

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Is this the education model we need to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

*A new book about an extraordinary school*

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, December 6, 2021 – Researcher and translator Alan Cockerill is launching a new book about an extraordinarily innovative school. The launch will take place at the Avid Reader Bookshop in Brisbane at 6.30 pm on 20 December. Alan is available for interviews about the book (see details at the end of this press release) and hopes that this new translation can inspire today's educators to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Vasily Sukhomlinsky's *Our School in Pavlysh: A Holistic Approach to Education* (EJR Publishing, Brisbane, 2021, ISBN 978-0-6485800-4-1, Au\$ 34.95) describes the inspirational work carried out at Pavlysh Secondary School in central Ukraine during the 1960s. For Sukhomlinsky's readership of teachers and school principals, the word 'Pavlysh' stood for creative thought, inspiration, and the hope of finding answers to troubling questions. Raising his school from the ashes of World War II, Sukhomlinsky created a system of education that was deeply embedded in the natural environment and that fostered the qualities of curiosity, empathy, and creativity. One of the thousands of visitors to Pavlysh, a school principal from Armenia, wrote:

***'I have spent only one day in this remarkable school where so much is happening, but I have gained as much as I did in four years at the institute.'***

Another visiting principal wrote:

***'Pavlysh Secondary School should be renamed a university! We say this quite responsibly: here a feeling of wonder and admiration comes over anyone with the slightest love for children and schools.'***

Students enrolling in Sukhomlinsky's school became part of a vibrant learning community in which teachers, parents, community members, and the students themselves all played a role in educating each other. Dozens of clubs operated after school, most attended by children of varying ages, and the older children played a significant role in educating younger children. These informal, extracurricular activities were extremely important in developing children's talents, building their self-esteem, and providing an experiential background for formal studies. In this environment students became autonomous, lifelong learners. Sukhomlinsky's model school has been extraordinarily influential in Ukraine, Russia, other former members of the Soviet bloc, and in China, where many of his works have been translated.

Although Sukhomlinsky was working in Soviet Ukraine, many of his concerns are universal, and still relevant to us today. Themes treated in the book include:

- Implementing professional development for teachers through long term mentoring arrangements and regular staff discussions.
- Focusing on understanding the psychology of each individual student and adjusting educational methodologies accordingly.
- Ensuring students enjoy optimum health, to provide a foundation for all other areas of development. This was done through comprehensive health screening, including screening of sight and hearing; through liaising with families; and through making student health the number one priority throughout all the years of schooling.
- Teaching students to be resilient and self-disciplined, through practical training in following routines, through liaising with families, and through setting appropriately challenging activities.
- Motivating students to learn through emotions of wonder and excitement, often by taking students out into natural surroundings. Providing first-hand experiences as the basis for language development and thought (gradually moving from the concrete to the abstract).
- Educating students to be custodians of the natural environment and responsible citizens, through practical outdoor activities.
- Fostering empathy and supportive peer relationships among students, through personal example and through group activities.
- Reducing administrative loads to make sure teaching staff have sufficient free time to rest, to read, and to develop their knowledge.
- Utilising extracurricular activities and multi-age peer tutoring to foster intellectual and vocational development.
- Running extensive parenting programs for the parents at his school, as a way of integrating the efforts of school and families. Sessions were run twice a month in groups based on the age of the parents' children and offered in-depth knowledge about child development. They also provided recommendations to parents about diet and routines.

Sukhomlinsky's approach can still offer inspiration to educators in the twenty-first century, as we face the challenges of the Anthropocene. This new translation provides an excellent complement to Alan Cockerill's earlier translation of Sukhomlinsky's *My Heart I Give to Children*.

### **5 Points of Interest about the Book:**

1. Sukhomlinsky's books have been read by millions of educators around the world, but he remains relatively unknown in English-speaking countries. This book has never before been translated into English. Alan Cockerill's translation is part of a long-term strategy to make Sukhomlinsky's key works available to English-speaking educators, in the belief that Sukhomlinsky's holistic approach is very relevant to our current challenges.

