



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School

Board Chair Report – Nick Gvozdin

Monday, 23 November 2020

Good evening and welcome fellow parents, teachers, and friends to our OLMC Annual School Community Meeting for 2020. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Nick Gvozdin and I am the board chair, this being my sixth and final year on what was known as the school board but is now known as the Catholic School Advisory Council. Thank you for taking the time to attend at what is traditionally a very busy time of the year for all of us.

Well what a year it's been. A year the likes of which nobody expected nor saw coming. It raised so many challenges but I'm very proud of how the school rose to the challenge and I'm sure you'll agree that the staff did an amazing job to support our children and keep them safe and at the same time adapted to provide them with the very best education and learning environment possible in very challenging circumstances. Despite COVID, so much has happened this year in what seems like a very compressed timeframe some of which I will touch upon in this report, but which Kevin will also address in his.

Insofar as the agenda for this evening is concerned, we do have a list of matters to get through. We will commence with the P&F AGM, Parish Report, my report as Board Chair, the Treasurer's Report in which the 2020 budget will be presented, the Principal's Report, and will conclude with a few presentations. There is a lot to get through, and I've set the rather ambitious aim of getting through it in between an hour and an hour and half. I don't propose to have any questions taken during the meeting, but please come and see me afterwards if you would like to discuss anything.

In tonight's report, I will provide the Community with:

- a brief update on the school's financial position.
- some other general matters regarding reviews, and the strategic plan, and some information regarding timeframes for the announcement of the new principal; and
- details the School Board composition for 2021.

School Finances

I am pleased to report that OLMC continues to be in a strong financial position. Despite continuing to fund necessary maintenance works and given the unique challenges of this year, we have still been able to consolidate our financial position during 2020 and have again managed to ensure that there is still enough money in the bank to cover costs into the New Year prior to the receipt of the next portion of Federal and State funding. Ivan will give you a breakdown of the government funding in his report. But we are proud of our continued ability to have sufficient funds to cover costs over the summer holiday period. To put this in perspective, many Catholic schools go into debt at this time of the year by using their bank overdraft facilities to cover costs leading into the New Year. However, due

to a combination of factors such as fundraising and the careful management of our finances and our continual efforts to spend our income wisely to try and get maximum bang for our education buck, we are able to avoid that scenario.

I would like to thank Gaby Del Borello for her continued efforts during the year as school Finance Officer. Gabby together with our Board Treasurer, Ivan Jaksic, have managed to deliver the financial information required for the Board to make informed decisions, and most recently have finalised the school budget for next year, and you will see some of this financial information in the presentation to follow.

That presentation will give you an overview of our financial standing, and the financial picture for the next 12 months, including to discuss School Fees for 2021. I also want to thank Ivan for the hard work and professionalism he has put into the treasurer job. I know he puts a huge amount of effort and many hours of his time into the role and appreciate it can be a thankless task. It is very challenging to undertake that task yet at the same time juggle his own work and family commitments. Ivan leaves the Board at the end of this year so I wish to thank him very much for his tremendous effort in such a challenging role.

OLMC Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

This year a committee was formed from the Board to work on our next Strategic Plan being for 2021 – 2024, and that will be launched next year. More information will be forthcoming next year and copies will be circulated.

Cyclic Review

We also had our 5 yearly cyclic review in the latter half of the year which was conducted by Catholic Education. It was a pleasing vindication of many things that we knew we were doing right in the school, but the process is always helpful for us in identifying whether there are opportunities for improvement. Kevin will also mention this in his report.

Improvements

We will continue to identify opportunities for improvement in our school and will action those in accordance with our priorities and budget. We continue to focus both on maintenance works and also have a continuing contract with a painting contractor to keep the school looking shipshape.

We have also identified capital items for improvement and next year the board and new principal will make decisions for the continual revitalisation of existing facilities to continue to improve the learning environment that we provide for our children and also the working environment we provide for our staff.

