

Annual General Meeting - School Advisory Council Report

10 November 2015

The School Advisory Council (SAC) supports the Parish Priest and Principal of St. Michael's Parish Primary School. The SAC includes three ex officio members: Fr. Laurence Cortez (Parish Priest), Marisa Matthys (Principal) and Meredith Bennett (Deputy Principal). The school community representatives (elected and appointed) are John Whitehouse (Chairperson), Bronson Justus (Deputy Chairperson), Andrea Byrne (Secretary), Ivan Brekalo, Kate Earl and Kristin O'Brien.

School Review

School Review drives quality assurance, planning and improvement for all Catholic schools in Victoria. In 2016, St. Michael's underwent review. To prepare for this, the agenda of SAC meetings was aligned with the five spheres of the School Improvement Plan (SIP): *Education in Faith, Learning and Teaching, Student Wellbeing, School Community, and Leadership and Management*. CEM uses survey data to evaluate the performance of schools in these spheres.

For *Education in Faith*, aggregate survey results are well above the national mean for staff, students and parents. For *Learning and Teaching*, responses to the Student Survey (Year Five and above) reflect the fine learning environment that our school offers: 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers want to help them learn, devote a great deal of energy to classes, and are well prepared. Every student held a positive self-image as a learner. These are wonderful outcomes.

There have been strong gains in *Student Wellbeing*. The implementation of School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support has driven this growth. This approach is based on principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Jo Mannix delivered an excellent presentation to the SAC on this topic. We are grateful for her leadership in this area. For *School Community*, the Community Engagement Aggregate Result for 2015 exceeded that of the start of the four-year review period. In *Leadership and Management*, the Organisational Climate Aggregate Index recorded significant gains.

Alignment of SAC meetings to the five spheres of the SIP is regarded as best practice by Catholic Education Melbourne. Adopting this approach enabled the SAC to explore each sphere in detail. As Chairperson, I found it invaluable preparation for participation in the School Review. Building on the many impressive achievements of the school, we formulated goals for the next four years. I look forward to using the SIP to guide a number of SAC meetings in 2017 to support the pursuit of these goals.

Masterplan

The construction of the new building constitutes the largest such project currently underway in the Catholic sector. Management of the project now rests with Catholic Education Melbourne, but the SAC has discussed issues concerning traffic and site management. At last report, the building works were two weeks ahead of schedule. To inform our school community on the progress of construction and related matters, the SAC introduced the FAQ web page. We look forward to the completion of Stage 1 of the Masterplan next year.

SAC Charter

This year, the SAC Charter was subject to review. This included reading the document against current CEM material. The following sections of the charter were amended: *Annual Review of the Charter* (8.1.1), *Annual Review of the Council* (8.1.2), *Statement of Responsibilities* (2), *Desired Attributes of the School Advisory Council* (3.4), *Meetings* (4.6), *Agenda* (4.8), *School Community Representatives* (3.2), *Level Representation* (3.2.1), *Appointed Representatives* (3.2.2), *Second Term* (3.2.3), *PFA and Staff Representatives* (3.3), *Invitation to Self-Nominate* (3.5.1), *Approval of Nominees* (3.2.1), *Co-opting Members* (3.5.2), *Tied Elections* (3.5.10), *Resignation of a Council Member* (3.6), *Supporting Documentation* (7). These seventeen amendments have been ratified. The revised Charter provided the basis for the election and appointment of our new members in Term 4. An eighteenth amendment (Section 6. *Publicity*) will be subject the discussion at the AGM/November meeting. The revised charter will be distributed to all families at the start of 2017.

Finance

The financial position of the school is sound. Last year, the SAC resolved to invite Joe Brick, the school accountant, to attend two meetings annually (May & November). As Joe was unwell for the May meeting this year, the SAC discussed a summary budget comparison (Actual to April/Forecast to December 2016 compared to Budget 2016). This demonstrated that school finances are well within CEM guidelines. It is important to note that the high Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the school presents on-going challenges in terms of securing grants. We are grateful to Joe for his work and thank him for attending the AGM/November meeting.

Policies

One of the responsibilities of the SAC is to provide advice on the development and review of school policies. The policies that the SAC has considered in 2016 cover a number of areas of school life:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Drug Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Student Wellbeing

Further policies were updated to comply with the requirements of the School Review.

Please note that the adoption of a particular policy should not be taken to mean that there is a current issue in this area.

Code of Conduct

Catholic Education Melbourne asks that School Advisory Councils verify that schools have adopted a Code of Conduct. This sets explicit standards about the ways in which school staff, volunteers and school council members are expected to behave with children. St Michael's Parish Primary School has adopted a Code of Conduct. This document has informed the efforts of the Parish in this area.

Farewells

After serving for three years, Bronson Justus (Deputy Chairperson) is stepping down from the SAC. I thank him for everything that he has done for the school over this period. Ivan Brekalo, Andrea Byrne (Secretary), Kristin O'Brien each completed a two-year term. I am grateful for their contribution to the SAC. I thank Andrea for her work as Secretary.

Looking Forward

Four members of the school community have generously nominated to join the SAC next year: Michael Fletcher, Augarette Malki, Jason Hay and Jerome Durkin. We welcome them and look forward to working together in 2017.

Kate Earl has accepted the position of Deputy Chairperson. I thank Kate for her contribution to the SAC in 2016 and look forward to working with her next year.

We look forward to supporting continuing improvements to the school in 2017. The goals set by the School Review will shape the advice and support provided by the SAC. The gains that have been made across the spheres of the SIP over the last four years have established a strong foundation for on-going growth. Furthermore, we look forward to the completion of the new building.

St. Michael's Parish Primary School is set to enter an exciting new chapter in its history.

John Whitehouse,
Chairperson, School Advisory Council