2. The system of education developed by Sukhomlinsky at his combined primary and secondary school was deeply embedded in the natural environment. Students spent a great deal of time outdoors observing nature and interacting creatively with it. Sukhomlinsky and his staff educated their students to be responsible custodians of the natural environment, to plant trees, to guard against erosion, to improve soil fertility, and to protect vegetation and wildlife. Over a period of twenty years students at Sukhomlinsky's school completely transformed an area of 40 hectares around the school, making it a place of great beauty.

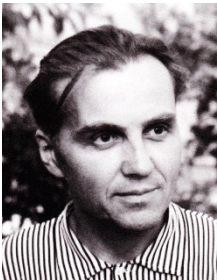
3. Sukhomlinsky's top priority in educating his students was their physical and mental health. Excellent health and vitality provided a foundation for all personal growth. Comprehensive health screening of students was conducted two years before they commenced schooling, and close contact was maintained with families throughout a child's studies. Every activity in the school, academic or extracurricular, was organised with student health in mind. Mental health was supported through the development of supportive peer relationships, and through the development of self-discipline and healthy routines.

4. Sukhomlinsky and his staff ran extensive parenting programs for the parents at his school, as a way of integrating the efforts of school and families. Sessions were run twice a month in groups based on the age of the parents' children and offered in-depth knowledge about child development. They also provided recommendations to parents about diet and routines.

5. A key feature of Sukhomlinsky's approach to education was the conscious fostering of the personal quality of empathy. Students were taught to read people's eyes and body language, and to give each other mutual support. They were taught to care for plants and animals, and to show kindness to friends, family and members of the community.

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#### About the Author:



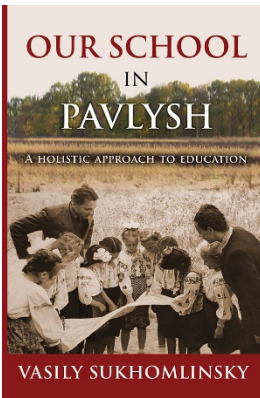
Vasily Sukhomlinsky (1918-1970) was a school principal, a prolific writer, and a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. From a school in rural Ukraine, where he was principal from 1948 until his death in 1970, Sukhomlinsky's influence spread throughout the Soviet Union and beyond. In 30 books and 500 articles, all based on his own practical experience, Sukhomlinsky describes a holistic approach to the education of global citizens. Sukhomlinsky's influence continued to grow after his death in 1970, and his writings are still very popular in Ukraine, Russian and China, where conferences devoted to his legacy attract hundreds of delegates.

#### About the Translator



Alan Cockerill is teacher, translator, and researcher. He has a background in Russian Language studies and was awarded a Ph.D. in 1994 for his study of the educational legacy of Vasily Sukhomlinsky, the eminent Ukrainian educator. His book about Sukhomlinsky, *Each One Must Shine*, was published by Peter Lang in New York in 1999, and has since been republished in Australia and South Korea. He has published articles about Sukhomlinsky in refereed journals, and his translations of two of Sukhomlinsky's most famous works, *My Heart I Give to Children* and *Our School in Pavlysh*, have been published by EJR Language Service in Brisbane.

## About the Book



Vasily Sukhomlinsky's *Our School in Pavlysh: A Holistic Approach to Education* (EJR Publishing, Brisbane, 2021, ISBN 978-0-6485800-4-1, Au\$ 34.95) describes the inspirational work carried out at Pavlysh Secondary School in central Ukraine during the 1960s. Raising his school from the ashes of World War II, Sukhomlinsky created a system of education that was deeply embedded in the natural environment and that fostered the qualities of curiosity, empathy, and creativity. Students enrolling in Sukhomlinsky's school became part of a vibrant learning community in which teachers, parents, community members, and the students themselves all played a role in educating each other. A multitude of informal, extracurricular activities helped to develop children's talents, building their self-esteem, and providing an experiential background for formal studies. In this environment students became autonomous, lifelong learners.

### Review Copies and Media Interviews:

For a review copy of *Our School in Pavlysh*, or to arrange an interview with Sukhomlinsky scholar and translator Alan Cockerill, please email [alan.cockerill@ejr.com.au](mailto:alan.cockerill@ejr.com.au) . When requesting a review copy, please provide a postal address.

If you would like to receive this information as a Word document, please send your request to the above email address.

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