or the extensive parent networks.

Again, we thank our principals and teachers, and all school staff for their effort and commitment to our families, students, and teaching and learning during these unprecedented times. We are in this together and, while there will always be a range of experiences and opinion, at a broad level, our principals and teachers have strong support from P&Cs and parents.

With thanks,

Kirsty McGovern-Hooley  
President, ACT Council of P&C Associations