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THE LATEST FROM STUDENT LEADERSHIP NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Student leaders from around Australia recently fundraised $10,000 towards communities in Uganda and South Africa.

At the 2019 National Young Leaders Day events across Australia, the Cotton On Foundation shared their story behind the work they do in ‘empowering youth through education’. At the events, many students chose to buy a bracelet, water bottle, or tote bag, with 100% of the $10,000 going toward the Cotton On Foundation projects.

The Cotton On Foundation also offers ‘Empower Sessions’, a program focused on equipping Australian students to create their own projects for making a global impact.

A special episode of the Student Leadership News Podcast was recently recorded featuring Sean Purcell from the Cotton On Foundation. This episode focused on the many effective strategies that the foundation uses to make a significant impact, many of which can be duplicated by student leaders in their own setting. To listen to this podcast episode visit: www.studentleadership.news/podcast

To find out more about the Empower Sessions that the Cotton On Foundation offer to schools, please contact:

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$10,000 FUNDRAISED FOR OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE COTTON ON FOUNDATION AND THE NATIONAL YOUNG LEADERS DAY
How many students define a ‘small’ school? We know that this will be the first thing that people will want us to clarify. To give you a short answer… it’s not a defined number. Sometimes when we attend conferences, we hear a teacher or student say, “our school has extra challenges because we are a small school of only 200 students.” Quite often someone else responds quickly with, “wow, our whole town has a population of 200 people and our school only has 25 students.” It gets smaller from there too.

As we write this article, we are coming from the viewpoint that… if your students and teachers feel that your school is a small school, then from that perspective, it’s a small school.

A small school will inevitably have challenges surrounding budget, enrolment uncertainty, staffing, and providing students with the range of opportunities that it would ultimately like to.

If there is one thing that doesn't need to be compromised in a small school, it is providing leadership opportunities for students.

Small schools usually have some elements that are craved by large schools. For example, the sense of closeness and community that exists in small schools can be the envy of large schools. Student leaders (and school executive) at large schools can often only attempt to achieve what comes organically to a small school. This is just one advantage of a small school environment, and there are certainly many more.

If you are in a small school, and are looking for ways to take advantage of your size when it comes to student leadership, here are six things to consider:

SHOULD WE GIVE EVERY SENIOR STUDENT A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

No. But perhaps! If your school has three senior students, then it can be tempting to simplify the process and just label all three of them as the ‘school leaders’. The problem is, you will occasionally get a student who really doesn’t want that role, and they may negatively influence the way the younger students view the word ‘leader’. Also, these three students may not entirely embrace their ‘leadership’ role, feeling that it was just automatically given to them by default. Our suggestion is to invite all incoming senior
students to apply for a leadership role, and deliberately encourage them to do so. Hopefully, all three of them will apply (and be accepted) and they will value the role that they ‘earned’.

HOW DO WE GENERATE A BUZZ AROUND OUR ACTIVITIES WITH A SMALL GROUP?

Student leaders at large schools will often focus their activities on their peers. At a small school, where leaders have few peers, the student leaders can focus some of their activities on impacting the community outside of the school. Instead of holding a ‘recycling campaign’ within the school (where results may feel minimal), student leaders could be the instigators of a recycling campaign within a whole town.

WHAT STUDENT LEADERSHIP ROLES SHOULD WE HAVE?

Small schools don’t have to copy large schools in this regard. Create roles that are tailored for your school. You may decide to change the roles each year to fit the talents of the senior students that you are encouraging to lead. One year you might create the role of ‘music captain’ simply to provide a leadership context for one student who is talented in music and will be capable of influencing the school in this way. At the end of that year, the music captain role may not be needed again for many years. Put simply, it can work better for small schools to fit roles to students, and not expect students to fit roles.

HOW DO WE INCREASE DEPTH OF LEADERSHIP WITH SO FEW STUDENTS?

We all know that students need role models. Find ways to highlight and reward exceptional leadership to students so that it is recognised by their peers, especially those whom are younger. The media is extremely proficient in profiling sporting successes and acting accomplishments, but perhaps not leadership achievements. Creating awards, honour boards and prizes for students who show leadership will become attractive to younger students.

WHAT YEAR LEVELS SHOULD WE BE ENGAGING IN STUDENT LEADERSHIP?

Involve as many year levels as you need to. There is nothing wrong with appointing a school captain who is not in the oldest age group of the school. Even if you think this is unrealistic, consider involving students from younger year levels in other official capacities. Outside of school, people will inevitably work under the leadership of those younger than them, and you are doing everybody a favour if your school helps instil this reality from a young age.

FOR MORE IDEAS ABOUT STUDENT LEADERSHIP, READ OUR DAILY ARTICLES AT WWW.STUDENTLEADERSHIP.NEWS WHERE MANY ARTICLES SHOWCASE THE WONDERFUL ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENT LEADERS AT SMALL SCHOOLS.
The number of students required to identify a ‘large’ school is entirely subjective. A group of 80 students will seem enormous in the eyes of a small regional school, but if the school itself is located in a large city, then amongst those who are part of that school, it may feel small.

For the purposes of this article, if YOU feel that your school is a ‘large school’, then the ideas we put forward will hopefully be helpful to YOU. A school will likely feel large because it is a bustling place where it’s impossible to know everyone, where much occurs that you don’t know about, and where communication isn’t always easy. Let’s not worry too much about comparisons with exact enrolment sizes. According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the City Montessori School in Lucknow, India, has 39,437 pupils and 2,500 teachers. Now that’s large!

