

**Minutes of School Council Meeting  
Wednesday 5 April 2017  
Fortian Room 6.00pm**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Kathy Esson	Chair
Ros Moxham	Principal
Jane Bell	Parent Representative
Rachel Thompson	Parent Representative
Jenny Curtis	Parent Representative
Justyn Boyle	Staff Representative
Rebecca Cameron	Staff Representative
Don Newby	Foundation and Fortians Union Representative
Alex Coombs	SRC Representative
Cole Johnson	SRC Representative
Yasmin Kirk	Student Representative
Jules Davies	Executive Officer

The Chair welcomed the new Staff Representative and Student Representative. Apologies were received from Lai Heng Foong and John Ockwell.

**2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

The minutes were accepted.

**3. Matters arising from minutes**

The canteen will be added to the agenda in May.

**4. Correspondence**

Correspondence was received from the Sydney University Graduate Choir (SUGC) requesting a continuation of up to 10 rehearsals in the school hall free of charge. This was agreed and the Executive Officer will inform SUGC.

**9. Strategic Plan Update**

The milestones for this year have been adjusted and the next cycle is now being discussed. Not all milestones have been achieved as planned and there will be some adjustments made for this. The development of the new strategic plan will be a consultative process and the plan will come back to Council.

**5. School Bytes Finance Model**

The School Council welcomed Blake Garrett to present an overview of the School Bytes administration program. (<https://www.schoolbytes.education>). This assists parents and the school to make and monitor payment of fees and other expenses. Parents would receive an emailed invoice that could be paid securely online. There are also reporting options that are easily accessible. The cost to FSHS would be \$5500 plus GST. School Bytes have already presented to the School Administration Manager who is looking for ways to improve on the current system. The security of the system has been approved by the Department of Education. The School will get references from other schools that are already using the School Bytes system and talk with DE Finance.

**6. HSC Results**

The School Council looked at trend data from 2001 to 2016 showing how many students achieved bands 5 and 6. There is some variation between years but overall there are not any large assessment discrepancies. The main focus is always on how to move students who achieve 87-89% or 77-79% up to the next band. The school also celebrates the results of individual students who may have achieved their results under difficult personal circumstances.

The most consistent results are in maths. Students join the school with a higher level of skill in maths than any other subject. Our acceleration program works well for these students.

Results are also consistent in Visual Arts and Music both of which are high.

The biggest change over the years is in English which is the hardest subject in which to perform at top level.

Science shows the most inconsistencies and there are a number of explanations for this. A continuing effort is being made to undo the perception that studying science subjects will automatically lead to a higher ATAR. A number of students are advised to pursue non science subjects but this conflicts with family perception, even with hard data showing that the dux often

does not study science.

Coaching also impacts science results, particularly in Physics and Chemistry. Fewer students are coached in Biology and results tend to be better overall in that subject.

HSC results are analysed by the Head Teacher who looks at student results and identifies areas for improvement using results over a period of time. Students tend to do well at lower order questions but not so well on the higher order questions.

In Visual Arts and Music the results are consistent because students who choose these subjects are usually passionate about it. Visual Arts results are usually in the lower range of Band 6 and the Head Teacher looks at how we can improve each student's result.

There was a question as to whether some students turn to Science rather than English thinking that it requires lower literacy skills. The sort of communication needed in science is different to English and the school discusses literacy needs for each subject.

The Council discussed mentoring. The school does not have a formal mentoring program. There was a suggestion that this would be very useful as some students don't utilise their teachers as much as they could. The school does try to link each student with a teacher that they feel connected to. However, teachers do not get a period allowance for this so it has to be informal. Many teachers took the opportunity to take part in a course in mentoring at last year's TPL.

There is a culture amongst students in some cohorts that means the school has to be careful with additional pressure. Students agreed that the cohort definitely affects the group's dedication and overall performance. This does not have to be competitive as camaraderie is prevalent at FSHS especially in years 11 and 12. Students would like more clarification on mentor opportunities.

The Principal reiterated that the year groups that do best are the ones that work collaboratively.

## 7. **Assessment Policy**

The School Council focussed on the section 'Failure to submit a task on the set date'. The majority of assessment tasks are done in class but some are to take home and hand in. The assessment policy has been designed in an attempt not to disadvantage students who hand work in on time, and those who do not hand assessments in on time are still encouraged to complete the assessment to ensure that the course is covered. However, section 5 states that students who are awarded a zero and have not followed procedures 1-4 as appropriate will not be eligible for academic awards in that subject at Speech Day. This is to avoid a situation when a student hands work in consistently late but the work is excellent. The purpose of this amendment to the Assessment Policy is that there needs to be encouragement for students to have good time management skills and there are always students who do not meet deadlines. The School Council generally agreed that the policy was good although there was a feeling amongst the students that missing out on an award at Speech Day was not necessarily a disincentive to handing work in late if it was still being marked. One student felt that the policy was too lenient overall. Parent representatives felt that it made students accountable and was good. The Council reviewed the Assessment Policy process and voted to endorse the whole policy. The Principal undertook to bring the criteria for grading to a future Council meeting.

