

Bellingen High School P & C Association

Minutes

Monday 28 August 2023 6pm
Bellingen High School Staff common room
Gumbaynggirr Country

Attendees – Rachael Case (chair), Graziella Reeson, Sam Gage (relieving Principal), Caroline Thomas, Melanie Tyas, Milo Bowd, Michelle Bowling, David Neville (Guest Speaker), Vicki Greer, Jeannie Holker.

1. Welcome, Acknowledgment of Country (6.04 pm)

- 1.1 Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country (Chair) – Rachael Case.
- 1.2 Apologies (Chair) – Kathleen Hannah, Raelene Carey, Kim Childs.

We welcome new voting Members for 2023 P&C & acknowledge receipt of payment:
Jeannie Holker

2. Previous minutes

2.1 Approval of Minutes – Milo Bowd, 2nd Michelle Bowling.

2.2 Business Arising from Previous Minutes (Chair)

- Principal position - Welcome new relieving Principal, Sam Gage
- School musical fundraiser - \$1534.95 - thanks to all those who contributed.

David Neville (Guest Speaker) – Historically the P&C contribute towards capital expenditure at each school musical. This year’s contribution purchased extra LED lighting to increase from the previous purchase. It’s a great addition and students learn a specialised skill in connecting and using them during performances. They will be used again at CAPA evening this Friday night.

- New Student Wellbeing Officer - Welcome Katie Fitzgibbon. Couldn’t make this meeting but will aim for the next one.
- Training for staff re rainbow families (offer of free training - parent contact). A parent has a contact who specialises in training in this area and offered to put the school in contact with them. To date Sam has not been made contact with, but is welcoming of this process.
- School bus for sporting & other events – Having a school bus for sporting or excursion would be very useful, especially to assist those families who have working parents and are not available for transport.

Mr Beale would like to attend a meeting to progress this idea further. Suggestion of potentially sharing with another school/s. Vicki suggested approaching the board of the Community Transport in Coffs to facilitate either a purchase or exclusive use of a community bus. It could potentially be allocated to the shire/region.

Sam advised that this year's school budget has already been allocated but can revisit the idea for next year's budget which will be set around March 2024.

P&C will also keep an eye out for a grant.

- Extending on the P&C Parent Survey, which highlighted parent education which as a key outcome either for student support in learning or wellbeing.

Concern raised over how the school is dealing with disruptive and violent student behaviour causing other students to not feel safe at school.

Question of turning the focus away from punitive measures which can sometimes alienate the wrongdoer. Perhaps more support for behavioural issues & education on how to direct/re-direct engagement rather than using a conventional confrontational method - How to recognise & regulate behavioural issues.

How do we encourage parents of those students who need it the most to attend informative and potentially helpful sessions in dealing with disruptive student behaviour. Need to come up with a way to engage with the parents to gain their interest.

Youth engagement police have commenced sessions at the school as violent behaviour is increasing. Police want students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and that it can be legally punishable.

Adding to the problem is Teacher shortage and teacher work overload. With the disruption of Covid over the last few years this is potentially adding to an increase in violence.

Reassuringly, Bellingen is a calmer school than most in the Mid North Coast.

Question regarding procedure of re-introduction to school after a suspension. Part of the return from suspension is a phone interview with the counsellor to determine if they are "fit to return". If they are deemed not fit to return, there is mandatory regular counselling. Suspension time away from the school allows the school to determine the next steps for that child to improve their behaviour.

Students are always able to self-refer themselves to the counsellor. There is both a male and female counsellor at school plus the new Student Wellbeing Officer who is also a Social Worker – Katie Fitzgibbon.

Need to tackle relationship building rather than singling out and entrenching wrong behaviour. How do we build responsible/respectful skills within the school environment.

Sam advised it's about Care continuum and using sessions such as eg. Rock & Water which can be built into the curriculum.

3. REPORTS

3.1 Principal's Report

- Study periods are continuing in the library when there is no teacher. Tracking of which classes are in the library so it's not always the same classes. Teaching priority going to years 11 & 12.
- Due to staff shortages change in timeframe for recess and lunch will be trialled so less teachers are required to cover these times.
- There is a 2nd Multicategorical Class (MC) teacher coming on board.
- A 2nd Deputy Principal position has been offered to Rachael Webb who has experience in Learning & Support. She will be joining in the next week or two once her position at previous school is filled. She will assist for the rest of this year, 2024 and beginning of 2025. Her focus will be improving in Teaching & Learning.