Before I get onto the School Board composition for 2021, I would like to acknowledge some of the contributions made by special individuals and groups in 2020:

OLMC Parish / Father Paul

Once again, Father Paul and our teaching staff have been instrumental in preparing our children for receiving the sacraments and celebrating Community Masses. The Parish and Father Paul have also had to adapt to the COVID challenge, and they have successfully done so and continued to support our school and I would like to thank Father Paul for his tireless effort in continuing to enrich the lives of our children and for his continued guidance to the Board in ensuring that our decisions are inclusive of our Parish. We look forward to continuing to work with Father Paul and the Parish in the future and for the strong bonds between the school and the Parish continuing to strengthen in the years to come.

P&F Committee

The P&F has continued under the very able leadership of Carmen Forde and Katherine Beeson and the rest of the P&F Committee. The P&F have worked tirelessly to coordinate the various fundraising activities that continue to provide the school with the opportunity to purchase valuable resources for our children's education. To Carmen and Katherine and all the hardworking P&F Representatives, thank you for your continued effort, support and dedication. Carmen and Katherine's time at the school is coming to an end so I want to acknowledge both of you and can sincerely say that the school community is deeply in your gratitude for the tremendous work that both of you have put in over the years in strengthening our school community and raising money for our children's learning needs. I thank you both very much.

Teachers

As for the teachers and the Leadership Group, late last month was World Teacher's Day and as I did the year before and the year before that I asked Kevin to pass to the teachers a message on behalf of the Board and the wider school community. It's probably enough for me to simply read out that message.

World Teachers Day is this Friday 30 October 2020. This has been a difficult year for all but we as a Board wish to demonstrate our gratitude and appreciation for your efforts during this past year which has presented unique challenges for our school. The manner in which the educators at our school rose to the challenge and were able to continue teaching our children during the COVID19 period and the unique challenges it presented, and the ability to do so in an almost seamless fashion, has made us very proud. The feedback from parents and caregivers in respect of our teachers during such period was extremely positive. It served as a reminder of your dedication to the school and is truly appreciated, and your actions and dedication enable our children to continue to thrive not just in their learning in the classroom but also in all aspects of their development. It has also served to remind us of what we already know, namely that we have a tremendously talented group of educators at our school.

This has been another successful year for our school, and we would not have been able to achieve what we have without the contribution and dedication of our educators and their passion for our children and the school. We acknowledge and thank you sincerely for your contribution and your efforts, and the wonderful learning environment for our children and the continued success and progress of the school are a credit to you all.

We look forward to continuing to work together with you in our school.

So a sincere thank you once again to all our teachers and the leadership group who form such an integral and invaluable part of our school community.

School Board

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the School Board for their time, effort and their valuable contribution throughout 2020. Once again we have pulled together all our different skills, during the year we've mastered the art of having Board meetings by Zoom, and everybody has made their own contribution. Their continued commitment to good governance has been greatly appreciated by both Kevin and myself.

Incorporation of CEWA

Show Powerpoint.

As of the beginning of this year, CEWA has adopted an incorporated structure.

Board Composition for 2021

The end of this year will give rise to a changing of the guard of sorts on the school board – a number of board members are finishing up this year, whether it be due to the reaching of the end of the 6 years that is the maximum period of service, the last of their children finishing at the school, or their family moving away, or in one case because of accepting a principalship at a new school.

So I wish to thank the following persons whose time on the board is at an end (this is in no particular order):

Ivan Jaksic – our very capable treasurer – his role will be taken over by our current board member Deanna Protich – thank you again Ivan.

Carmel Elkins – our extremely capable Secretary. Carmel is extremely organised and it's because of her efforts that our board meetings run as smoothly as they do. She's been a vital cog in the Board machinery for the last 6 years. Thanks very much Carmel for all your hard work, much of it behind the scenes but incredibly valuable.

Also leaving us is Karina Tedesco who has been Parish Rep on the board now for a number of years, and is always able to provide invaluable information and input in respect of the Parish to ensure that the lines of communications remain open and that we continue to work hand in hand with the Parish. Thank you very much Karina for your contributions over the years.

