POSEIDON PRIMARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
27 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Yvonne Atkinson (Chair)
Peter Blackford
Wes Buzza
Madlen Griffiths
Melinda McAndrew
Brooke McKenna
Ros Mugg
Jan Norberger
Margaret Willett
Biljana Wright

Guests: Debbie Linehan
Danial Swan

Meeting opened: 7pm

1. Welcome
Yvonne opened the meeting and introduced Jan Norberger and Madlen Griffiths to the Board. Jan is not only our local MLA but also has extensive business experience to offer the board. Madlen is Partnerships Manager at ECU and provides the board with education expertise. The board welcomed both Jan and Madlen.

Debbie and Danial were also present and were acknowledged as being observers at the meeting but had no voting rights.

A brief ‘ice breaker’ was conducted with each board member being asked to remember and share with the board who their best primary school teacher was and why?

Yvonne acknowledged the contribution the school council members have made to the school over the last few years and thanked everyone for their participation.
2. **School values and Board of Code of Conduct**

Yvonne outlined that the opportunity to form a School Board is an exciting new chapter in Poseidon’s evolution. Board members need to think about how they conduct themselves and how the board can work effectively as a team. Yvonne reminded board members that the board is there to support Peter as Principal in achieving the objectives and strategic direction of the school.

Yvonne suggested that the school values should be the basis of the work the board does. A formal Code of Conduct will be established but for now each board member should remember at least the following two of the four school values:

- Relationships and Collaboration (building positive and pro-active relationships)
- Caring and Inclusivity (providing a safe and caring environment)

Board meetings need to be an environment where each member feels safe to be able to put their point of view across, there is mutual respect, trust and honesty. Each member needs to actively listen to what is being said. Yvonne reminded the members that there will be times when opinions are challenged; conventional wisdom is challenged. The board will need to be pro-active and members should have an open mind. Being an Independent Public School is a different way of ‘doing business’. Each member should have the school values and the school wide pedagogy at the front of their minds while considering the issues at hand and always consider “is it best for the students?”

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous School Council meeting were tabled and were approved by Melinda McAndrew and seconded by Peter Blackford.

4. **Decision Making Processes for the Board**

Yvonne explained the difference between consensus and majority vote. A general discussed ensued. Jan shared his experiences with consensus in a practical setting. He posed the question “when do you make a decision?” Jan proposed that the board could discuss and agree on issues using the ‘spirit of consensus’ but have a ‘majority vote’ option as a backup. Members’ different view points should be registered and respected.

The Board agreed to operate within the ‘spirit of consensus’ with the ability to hold a vote if needed.

The Board agreed that a quorum of 70% of the total membership is required.
The Board agreed that the board should have an odd number of members to prevent the chair from having the casting vote.

Biljana queried the possibility of a proxy vote. This was discussed with an option being the proxy could only be given to a board member. This issue will be further explored once the board has been established.

5. Board Structure/Nomination Process

There was plenty of discussion around the table to work out the following issues:

- How many members should be on the board?
- What skill set is being sought?
- Length of tenure on the board?
- Nominations and Voting process inc timelines.

Board members tabled various combinations of the make up of the school board. Peter reminded members that the membership must be predominantly made of community members.

There was some discussion as to whether there should be six community members and two staff members or five community members and three staff. There was also some discussion as to any other positions board members may hold on other committees eg. P&C and would this present any conflicts of interest. Yvonne confirmed that any pecuniary interests would need to be declared.

The Board Agreed that both Jan and Madlen were already wider community representatives. Jan and Madlen agreed to serving a two year term with the option to extend for a further two years. Their tenure will initially be up for renewal in October 2016.

As the School Business Plan hasn’t been prepared yet it was suggested that a general skill set should be aimed for. Skills may include: finance, marketing, IT, strategy, education, sustainability, partnerships, communication. Bil also made the point that many parents may still have a valuable contribution to make even if they don’t have the above skills. Everyone agreed they should also be encouraged to nominate.

The nomination and voting process was also considered with input from various members of the board. Questions posed included ‘do we seek nominations?’ ‘do we head hunt?’ ‘do we vote for all members?’ ‘how do we get nominations?’ ‘what needs to be included in a nomination?’
In conclusion the board agreed on the following:
- The School Board will be made up of 11 representatives.
- There will be five parent representatives.
- There will be three staff representatives.
- There will be two wider community representatives.
- Peter Blackford as Principal is a mandated member.

