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Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council

Executive Summary: 25-26 May 2016

The Advisory Council began its second meeting for the year at the Catholic Diocesan Offices Ballarat from where they travelled to St Michael's Springbank to tour the school. Members were also afforded a valuable and candid conversation with Principal, Michael Kennedy, and teachers Krys Reid and Jacinta Reidy, around the recently announced decision to close the school at the end of 2016.

BDSAC moved on to St Patrick's School Gordon where they toured the school, chatted with students and joined staff members for morning tea. Michael Kennedy, also principal of St Patrick's, gave an informative overview of principalship, school life and the concept of Growth Mindset.

Members were warmly greeted at St Brigid's Ballan, where the meeting resumed, by student leaders and Principal, Gabrielle Driscoll. Staff members joined BDSAC for meals over the two days and a tour of the school was enjoyed by all. Gabrielle generously gave of her time to converse with members about her leadership and challenges and achievements of St Brigid's.

BDSAC hosted a dinner for School Advisory Council Members from St Brigid's Ballan, St Mary's Clarkes Hill, St Michael's Daylesford, St Brendan's Dunnstown, St Patrick's Gordon and St Michael's Springbank. Such opportunities to meet with parents are a highlight for members.

Child Safe Standards - Update

Audrey Brown, Director, reported that every school in the Ballarat Diocese was represented at a Child Safe Standards Briefings held in four venues in April. Other activity in this area:

- Susan Renn and Lee Schloo are working at state level developing common resources
- Bishop Paul has endorsed the Catholic Education South Australia *Keeping Them Safe* curriculum
- Advice has been provided to school governing authorities (27 April 2016)
- The BDSAC Policy for Child Safe Schools (formerly BDSAC Child Protection Policy) is being re-drafted
- Regular email updates to Child Protection Officers and Principals will continue

CEO B Report

Mary Lovelock has been contracted as project officer to work with the CEOB Stewardship Executive and SIMON team to design and build a risk management and compliance portal where schools can:

- See information about areas of risk/compliance in one place
- Seek resources to assist in the management of risk
- Maintain records of compliance

The draft *BDSAC Risk Management in Schools Policy* is part of this project.

The Characteristics of a Highly Effective Catholic School (CHECS)

Audrey Brown spoke to the CHECS document which is a key document in the School Improvement process, articulating the aspirations of Diocesan school communities.

Currently schools are taking initial steps towards making use of the CHECS document more consistently. Schools undertaking Reviews in 2016 are using the document extensively. Initial feedback from these schools suggests that, as a tool used in review processes, it is supporting a far deeper reflection of existing practice and a better articulation of possible foci for future improvement.

CECV Report

Maria Kirkwood (Sale), Paul Desmond (Sandhurst) and Audrey Brown (Ballarat) met recently with Victorian Education Minister, James Merlino. The meeting was arranged by Phil Brown (Country Education Project) to enable the Minister to gain a better understanding of the needs of regional Catholic schools. It is clear that the Minister is both interested in our schools and seeking to improve education across the State. Cross-sectoral partnerships were discussed as a possible way to improve education for all country students.

Audrey gave BDSAC members a brief election update from the CECV Meeting held 23 May.

- Coalition – offering 3.56% indexation to the end of 2020; performance based pay; annual NAPLAN testing
- ALP – offering final years of transition to Gonski model (5.6% funding growth to end of 2019); strict compliance requirements
- Greens – commitment to honour the last part of Gonski then most probably roll back funding for Catholic education.

Principal Wellbeing Project

Brian Lynch, Project Officer, presented a report to BDSAC which outlined the background and aims of the project, the Principal Wellbeing Reference Group, the Project Officer role, development of strategies and consultation/findings. The report prompted good discussion around the nine strategies, rationales and intended actions. Brian will use feedback from BDSAC to further inform his work which will culminate in a ‘Framework’ at the end of Term 2.

Reports were also received from:

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|  CEOB |  Religious Education Centre |
|  Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body |  BDSAC Governance Working Party |
|  BDSAC Finance Standing Committee |  BDSAC ECSI Standing Committee |

Next meeting: 21-22 July 2016

This summary is a brief overview of the meeting and you are reminded that if you wish to raise any matter with the Ballarat Diocesan School's Advisory Council you are welcome to do so either through the Executive Officer, Peter Kerwan or any Board member.