

MINUTES



Mother Teresa Catholic Primary School – School Board Information Night

Wednesday 11th March, 2020

6:00pm

Item	
PRESENT	Denis Graham, Greg O'Mullane, Geoff Perry, Amie Wagner, Chandrika Undapalli, Bridgit Federici, Trish Hilder, Stephanie Munday, Corina Hayes, Ester Pena and Belinda Kolstad
Summary Catholic Education School Boards	<p>Greg O'Mullane led discussion around purpose of School Boards and how they operate within the Catholic Education system. Greg spoke about how the first moment that a student steps into a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment – an environment illumined by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics. Greg advised that the School Board is responsible for upholding the Catholic School Ethos and that every decision that the Board makes and every policy that it formulates should reflect these precepts. Every member of a school board plays an important role in nurturing and strengthening the Catholic culture of the school.</p> <p>Greg reiterated the importance that each Board member is challenged to be aware of the joys and sorrows, the celebrations and the struggles of the families served by the school. This involves listening to the details of everyday life in the school community. Members of the School Board must work towards a vision where all people feel supported and valued, and encourage each other to participate fully in the life of the school.</p> <p>Denis mentioned that the school is working hard to have a continued P & F presence and active involvement in the school. Greg agreed that P & F Associations play a large role in supporting the school and board to encourage parent involvement in the children's learning journey.</p> <p>Greg discussed the importance of the School Board representing the diversity of our school. A discussion was held around the many different cultural groups and family structures existing within the school community and how there is often a variety of Christian denominations and religious traditions, whilst others have little or no connection with a church. Greg discussed how a number of parents may not be active within their local parish and attending regularly but that they appreciate and seek out Catholic Schools for their values and community spirit. The mission of Catholic Education is to engage all.</p> <p>Catholic schools must provide a comprehensive educational experience for all children, whilst allowing individual differences and talents to flourish. To achieve this, schools need dedicated and competent teachers as well as modern facilities and resources. To enable this to happen effectively, the School Board requires a clear vision of education for its particular community, thus ensuring that all students receive a well-rounded education of high quality. The School Board lies at the heart of a Christian community where all share in rights, dignities and responsibilities. The Board works towards this vision of the community, striving to build a place where all people feel supported and valued.</p> <p>The NCEC outlines the following governing principles for School Boards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Love of Christ;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Role of Parents as primary educators; • Faithfulness to the Mission of the Church; • Church solidarity; Support for the common good; • Embracing the poor; Educational Quality; • Participation; Inclusiveness; Unity in Diversity; • Stewardship of resources; • Rule of Canon Law
Governance	<p>Greg spoke about how Catholic Education in Australia is connected at a National level. However, legal and Canonical authority resides with the Bishop of each Diocese. For the Northern Territory we only have one Diocese whereas in southern states there are multiple diocese/Bishops etc.</p> <p>The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) is established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference through the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education to maintain effective liaison with the Commonwealth Government and other key national educational bodies.</p> <p>The Bishop of Darwin has ultimate responsibility for Catholic Education in the Northern Territory. The Bishop receives policy advice from the Catholic Education Council of the Northern Territory. Policies approved by the Bishop are enacted by the Director of Catholic Education. At the local level, the Principal is responsible for the leadership and management of the school, in accordance with overall diocesan policy objectives, and the advice of the School Board. The Catholic Education Council is the principal advisory body to the Bishop on matters of school education. The Catholic Education Office (CEO) of the Diocese of Darwin, under the leadership of the Director of Catholic Education, is responsible to the Bishop of Darwin.</p> <p>Greg spoke further about Canon Law being : One of the tasks from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was to translate, into church law, new teachings about the nature of the church as the Body of Christ. The laws of the Catholic Church were promulgated in a new Code of Canon Law in 1983. This Code provides the legal framework within the Catholic Church for the establishment and conduct of Catholic schools under the authority of the diocesan Bishop. A discussion was held around the founding of new Catholic School and process involved is quite extensive. Greg explained that all property and assets are canonically owned by the Diocese.</p> <p>The Roman Catholic Bishop of Darwin is recognised under Northern Territory law (Catholic Church of the Diocese of Darwin Act 1979) as the ultimate authority for the work of the Catholic Church in the Territory. Catholic schools established by the Bishop are recognised under the Act. Catholic school property is held within the property trust established by the Bishop in accordance with the Act.</p> <p>Catholic Schools are bound by the following legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools Assistance Act 2008 • Australian Education Act 2013 • Australian Education Regulation 2013 • Northern Territory Education Act 2016

