

Preston South Primary School

2014 School Council

Presidents Report



Introduction

Given the timing of School Council elections, this report on the 2014 Preston South Primary School Council covers a period from March 2014 to March 2015. This was a busy and productive year for the School Council. Set out here is a summary of Council activities.

The Council met on eight occasions (twice per term on Monday afternoons) and members met informally on other occasions as required. Membership of Council was as set out in this table:

Council Member			Subcommittee					
			Building & Grounds	Finance	Education	Sustainability	Grants & Community Initiatives	Marketing & Promotions
School	Mr Leon Leonidas	Principal	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Mr Malcom Mclvor / Mrs Miryana Ristovski	Treasurer		●				
	Ms Cheryl Trott / Dianne Wells	Secretary		●				
Parents	Mr Simon Zavros-Orr	President				●	●	●
	Mr Brian Fairman	Vice President	●			●		
	Mr William Vega	Councillor	●					
	Ms Elizabeth Naumoska	Councillor		●				●
	Ms Maria Vrasidas	Councillor						●
	Dr Agli Zavros-Orr	Councillor			●			

This is your School Council

School Council meetings are open for any members of the school community to attend and to contribute their views. Only very occasionally there may be confidential matters to discuss and this will occur at the start of any meeting with non-Council members invited in after this. Being a School Councillor also provides voting rights in the event that decisions are being made.

Members of the school community are also welcome to become involved the work of each of the Council subcommittees, which are a way of contributing your ideas and becoming more involved in the school lives of your children without the commitment of being on School Council. Each of the 2015 subcommittees and their responsibilities are listed at the end of this report

Building and Grounds

One of School Council's roles is to assist with maintaining the school grounds and facilities.

In 2014, Mr Leonidas as Principal and School Council devoted significant resource to planning and delivering various capital works and maintenance in the school grounds. An important emphasis of this work was painting and modernising classrooms.

In total, over \$57,000 of capital works and improvements were undertaken over the year. Key activities were:

- Repainting and carpeting four classrooms to make them more attractive learning spaces. Special thanks are due to Ms Elizabeth Naumoska and her father who very generously painted the library, saving the school the considerable cost of doing this work.
- Establishment of the Food Forest and in particular the highly successful working bee to install key elements of this garden under the guidance of Angelo Eliade from Deep Green Permaculture, an ex-student who generously donated his time and expertise to the project.
- Repairs to the sewerage system (paid for by the Department of Education).
- Repairs to the boundary fencing around the school.
- A range of works undertaken by volunteers from Deloitte that spent a day at the school. We are very grateful for their support.



Finance

School Council is responsible for approving the annual budget, monitoring expenditure and approving the transfer of funds between the school's investment and trading accounts. Prior to each School Council meeting, the Finance subcommittee prepared financial reporting with respect to the schools discretionary funding (ie excluding non-casual staff salaries, which are not considered by School Council). Ms Elizabeth Naumoska is to be thanked for contribution to this subcommittee, critically reviewing expenditure and suggesting opportunities for cost savings.

At the start of the 2014 year, the school had \$26,000 saved in an investment account which was used during 2015 to repair the boundary fence and for painting a classroom. Being a small school that puts a high priority on small class sizes makes the balancing of the school's budget a significant challenge. Mr Leonidas did a great job over the year administering the budget and securing funds through sponsorships and other initiatives to make the most of the limited funds available.

In first term 2015, a routine independent audit was undertaken of the School accounts. Only a few minor issues were raised that related to past practices and the school received a clean bill of financial health in the way that financial statements (and the information they contain) were prepared.

Education

Over the course of the year Council reviewed/updated and ratified several school policies including those relating to Ipad use and eSmart (online digital safety).

Furthermore, the sustainability subcommittee drafted an environmental sustainability policy and engaged a specialist school policy service to provide drafts of 98 required policies that School Council will progressively review, edit and ratify in the coming 1-2 years. Copies of all approved policies are available from the office and will likely be placed on the school website.

School Council supports the progressive educational initiatives initiated by Mr Leonidas and staff that has seen a substantial jump in NAPLAN results in 2014 (for all the shortcomings and problems with NAPLAN as an assessment tool, it is an important measure by which our school is assessed parents of prospective students and the wider community. The staff are to be commended for this very significant achievement.