I've already mentioned Carmen and Katherine who were joint P&F reps – they are both leaving but it would be remiss of me not to mention the both of you again, so again thank you very much.

Also leaving the board is Natalie Giles who was a former P&F Rep on the board and a board member for a number of years since. Thanks very much Natalie for your insight, assistance and input as a board member.

Also leaving is Clayton Pritchard whose family are leaving the school and moving to regional WA. Many thanks Clayton and we wish you well on your new adventures in sunny Onslow.

My time on the Board also concludes at the end of this year. It's been an incredibly rewarding role and I thank all those I have had the pleasure of being on the board with during that time, and have enjoyed having the opportunity to contribute in that way. I am also very pleased to announce that my successor as School Council Chair will be Kelly Wiggett – stand up Kelly. I'm sure Kelly will do a tremendous job, and I'll be around for as long as Kelly wants me to help her transition to the role, but I expect that Kelly won't need much assistance. I said to Kelly a little earlier that it's an exciting time to take over the role

as the school will enter a period of renewal with a new principal and a relatively new Board so it's a great opportunity for new and fresh ideas and a new perspective to be brought to the role.

That is also a Segway to mentioning our final board member who is leaving, that being the person who just happens to be our principal of the last 8 years, Kevin Duffy.

Kevin has been a massive part of our school during the last years, his presence, passion and contribution to our school has been invaluable and it's because of his energy, input and his always putting the children first that our school has been shaped into the wonderful, successful and nurturing learning environment that it now is. As Board chair I've seen some of the challenges that Kevin has faced, his is a position that involves being a combination police officer, diplomat, mentor, therapist, marketing rep, punching bag, administrator, and about a dozen other jobs rolled into one. I marvel at how he retains his sanity sometimes – but it's a credit to him that through his very capable leadership he has always steered the ship in the right direction, and our school community will be forever grateful to Kevin for all he has done in the last 8 years. The staff were genuinely devastated when I announced that Kevin was leaving and I think that is testament to the person that Kevin is, and the regard in which he is held by all staff. On a personal level I thank Kevin for all his support during my 4 years as board chair and for his unending patience with me when I sometimes ask stupid questions.

I know though that Kevin felt it was time for a new challenge so it is to your credit that you leave the school with it being in a very strong and successful, and in a position that the new principal will be able to build on its many existing strengths when starting their own journey in this school. Kevin, you will leave with nothing but our best wishes for your new journey in your career and I have no doubt that you will be as successful at your new school as you have been here.

Enough goodbyes, some welcomes are needed to balance things out. I would like to welcome Nathan Maxwell, Tom Iwanowski and Karyn Cooper onto the School Advisory Council from next year. All 3 have expressed an interest and we are very pleased to have you on board, and we hope that you will find the experience as rewarding as we all have.

As always, we are always looking to welcome some new faces onto the team and add to our skillset. Criteria for membership:

- (a) possession of special skills that will be an asset to the Board;
- (b) a deep interest in the welfare of all students and staff;
- (c) a desire to give service to the Catholic School Community;
- (d) a keenness to promote Catholic Schooling;
- (e) an ability to work cooperatively and constructively with all other members of the Board; and
- (f) a sufficiency of time to devote to Board duties.

We always have an eye on succession planning, so if you are interested please do not hesitate to contact Kelly or me for a chat.

New Principal

Finally, an update as to the progress of the appointment of the new principal. Father Paul and I have been part of a 5-member selection panel which also includes 3 other persons from CEWA. We have met twice, the first time to create a shortlist of candidates, and last week to conduct interviews. Following interviews we made recommendations to the CEWA

Executive as to preferred candidates and rankings but ultimately CEWA will make the final decision taking into account not just the vacancy at our school but also other potential vacancies for principal appointments all occurring in the same week.

I expect that I will be in a position to announce the successful candidate this week, probably Thursday, but the timing is ultimately a matter for CEWA.

That concludes my report, will now pass you over to Ivan for the Treasurer's report.

Thank you all for attending this evening's Community Meeting and I wish you all a very safe and Merry Christmas.

Declare the meeting closed.