A large school will typically capitalise on its size in numerous ways. There are specific things that large schools can do to use its size to their advantage when it comes to student leadership. Here are four things to consider:

**ASSIGN ‘MENTOR TEACHERS’ TO ASSIST STUDENT LEADERS:**

Most schools will assign a single teacher to oversee the student leadership body. For this teacher, this responsibility is usually only a small part of their portfolio so it can be hard for them to give their attention to the student leadership team as much as they might like to. In larger schools, it may still be that one teacher who coordinates student leadership, but there is often merit in pairing each student leader with a ‘mentor teacher’ that acts as a sounding board and encourager. In a smaller school, the single teacher overseeing student leadership is likely to personally know each leader and is therefore aware of how to bring out the best in each student. This existing relationship is less likely in a large school, and therefore it can be beneficial for each leader to have a meeting a few times each year with a teacher that they have asked to mentor them on individual aspects of their leadership responsibilities.
BE CREATIVE WITH ASSIGNING PORTFOLIOS:

Don’t feel restricted by the traditional leadership roles such as school captains and sports captains. A larger school is usually spoiled for choice with candidates; having too many great candidates than they do positions in the leadership team. Use this to your advantage and create roles to help contribute to the challenges that exist at your particular school. A helpful phrase can be: ‘If you see a problem, create a position’. For example, if your school has a large number of ethnic cultures causing friction, create a role for a ‘Leader of Cultural Celebration’. If your school has the challenge of maintaining a reputation in the community, create a ‘Leader of Public Relations’. Chances are, in a large school you will be able to find students with leadership qualities who can help contribute positively towards these challenges.

ENSURE YOU GIVE MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITIES:

Large schools are often complex places. When organising events and activities it can feel like the ‘stakes are high’ and that the organising is best done by a staff member. Larger schools typically have a larger executive and support staff, so it can be tempting to avoid the hassles that might come with student leaders overseeing significant projects. It is worth doing a basic review to ensure that you still have some meaningful tasks allocated to your student leaders and confirm you haven’t accidentally drifted towards making them a group of helpers who only contribute to odd jobs.

CREATE A SUB-STRUCTURE:

Some large schools try (with good intention) to create more leadership opportunities by creating so many roles that the structure becomes complex. An alternative to just ‘more roles’ is to create a ‘sub-structure’. A ‘sub-structure’ is where younger year levels have the same opportunities as what the senior year levels do. Try and create an exact replica, where every role in the senior year level is replicated in a younger year level. Firstly, you can potentially double the effectiveness. And secondly, these younger students (or those observing them) get full exposure to the structure of leadership roles in advance of them being the senior leaders themselves.
AVILA STUDENTS SHOWCASE SUSTAINABLE FOOD

A group of Year 12 students have found a fantastic way to promote food sustainability. An entire recipe book has been launched by these students, from Avila College Mount Waverley, in Victoria.

The students investigated the issue of food wastage in the home and discussed how many leftovers can be re-imagined into new dishes. They collected family recipes and published the book, titled “Taste It Don’t Waste It”.

Every recipe in the book showcases a delicious way to minimise food wastage. “The recipes were compiled into a book which they designed and printed”, said Kim Edwards from Avila College. “The book is available as a digital e-book and printed copies were also presented to staff and families.”

NATIONAL BANANA DAY

May 1st was declared as National Banana Day in Australia. These kinds of interesting days happen almost every day of the year, and can be great starting points for student leaders to come up with school activities.
Pictured (previous page) is a simple idea, involving the writing of encouraging messages on bananas that were given to students. This idea was implemented at Kingston High School, with the bananas given to approximately 60 students.

Banana Day was declared by the group ‘Bananas Australia’. For a list of more ‘national days’ that are declared in Australia throughout the year go to: https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar/.

**STUDENTS LAUNCH BATTERY RECYCLING**

Chisholm Catholic College, in Perth WA, has a committee of student leaders focused entirely on the ‘Environment’ portfolio.

These student leaders realised that in their state of WA, over 18 million batteries are thrown into landfill each year. To raise awareness and facilitate the recycling of batteries in their school community, the Environment Committee has organised a battery bin, located in the student entry to reception, to collect dry-cell batteries.

These bins make it easy to recycle AA, AAA, C, D, button batteries, 9V and 6V batteries, and the broader school community has also been invited to utilise this new service.

**222 PAIRS OF FOOTY BOOTS**

Max Beadle is just 14-years old, from Broome in Western Australia. This year, Max moved to Melbourne to study at Caufield Grammar. The first thing he noticed when playing footy – all the players had boots.

Max grew up playing for Cable Beach, where not all players had footy boots. Max decided to make a difference, setting up boxes around Melbourne for players to donate footy boots.

Already, Max has collected 222 pairs of footy boots to donate to the Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community. He recently travelled to Bidyadanga to give the boots to the community.
A PRACTICAL AND INTERACTIVE TRAINING DAY HELD IN OVER 100 TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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THE NATIONAL YOUNG LEADERS DAY
WHERE STUDENTS ARE INSPIRED TO LEAD

This unique event exposes students to a range of influential leaders who would often be difficult for schools and students to access on their own. The high-profile speakers include leaders from business, sport, politics, community service, media, science, and the arts.

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