A significant education initiative undertaken by Council in 2014 was a trial of a Philosophy for Kids program implemented in 3rd term at the school and involving the grade 5/6 classes. Philosophy for Kids (P4C) is integrated with the literacy program and supports children to listen deeply, think critically and express themselves well. The 2014 P4C program explored issues around identity and community. NMIT generously made available Dr Agli Zavros-Orr to contribute to the delivery of this program. The P4C program reportedly had a marked positive impact on student's literacy and critical thinking skills and led to a successful grant application as described below.

Sustainability

Preston South enrolled in the ResourceSmart AUSSI Vic environmental sustainability program in 2014 (refer www.resourcesmartschools.vic.gov.au).

In each of the five ResourceSmart modules are a series of actions that schools can take to improve their sustainability practices. All of the core module actions and a few of the actions in the other modules are mandatory to achieve accreditation for that module. For the most part, schools can select actions that best reflect their circumstances and priorities, with a minimum number to be achieved to achieve accreditation.

Many Victorian schools participate in ResourceSmart. As well as helping schools become more resource efficient and save money, this program is a great way of teaching sustainability practices to children. Children participated in sustainability teams led by Mr Dean that focused on actions relating to energy, water, waste and biodiversity. A sustainability policy and sustainability action plan were also drafted.

The following table summarises the number of actions available within each module, the minimum number required to complete each module, the number that we have achieved already and the year where we expect to complete each module.

Module	Resource Smart AuSSI Vic Actions			Target year for completion
	Available	Required to complete module	Achieved to date (% of required)	
Core	24	24	25%	2015
Energy	65	26	27%	2016
Water	57	32	16%	2016
Waste	63	47	7%	2017
Biodiversity	48	34	9%	2017

Grants and Community Initiatives

Council has had a successful year of fundraising. The school was supported with the following grants and sponsorship during the year.

Grant Provider / Sponsor	Purpose	Amount
Darebin City Council	Food forest	\$ 4,000
DEECD	Energy efficiency initiatives	\$10,000
Australian Government	Construction and installation of a Remembrance poppy mosaic	\$17,475
Sidney Myer Fund & The Myer Foundation	Philosophy for Kids	\$7,719
John Fawcner Private Hospital	Health related scholarship and funding	\$1000 a year for 3 years
Victorian Multicultural Commission	Multicultural cook book	\$1,100
Bendigo Bank	Student welfare	\$500
Other sponsors	Student welfare	\$1,000
	Student leadership day	\$1,000

GST is included in some of these amounts whilst not being applicable to all of them

In addition to the above, Preston South has established a strong relationship with Preston Connected Communities group auspiced by Bendigo Bank. It is anticipated that this group will support the school's engagement with PANCH through the provision of a class set of Ipads in 2015.

The school had many other supporters in 2014, making available resources, free or discounted educational experiences for students, assistance with film making, prizes for raffles and other support. Some of these supporters are acknowledged at the end of this report and all of them are deeply appreciated by our school.

Marketing and Promotions

Marketing our school to prospective prep parents is an important responsibility for School Council: our annual Prep enrolment is the life blood of our school, with implications for school size that extend seven years into the future. Increasing enrolments in a school of our small size benefits all students, as it increases our total and generally our per-student discretionary funding.

This year we had

- Current parents attend each scheduled Prep tour through the year, to provide prospective parents another parent's perspective of the school.
- A Prep Transition seminar with both external and staff speakers. This was well attended and received very positive feedback. School Council members visited 17 childcare centres around Preston and Thornbury to promote this seminar.
- Whilst not a marketing activity, School Council also ran three Christmas holiday playdates for new Preps in the school playground that attracted great feedback

School Council was gratified to see Prep enrolments more than double from 2014 to 2015. We attributed this primarily to the schools growing reputation, but this increase was also supported by the marketing activities described here.



Parents and Friends Association

The Parents and Friends Association operates separately to School Council however their very considerable contribution to the school in 2014 should be acknowledged.

School Council is indebted to the Parents and Friends Association under the leadership of Nicole Sarre whom provided a wide range of support to the school – including fundraising, catering for school events, family nights, morning teas, breakfasts and other events. Our school community is much the richer in friendships, experiences and social connections for their work.

Conclusion

All School Council statutory, legal, finance and audit requirements were achieved.

We thank Ms Cheryl Trott and Ms Dianne Wells for fulfilling the essential task of keeping accurate minutes of all School Council meetings. The achievements in this report were undertaken by a dedicated and enthusiastic group of parents and staff, who make their time available to support our school notwithstanding their family, work and personal commitments. I would like to acknowledge all members of the 2014 School Council for their contributions over the year and particularly outgoing Council members Brian Fairman (2 years) and Agli Zavros-Orr (1 year) for their considerable service provided to School Council.

