

School Council Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday 7 August 2018

3:15pm, ATPS Staff Room



Apologies: Sacha Bridger, Amanda McAlpine, Suellen Harrison, Mike Smith

Present: Adam Cheetham (Chair), Stuart Blackwood (Principal), Rachael Bernsousa, Magdalene McCulloch, Sue DeWitt, Rebecca Benson, Steph Tarbin (minutes)

1. Confirmation of minutes of meeting 21 May 2018 (Attached)

Moved: Steph Tarbin Seconded: Magdalene McCulloch All agreed.

2. Business arising

- **Confirmation and ratification of the annual report:** Stuart reported that the 2017 annual report has been and can be viewed on the WA Education Department's School's Online website <https://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/home.do>.

ACTION: Stuart to upload the 2017 Annual Report to the ATPS School Website

- **WA Education Awards (for information):** As a result of Onya nominations, Rosie Penn and Sue Ashmore were identified as the school's nominees for the 2018 WA Premier's Education Awards (Education Assistant and Primary Teacher categories). Adam thanked all who contributed to the process and noted that the wealth of evidence supplied by staff, families and Onyas helped immeasurably in the writing of strong nominations in support of two excellent candidates. The finalists for the 2018 awards were announced 6 August; unfortunately, our nominees were not in the final four selected in their categories. Nonetheless, the process of nominating staff is an invaluable way for the school community to appreciate and acknowledge outstanding efforts by ATPS staff. Some considerations for future nominations, based on our 2018 experience:
 - the WA Education Awards are highly competitive (there were approx. 380 nominations for Primary School Teacher in this year's round);
 - recognition of Education Department priorities (e.g. Indigenous education) may give a strategic edge to applications;
 - an early start (Term 1) to data collection and writing is essential! NB. the 2018 submission date was brought forward to end of Term 2 (rather than early Term 3 as in 2017) and several pages of supporting documents were allowed IN ADDITION TO the three-page nomination statements of 2017. Fortunately, we were positioned to respond to both changes largely thanks to the Onyas.
 - Bec is willing to be on a 2019 subcommittee. Steph is willing to be co-opted as a community member to assist with writing/editing.
 - Stuart noted that Onyas can now be submitted online via the school website and he has received several already.

ACTION: Planning for 2019 nominations to be an agenda item in term 4.

- **Suggestions for do-able improvements to School Council operation.** This item arises from the results of the self-assessment exercise discussed at last meeting and Adam's request that Council formulate suggestions for achievable changes. Suggestions included: an information session and discussion of Induction Module before first meeting in Term 1 2019 for new Council members (Bec); allocation of time for agenda items with a view to finishing meetings at a specific time (Magdalene); two meetings per term (Steph and Stuart) which would potentially be shorter, because there would be less time explaining/catching up after a long break between meetings; annual school council dinner to recognise volunteer efforts of council members and to build sense of community (Stuart). Discussion of these suggestions noted: the value of an induction meeting before the first meeting; the importance of allowing time for all council members to contribute perspectives to items of discussion; the value of circulating information in support of agenda items (and agenda) a week before meetings to reduce time explaining and allow for reflection; the benefits of a council dinner to create a positive culture for School

Council. The idea of moving to two meetings per term at fixed intervals (e.g. week 3 and 7) was thought to warrant further discussion before making a decision involving all members of Council.

ACTION: Council meeting intervals and frequency to be an agenda item in Term 4. Allocation of times for items to be incorporated in Term 4 agendas.

- **WA Ed. Dept online resources for school boards and councils (for discussion). Refer to modules at:**

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/online-resources-for-school-councils-boards>

The online modules contain lots of resources for all members of school councils and boards, in addition to induction materials for new members. Steph suggested that council might aim to review at least one module per year as part of ongoing development (e.g. in Term 3 meeting, or as a less formal get together outside of formal meetings). Stuart noted that schools can apply for a facilitator to visit schools to implement modules.

ACTION: Stuart to obtain details about school-based training for councils.

3. **ATPS 50th Anniversary planning**

Rebecca reported on planning for the 'fun day' aspect of the celebration, to be held on Friday 15 March 2019. The format planned is to have an 'open school' in the afternoon and fun activities on the oval from 5pm into the evening (food trucks, music, colour run, etc). There are lots of logistics to consider, and these will entail some expense. The Town of Bassendean events officer has been very helpful with information about permits needed and possible sources of funding. Grant applications (eg. LotteryWest up to \$5000 for equipment) rather than School Council.