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Territory Education Regulations 2015 <p>Greg discussed the role of the Parish Priest as being entrusted by the Bishop with the pastoral care of the parish (c. 515 §1). Under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the co-operation of other priests or deacons and the lay Christian faithful. The Parish Priest has a standing role on the School Board.</p>
School Boards in NT	<p>Greg spoke about school Boards building a spirit of partnership within the school community. They are constituted in a way that allows the various bodies within the school to be represented and to provide advice in regard to the development of the school and its management.</p> <p>The school Board is an advisory body which shares in the genuine leadership of the school community</p> <p>Greg advised the Catholic Education Council of Darwin recognises the importance of School Boards in providing robust forward-thinking school governance at the local level to ensure that schools meet the present and future spiritual and academic needs of their school community. The Board is responsible for the school's strategic direction which must be aligned to the strategic direction of the Catholic Education Council including fundamentally the Catholic School Ethos. Operational matters are the responsibility of the Principal.</p> <p>In fulfilling this strategic role the Board has a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to the development of the School Strategic Plan, Annual School Improvement Plan, the School Annual Report and Financial Management; participate in the school self-assessment and other monitoring processes; and monitor and review school performance against identified goals and targets in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual School Improvement Plan. <p>The following functions would also normally be considered to be responsibilities of the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ongoing development of the Catholic ethos of the school, which means promoting the school as a centre of evangelisation Being consultative in relation to the appointment of a principal Supporting staff, especially the principal Exercising general oversight of the curriculum, but in accordance with any relevant requirements of Government and Catholic education authorities. Overseeing the prudent financial management of the school, particularly with a view to ensuring access to quality education for future generations, and including planning for the provision of future facilities. Seeking to ensure that the school fulfills its potential as an option for the disadvantaged, including the poor. Providing advice to the principal on any matters referred to it by the principal. Developing policies on matters referred to it by the principal or by responsible Catholic education authorities. Facilitating the induction and preparation of board members, including ensuring that members understand the scope and extent of their role. <p>If a School Board cannot meet these responsibilities, the Director of Catholic education has the authority to dissolve a School Board after due consultation with the Board and the approval of the Bishop.</p>

<p>School Board Membership</p>	<p>Geoff Perry discussed the School Board membership criteria as outlined in the School Board Manual.</p> <p>Criteria for Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess an enthusiasm for and willingness to promote the mission of the Catholic School • Bring to the board their gifts and skills • Desire to give service to their school community • Have an ability to work cooperatively and constructively with all members • Be prepared to undertake formation • Have an ability and desire to uphold confidentiality • Have sufficient time to devote to board • Have an Ochre Card <p>Members cannot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a material conflict of interest • Fail to report a material conflict of interest • Be bankrupt • Have been convicted of an offence • Commit an act with intent to deceive or defraud • Make improper use of information to gain a material benefit • Conceal, destroy or falsify records • Commit fraud <p>Geoff discussed Ex-Officio Members as those who are members of the board by right of their position (Parish Priest, Principal)</p> <p>Geoff discussed the election process being that a nomination form will be issued 28 Days before the AGM. Annual General Meeting will be the time when nominated persons will be elected. Geoff discussed the quorum being 6 elected members, not included those who have a standing place on the board such as:</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Parish Priest</p> <p>Teacher Representative</p> <p>P & F Representative</p>
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	<p>Student Support group representatives such as (Indigenous parent group, defence parent group)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoff outlined the Office Bearer roles as: • Chairperson • Executive Officer (Principal) • Chairperson of the Finance Committee • Secretary <p>Geoff read through the meeting procedures for AGM, General Meetings and Extra-Ordinary Meetings as outlined in the School Board Manual. Geoff explained that sub-committees could be stood up in relation to certain projects for temporary periods of time.</p> <p>Geoff explained that staff are not permitted to nominate for school board positions, even if they are a parent themselves. School staff will elect 1 representative for the board.</p> <p>Geoff reiterated the role of the board in being advisory to the Principal. Principal of the school is responsible for Operational matters. Geoff gave the example of :</p> <p>Say you are a board member and a parent approaches you about the canteen selling unhealthy foods and you want this to be reviewed by the school board to ensure healthy and appropriate goods are made available.</p> <p>Ask yourself – is this operational? Yes this example is relating to operations within the school which means the Principal is the responsible party to address. The school board is responsible for strategic planning and direction of the school not operational matters.</p>
Timeframes	<p>Discussion was held around current timeframes for AGM and nominations. Previous date outlined was 30 March 2020 for AGM however given the 28 days required the new AGM date will be: 27th April 2020 – 6pm</p> <p>Nomination forms to be issued to school community on Friday 13th March 2020</p>
4. NEXT MEETING	<p>AGM – 27 MARCH 2020 6:00-7:00pm</p>