

18 March 2016

Collaborative learning attitude wins national award

A teacher who believes that lifting student learning is a collaborative enterprise will receive a national award at the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) today at a ceremony in Melbourne.

John Kennedy from Coorparoo State School in Queensland will join 11 other outstanding educators from across Australia in receiving the top awards. Selected from more than 1100 nominations in 2015, the 12 national award recipients will be honoured for their inspiring and innovative contribution to teaching.

Mr Kennedy is the Deputy Principal and was nominated by a parent for a Leadership and Development Award and describes himself as an 'agent of change' where leadership and learning are indispensable to each other. Mr Kennedy developed the SOAR program, which not only defines schoolwide behaviour expectations of being Safe, Organised, an Active Learner and Responsible, but its design has enabled dynamic shifts around student responsibility, teacher practice, school-community pride and student voice.

Mr Kennedy has also embedded the underlying principles behind the SOAR program into the thread that is woven throughout the school's pedagogical framework.

He says working within this narrative fosters change, creates high expectations and promotes best outcomes for students and teachers.

"I have succeeded in creating a purposeful community, guiding change and developing people. Opportunities for staff, parents and students to learn together now exist, school-home communication has increased and there has been an observable shift from working to learning; from being reactive to proactive; from achieving to improving and from participating to actively engaging."

ASG NEiTA Chairman Allen Blewitt says Mr Kennedy is a wonderful ambassador for the teaching profession who has earned the respect of the wider school community.

"Mr Kennedy has really made a difference, not only as the Deputy Principal but his leadership style is inclusive and he gives teachers the confidence to be innovators, tapping into resources, support and expertise and creating an environment in which teachers and students can excel. Mr Kennedy is also a champion of the student voice, including students in the planning of and participation in school and community events alongside staff. This has had a great impact on student engagement, where students see teachers more positively and provides opportunities for students to take on more demanding roles and responsibilities. I congratulate Mr Kennedy on his achievements and school success which is a combined effort."

Mr Kennedy says it's a shared experience and success.

"My involvement in systematic and collaborative learning alongside teachers and students is one of the most powerful ways of developing capacity and ultimately impacting school performance of which I am vocal in promoting and exemplifying high expectations in de-privatised classrooms."



Media Release

Parents, grandparents, secondary student councils, school boards, councils, parent associations, committees of management and community organisations throughout Australia nominated these inspirational recipients.

Chief Executive Officer of ASG NEiTA, John Velegrinis says the ASG NEiTA recipients make supporting children's education possible and they understand the huge responsibility of educating tomorrow's leaders.

"I congratulate Mr Kennedy along with the other NEiTA recipients. It is an absolute pleasure to have them as our ASG NEiTA ambassadors and they represent the true epitome of dedicated teachers who genuinely care about the educational success and wellbeing of their students. They are education heroes in their own right and I am deeply touched when the parents tell us their faith has been restored in the education system when they had started to lose hope.

"Instilling a passion for education and a desire to learn is truly one of the greatest gifts that a young person can receive, while education is one of the most important investments that parents, families and communities can make. This is why ASG NEiTA has thrived for the last 22 years thanks to the contribution of passionate teachers."

The national awards are divided into three categories: leadership and development, innovation and community engagement. For more information on the 12 national awardees, including profiles go to: <http://www.asg.com.au/neita>

Eleven national award recipients will receive \$5000 professional development grants with one teacher getting the incredible opportunity to go to Space Camp in the U.S. One teacher is also awarded a \$2000 Disability Inclusion Grant.

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Editors notes:

The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 520,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.3 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members.

The ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) started in 1994 in Australia and 1996 in New Zealand. Since inception, more than 30,000 teachers have been nominated by the community in the two countries, with more than 1000 teachers receiving about \$182,000 in professional development grants, prizes and endowments.

For more information visit: www.asg.com.au