The Board further agreed to hold an election from 21 – 28 November for board positions. Voting will occur either online via Survey Monkey or ballot paper obtainable from the front office. Each parent/care giver will be eligible to vote for up to five community nominees. Each staff member will be eligible to vote for up to three staff nominees.

Each interim Board Member will need to re-nominate for their position and will be part of the election process.

Community and Staff will be invited by Yvonne as Board Chair to nominate themselves for a board position. Nominations should address what they can contribute to the school’s strategic direction and relate it to the school’s values. It should be no more than 250 words. Nominations open 5 November and close 14 November.

Action: Peter, Yvonne and Sam Smolarek to draft the letter inviting nominations.

Action: Peter/Yvonne to email to each family and staff member the invitation to nominate for a board position.

The board will review nominations at the next board meeting scheduled for Monday 17 November.

Nominees can state a preference for the length of tenure they prefer. The Board agreed that for the parent representatives there would be:
- 1 rep 12 months
- 2 rep 2 years
- 2 rep 3 years

The Board further agreed for the staff representatives the length of tenure be as follows:
- 1 rep 12 months
- 1 rep 2 years
- 1 rep 3 years

Yvonne suggested that at the board meeting scheduled immediately after the election (9 December) both outgoing and incoming members should attend.
This meeting should be a celebration and a welcome for any new members and an acknowledgement of the work outgoing members have achieved. The new School Board will commence officially from this date. Suitable refreshments will be organized.

7. Communication and Promotion
Yvonne shared her vision of the board being seen to be open, approachable and serving the needs of the community. A key part in achieving this will be how the board communicates and promotes the work that is being done.

It was suggested that the board agenda be posted on the school website prior to the meeting and articles could also be included in the school newsletter.

While the board believed this to be an important area it was agreed that any policies on communication could be held over until the new board is finalised.

8. School Voluntary Contribution and Charges 2015
Peter tabled the letter regarding School Voluntary Contributions and Charges for 2015 that goes out to all parents. The charges for optional items were discussed. The board believed that some of these costs were now a little low and should be updated to reflect rising costs.

Changes agreed were:

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<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excursions/Incursions</td>
<td>$60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 6 Graduation dinner</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6 camps</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>$35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interschool sport (Yr 4 onwards)</td>
<td>$30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remove PP from Interschool sport</td>
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Bil suggested that an optional charge for speech therapy assessments should also be included for kindy students. The board discussed the issue with the consensus being that if the charge is left with the parents then the parents may not wish to access the assessment. This would be detrimental to the student. Wes pointed out that as a school we are placing a lot of emphasis on the quality of our early learning program and we would want all students that were deemed to be at risk to access such an assessment. This could be a point of difference in the programs Poseidon offers.

The board agreed that the funding for any speech therapy assessments would potentially be funded by the school. This would be looked at in further detail in the Business Plan.
9. Any Other Business

Peter tabled a document “Re-profiling for Independent Public School (2015 intake).” Peter outlined to the board that the school has a once only opportunity to make changes to the staffing structure that would abolish positions filled by permanent employees. Importantly these employees will be registered as a redeployee and not charged to the school’s one line budget in 2015.

Peter advised the board that there are two contexts for Poseidon:

Administration: Review and/or create roles for greater efficiency. The school could create a permanent part-time marketing officer role which is currently undertaken on a voluntary capacity.

Teaching: Consider the specialist teaching areas currently on offer at Poseidon. In order to potentially enhance the direction of the school abolishing one of these areas could be considered. Poseidon currently has 14.3 FTE and 0.2 LOTE, 0.4 Art, 0.4 Music, 0.4 Physical Education.

The board generally discussed various options. Other considerations included that LOTE is half funded by the Commonwealth. What about DOTT? By re-profiling one of these specialist areas what would the school offer instead? Bil suggested extra art for the early learning years. Some members thought that physical education certainly shouldn’t be abolished. Should a specialist history, science, geography teacher be engaged? What is best for our community and students?

The deadline for the re-profiling is 28 November so the board acknowledged the timeliness for the decision. However, the board sought further input from Peter and asked Peter to provide some curriculum/funding scenarios for the board to consider at the next meeting. Peter is also to discuss with the staff.

**Action:** Peter to provide different curriculum scenarios

Wes brought up communication in general terms between teachers and parents. It was agreed that this would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
10. Date of Next Meeting
   Monday 17 November at 7pm in the School Staff Room

   Meeting concluded at 9.10pm

   Signed: __________________________

   Board Chair

   Date: 17.11.14