

Leading from the Middle: It's Real and It's Important

[A Statement of Commitment to the Profession of Teaching](#)

Middle Leaders Today

Middle leaders are integral to thriving schools. They are closer to the ground than senior leaders, and we now have a growing understanding of the way they lead both 'up' and 'down'. They support teams, guide change, and influence both strategy and culture.

Purpose: The Anchor for Leadership

It's common nowadays to think of purpose as starting with 'why'. In education, our 'why' can often feel buried beneath busy calendars and the ever-present accountability agenda, including externally devised standards and competing expectations.

[A Statement of Commitment to the Profession of Teaching](#) is intended to bring us back to what matters — the deep reasons why we do what we do: with purpose, with people, and for the wider community.

What is it?

The Statement strives to capture the spirit of what it means to be a member of the teaching profession. It is a voluntary commitment developed through widespread consultation over several years, articulating the deeply-held values and beliefs that unite us.

Like the Hippocratic Oath in medicine, it reminds us we are called to an ethical, intellectual and above all, human pursuit: a vocation in the truest sense of the word. It goes beyond standards, policies and procedures to the core of why we do what we do.

Why This Matters?

The ACEL Middle Leaders' Summit asks us to Connect, Contribute, and Commit – the Statement gives us a unique opportunity to do so.

If we come together with a common and deeply felt set of values and beliefs, we are likely to **connect** strongly and collaborate purposely for the benefit of all.

If we think on how the Statement can impact our work, we might **contribute** to and strengthen the profession's body of theory and knowledge developed by those who have come before us.

If we **commit** to a deeper understanding of the potential power of middle leadership, we are also committing to the future of our profession and strengthening our sense of purpose.

A Shared Purpose

Our hope is the Statement will stimulate reflection on the potential of Middle Leadership when it is viewed through the lens of a profession, at this summit and beyond; that it inspires a sense of pride in a profession bound by shared values, beliefs and purpose: a deeply human endeavour that helps shape who we are becoming as practitioners, as a profession, and beyond that, as a nation.

A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION OF TEACHING

I acknowledge that I am a member of a profession that extends to me the opportunity and the privilege to make a positive difference in the lives of young people.

I bring to the profession my unique talents to teach and to lead, which I commit to nurturing and developing throughout my career.

I understand that teaching is a deeply human endeavour. While I teach subjects, ideas and skills, above all I teach young people, who are our future.

I recognise and respect the body of distinct theory and knowledge which is gifted to me by those who have come before. I draw from it and strive to contribute further to it.

I recognise that young people learn in different ways and at different rates. I believe that given appropriate support and resourcing, all young people can learn, and I strive to nurture a love of learning that will help every young person to succeed.

I make judgements to evaluate student achievement through assessment that is valid, reliable and fair, and I give value to those learnings that cannot be measured.

I recognise that teaching is a collaborative profession and I am not the only teacher in a young person's life. My work is enriched through working with my colleagues, learning from them and contributing to their practice.

I acknowledge the contribution of the many parents, caregivers, and teachers past, present and future who contribute to a young person's education. I work with them wherever possible to enrich the learning of young people.

I offer a spirit of optimism, resilience and hope as I support young people to develop and act on the values, beliefs and capabilities that guide them throughout their lives.

I recognise the changing nature of knowledge, and I commit to continuous learning throughout my professional career.

In committing to this statement I accept the responsibilities of being a teacher, and acknowledge the deep trust placed in me by young people, parents, caregivers and society.

Context of the Statement

What is the Statement of Commitment?

The statement is a voluntary declaration of commitment to a set of values and beliefs for the teaching profession in Australia.

Why was the Statement of Commitment developed?

In 2015 the Queensland Executive of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) re-searched the criteria of established professions, with a view to ascertaining whether there exists a common set of criteria that comprise a profession. It was agreed that teaching clearly meets all but one of the criteria evident in the research. What is missing is a deep statement of ethically based values and beliefs that complements existing legislative and regulatory instruments.

The Executive resolved to lead the development of a professional statement that captures the spirit of the former Charter for the Australian Teaching Profession (Teaching Australia) and that of similar documents from other professions, and which speaks to all teachers.

Who has contributed to the development of the Statement?

The development of the statement was made possible through consultation with, and invaluable contributions from the following professional groups and their representatives:

Association of Special Education Administrators Queensland, Australian College of Educators, Early Childhood Teachers' Association, Independent Schools Parents' Network, Independent Schools Queensland, Isolated Children's Parents' Association, Joint Council of Queensland Teachers' Associations, Parents and Citizens Queensland, Queensland Association of State School Principals, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Queensland College of Teachers, Queensland Department of Education and Training, Queensland Independent Education Union, Queensland Secondary Principals' Association, Queensland Teachers' Union, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland, and University of the Sunshine Coast.

How might the Statement of Commitment be used?

It is hoped that the statement will inspire and engage teachers to take pride in being members of the teaching profession. The statement can be used formally or informally, at graduation ceremonies, induction ceremonies, celebrations of transitional moments in the careers of early childhood, primary and secondary teachers, or for recommitment to the profession for long-serving teachers. It can be used by teacher educators in their work with pre-service students, at the beginning and end of their courses. When using the statement, systems, schools, universities and professional associations may wish to brand the statement with their own identification.