## 8. **Strategic Plan update and**

### 9. **School Excellence Framework exercise**

A substantial amount of work was completed at the Executive Conference on how the school will meet its milestones in the allocated time. As requested, a number of School Council representatives had chosen an area of the Framework and ranked the school as part of the self assessment exercise. They provided their feedback to the Principal. However some representatives did not complete the exercise as they felt they were unable to assess the school accurately. The Principal suggested that the School Council receives commentary and narrative as to how the school has rated itself in the self-assessment, taking three areas per Council meeting. **This will commence at the June meeting.**

### 10. **TAS Evaluation results**

The School Council received a document outlining the results of the evaluation and recommendations that had been made.

Gifted and talented was highlighted as an area for improvement and the Head Teacher has identified that only 2 of the 5 staff members have completed GERRIC training. This is being rectified this year. The Head Teacher is also exploring the pace of lessons and how students manage project based learning. There will also be a review of how equipment is ordered to establish tighter conditions of stocktaking and budgeting.

### 11. **Business Manager**

The School Council looked at the role description for this new position. The Business Manager will work business hours rather than school hours. The position will be advertised as a 2 year temporary

position to be reviewed and will be a combination of aspects of the Head Teacher Administration role combined with the building maintenance role. The position will be advertised through the Department.

#### **12. Website update**

We have had an initial meeting with the new website designers and discussed the overall content and look of the new website. We will be providing them with more detailed information and engaging a photographer at the start of term 2. As a quick exercise the School Council provided examples of what they would like to see in the new website. This was largely consistent with the views of staff and the communication team. This information was recorded.

#### **13. School Building Plan Sub Committee update**

The sub-committee has met and minutes from that meeting will be circulated to the School Council. Terms of reference for the Sub Committee have been agreed. Although the focus of the committee is the new building there is also work on the library planned this year. Funding is being sought for the gym bathrooms, food technology kitchen and the ceiling in Wilkins. Existing funds are being used for a new electronic gate that is being installed in the staff car park and for the planned refurbishment of the library.

The Tiered Learning Centre is a major project. One option is to sell the space above the building to a developer. To achieve this we would need to show that there is support from the school community including the School Council and from neighbours. In the first instance, meetings are being organised with key Fortians to seek their input on ways to raise funds, and we will explore crowd sourcing funds. A compelling narrative needs to be written for marketing the building and a name needs to be decided.

A Fortian architect is meeting to discuss the new building in May.

Plans for improvements to the library were circulated and there is a young architect working on this project.

#### **14. Principal's Report**

Recent events have included the IMP concert, Duke of Edinburgh Gold Medal walk, Shave for a Cure and Silence for Cambodia fundraiser. There was also a BBQ to raise funds for the Flamingos hockey team. Their excellent video 'The Final Flight' is available to watch on YouTube.

There have been lots of students keen to initiate new activities and the school is trying to accommodate this.

The external validation process will take place on 31 August and the school needs to have all documents ready 2 weeks in advance. There is also an external audit taking place in the middle of May.

The School Administration Manager is looking at replacing all the photocopiers which will cost around \$45,000. There is a focus on how to organise payment for printing if the school offers colour printing to students. The SAM is currently on sick leave and her replacement is on planned holiday. Another office member is away on compassionate leave so administrative staffing is low.

The old Foundation office has been refurbished and is now the office for Jean Kidd, the Regional Psychologist and School Counsellor. The vacated office will belong to Catriona Arcamone who is standing in as Deputy Principal while Karen Di Stefano is Relieving Principal. Ros Moxham will be Acting Director of Inner City Strategy for term 2 but will be based in her school office.

#### **10. Other Reports**

##### **P&C Report**

No report

##### **Student Report**

The SRC representative reported the Easter egg hunt is tomorrow. The SRC is also looking at organising an afternoon tea for SRC representatives from other schools.

The student representative raised the environmental issue of paper handouts from teachers and suggested an online alternative. The school is aware of this but there is often a copyright issue with digital copying. There will be more teacher training in using Google apps and other ways to reduce paper wastage. The library also offers ebooks.

##### **Fortians Union Report**

No report

##### **Foundation Report**

No report

**11. Other business**

Lai Heng Foong sent a reminder regarding CPR training. The Principal will follow this up.

The next Council meeting is on **Wednesday 3 May 2017**.