Stuart reported that the official side of the celebrations will include: a formal assembly on the 50th anniversary of the school opening; installation of pavers with school logo and names of donors in entry area of school; a new entry statement to the school (brick letterbox); a photo book displaying the school's development; new mural in process in the quadrangle adjacent to the under-cover area; commemorative gift for 2019 students (e.g. mechanical pencil). There is also a plan to renovate the garden in the area between the admin block and the P&C room into an 'anniversary garden' which will feature a plaque commemorating the 50-year anniversary. Funding applications may be needed to help defray some of the costs of the various plans for the celebration.

4. **Promotional Activities**

Magdalene reported that ATPS will submit art works to the Bassendean Visual Arts Award. Question raised about the closing date for entries -- 10 August on website. Do school entries have a different closing date/submission process? Magdalene also noted that the Shaun Tan entries have been returned to the school and that there is a plan to present students with certificates of participation at an assembly. Other promotional activities are currently subsumed into 50th anniversary planning.

5. **Vision 2020 (standing item)**

Stuart noted that the school had taken part in National Quality Standards (NQS) review of teaching in the 0-8 years of age program, as identified in Vision2020 as a performance indicator in early childhood education at ATPS. Stuart noted that the review committee were impressed with the school's early childhood program and had constructive ideas for areas of improvement (e.g. outdoor play areas). Recommendations will be supplied with the report and the review report will be circulated to School Council

ACTION: Stuart to circulate NQS report to Council.

6. **Other business**

- **Staff development days, contributions and charges for 2019** are being formulated and will be an item for discussion and ratification the next meeting (week 3, Term 4). Information will be circulated by email in advance for Council to consider.

ACTION: Council members to monitor email, review documents and raise questions by email prior to the meeting.

- **'Reading Leagues'**: Stuart asked for Council's views on the idea of a program to recognise high standards of reading and to encourage students to keep aiming for the next level. It would be similar to

the 'lexiles' (reading levels) in schools that are using Scholastic reading programs. ATPS uses Oxford which has similar resources available to test student comprehension of reading. Reading Leagues would complement the BEARS reading program (i.e. an 'opt in' at Year 3 and provide an incentive for continuing with home reading for students in Years 4-6). A question was raised about the effect of the program for students who are not strong readers. The suggestion was made that perhaps the program could celebrate progression as well as recognise achievement of certain levels.

➤ **Strategies for distinguishing ATPS:** Rachael suggested that ATPS is well-positioned to be known as creative, problem-solving school ('a school for thinkers'), which could distinguish ATPS from other local schools and appeal to new families. She raised the following for discussion:

- EdConnect: Schools pay \$350 per year to join and the organisation supplies volunteers to provide academic and social support to students. Stuart noted that the organisation was formerly known as VolunteersWA and that ATPS left the program five years ago because their volunteers lacked literacy skills. He agreed that it was worth exploring whether the program had developed.

ACTION: Stuart to seek information from current users of the program (i.e. Eden Hill P.S., Bassendean P.S.) and report back to School Council.

- Homework: the existing policy is at least five years old (dated 2013). Rachael raised the question whether there is value in setting homework, particularly in light of considerable research showing no benefit to educational outcomes. Stuart observed that ATPS homework policy places reading at the core of activities and emphasises revision. Discussion by Council members noted: that homework is often an expectation of parents (i.e. preparation for high school and ultimately ATAR); that homework provides a way in which parents can engage with children's learning and school experiences; that homework can create or exacerbate conflict and stress in families; that some families are not in a position to engage in children's learning. General agreement that the homework policy is due for review. Stuart will raise the issue at a whole school development day (next term).

ACTION: Stuart to report back to School Council on staff discussion of the homework policy at next meeting.

- Recess: Rachel also raised the question whether there is value in rethinking the implementation of recess in light of research suggesting that short regular breaks through the day (i.e. 10 minutes every 50 minutes) improves concentration and focus. Staff noted that there would be significant logistical implications to such a change.

ACTION: item to be placed on agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

➤ **School website:** Steph noted that the new school website needs a refreshed look to reflect the change to the new style of polo shirt. Council members reported that some links are not working across all platforms (e.g. information about School Council is not visible on an iPhone but can be viewed on a computer). Stuart explained the school plans for website maintenance.

Meeting close: 5:12 pm

Next meeting: Week 3 Term 4 (3:15pm, Tuesday 23 October 2018).