3.2 Financial Reports (Treasurer) Current account balance is \$4006.10 CR

3.3 Correspondence (Secretary)

- Renewal of P&C Association membership & Insurance – due to no meeting prior to deadline, decision was made to renew.
- P&C Federation – notice of by-election to fill vacant positions from the election of councillors & delegates.
- Bequest donation to fund new Futsal shirts.
- Parent email regarding toilets & vaping at school – Sam advised that toilet blocks will remain locked during lesson time. They will only be open at recess & lunchtime and have a teacher policing visits to ensure there is no groups hanging out or long stays.
- Presentation offers from Digital Nutrition regarding Cyberpsychology & digital wellbeing education – this could tie in nicely with the new No Phones policy being introduced in Term 4.
- Social Impact in the Regions conference advice incl. Pitch FEST. – suggested that Mel present the Eat Dirt program at the conference?

4. PRIORITY BUSINESS

4.1 Advisory/ Information

- P & C Federation Membership & Insurance renewal (1 August)
- Interview Panel Training - open to all for future panels - register your interest

4.2 Events / Relationship Building

- Breakfast club volunteers always appreciated: Wed, Thurs, Fri, 8 – 9am
- Volunteers wanted for canteen at school (Contact Jade, BHS Admin, or Vicki Smart for more information)

4.3 Fundraising

- Grants subcommittee Update (Graziella, Mel) – nothing at present.
- 2023 Fundraising subcommittee Update (Milo) - Bello Markets, November
- New BHS Futsal shirts donation (Graziella) - Donor wishes to remain anonymous but will just pay the bill when new shirts are ready. Wants student involvement in the design.

5. OTHER BUSINESS (Chair)

- Support for Hawkshaw family – There is a planned Celebration of Catherine’s life – 2pm Friday 8 September at Gleniffer Hall. P&C would like to make a contribution to the afternoon tea following the ceremony on behalf of the school.
- Timely communication to parents re events / excursions (Katharine Sutherland) – There is not enough lead time provided to parents with regard to either important school activities eg. Parent/Teacher evening and sporting events leaving parents/carers not enough time to make possible arrangements to attend.

Sporting activities require either organising own transportation or ride share, or potentially having a parent need to take a day off to get their child to the activity if it’s further away.

Request to also have the elective sports selection options made available from a certain time in the evening as it disadvantages those students who do not have a phone or access to the online selection when they come out during the school day. These students potentially miss out on their 1st choice as other students have already made their selections online before the end of the school day.

- Homeroom / wellbeing (Kathleen Hannah) – has been brought up before. Tutoring style for homeroom is being discussed with teachers. Teachers need to be on board with the idea.

Homerooms offer the ability for grounding with one constant presence to begin each day. Students also get to build a more solid relationship with one teacher in a smaller class size, as opposed to the year advisers who are responsible for the entire year group (approx. 100 students).

Suggestion made to perhaps have homeroom classes made up of different year levels. This could possibly provide mentorship for the younger students and assist with support/a familiar face if needed.

Truancy is out of control. The only mandatory role call is the one taken at the start of the day during first period. There is no fence to stop students from leaving the school. How do we create a better school culture where students want to come/be at school?

- Mobile Phone Process (Sam Gage) – Government has mandated that from the start of term 4 NO mobile phones at school, however, there has been no directive as to how this is rolled out. Each school needs to decide what that looks like.

A draft procedure was tabled at the meeting which was successfully established at Orara in 2021. It was successful because it had full parent support and was seamless

to introduce. This draft procedure has been put to the faculty heads to obtain feedback and present ideas at the next faculty meeting. Rollout needs consistency across the board from teachers.

- Toilets - Students not feeling comfortable to use due to vaping, doors & locks missing or broken (parent email) – The toilet blocks will continue to be closed during lesson times and only be opened at recess and lunch. Students who need a bathroom break during school time will continue with the current procedure of using the toilets in the admin building.

During recess and lunch, a teacher will be policing the toilet blocks to ensure that groups do not gather and remain inside for long periods of time.

Improvements/upgrades to the toilets/door/locks will not commence until there has been significant improvement from students with usage and the destruction ceases.

6. CLOSE AND NEXT MEETING

Monday 11th September 2023, 6pm