Finally, thank you to our fantastic Principal Leon Leonidas, and the committed staff of Preston South Primary School for all their work and achievements of 2014, supporting our children to reach their academic, physical and social potential. We look forward to an equally busy and rewarding 2015.

Thank you to our supporters over the last 12 months



Australian Government



Northern Health



Appendix - School Council Subcommittees 2015

Finance Subcommittee
<p>Purpose To support the School Council with respect to its financial functions and responsibilities</p>
<p>Terms of Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the principal with the development of the school's annual budget. Ensure the budget is balanced and that all liabilities and financial commitments are brought to account in the relevant year. • Monitor and report to council on progress against the budget • Oversee administration of the schools internal financial governance and controls • Oversee the school's investment policy. • Assist in the completion of the annual summary of financial commitments. • Where required, assist in the completion of school tenders. • Review the annual audited financial statement and the auditor's report • Assist the principal with any programmed financial school audits. • Assist the principal in ensuring that the school operates to a balanced budget and that all liabilities and financial commitments are brought to account in the relevant year. • Assist the principal with any programmed financial school audits.
Education and Policy Subcommittee
<p>Purpose To support the Principal with respect to achieving best practice curriculum and pedagogy as well as comprehensive and up to date school policies</p>
<p>Terms of Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and adopt or write new school policies as required in line with DEECD requirements and our Strategic Plan. • Provide a forum for discussion of current educational and policy matters and the views of teachers, parents and students. Present all new or updated policies to School Council for ratification. • Consult with the school community regarding changes in the curriculum, school policies and broader educational issues (via the newsletter, surveys, information sessions etc.). • Assist the Principal with production of the Strategic Plan, Annual Implementation Plan and Annual Report. • Assist the Principal with any programmed school reviews. • Support School Council with respect to maintaining high levels of governance and promoting training opportunities for School Council members • Maintain professional affiliations with relevant organisations including School Council peak bodies.
Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee
<p>Purpose To oversee the implementation of ResourceSmart on behalf of School Council.</p>
<p>Terms of Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and update the <i>Sustainability Policy, Sustainability Action Plan</i> and <i>Environmental Management Plan</i> in consultation with staff, students, School Council and the wider school community. • Maintain the Environmental Sustainability web page. • Progress the completion of ResourceSmart modules consistent with the <i>Sustainability Action Plan</i>. This includes undertaking investigations and reporting on progress consistent with ResourceSmart targets. • Oversee the activities of the student sustainability teams. Maintain a standing invitation for members of those teams to attend subcommittee meetings.

School Community subcommittee

Purpose

To support the School Council with respect to marketing the school, engaging with parents and fostering a strong and culturally inclusive school community.

Terms of Reference

- Support the Principal with respect to effective communication and engagement with parents and the broader school community. Ensure parents are aware of developments and initiatives related to the School Council and each sub committee's role.
- Promote parent engagement with the school (parent help, lunch time clubs, working bees, parent surveys, Council subcommittees). Encourage a culture of volunteering at the school.
- Support marketing activities and information sessions directed towards prospective Prep parents.
- Work to ensure the school community is inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse communities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities.
- Assist the Principal with the development of content for the website and newsletter.
- Work with the Principal and Parents and Friends Association to promote and manage community events involving the school community.

School development and fundraising subcommittee

Purpose

To support the School Council with respect to generating grant funding and sponsorship, progressing strategic initiatives.

Terms of Reference

- Identify and develop innovative opportunities to enrich student experiences and market the school to the broader community and to present these to School Council for their consideration.
- Identify and pursue opportunities for generating grant funding, and sponsorship. Administer and successfully acquit grants maintain of sponsor relationships.
- Plan for and support the implementation of special events including the 150th anniversary celebrations.
- Support the Principal with respect to development of professional affiliations with NMIT and other organisations.

Building and Grounds Subcommittee

Purpose

To support School Council with respect the development, usage and maintenance of school buildings, grounds and facilities.

Terms of Reference,

- Support the buildings and grounds maintenance of the school.
- Advise School Council regarding improvements required to the buildings & grounds and any funding that will be needed for these.
- Encourage the participation of the school community in maintenance and improvement of school buildings and grounds through working bees and other volunteer work.