



# Board of Trustees Newsletter

## DECEMBER 2015

### From the Chair

Dear parents and caregivers

Since our last newsletter the Board has met several times to complete our 2015 Work Plan, including:

- review and approve recommendations from Rosemary and her team in the areas of Mathematics, Health & PE and ICT;
- progress work on our strategic plan for the next five years, including actively considering the feedback you provided;
- confirm many elements of the building project, due to commence next year;
- ensure the school is equipped to continue to provide an excellent learning environment for our children; and
- commence our planning for transition to a new Board as part of the 2016 elections.

The Board would like to thank our management team and all school staff for their dedication. Your efforts and professionalism were recognised in the external reviews of the School by both the Education Review Office and Catholic Schools Office. Your focus on helping our children to achieve and grow is a key part of what makes our school special.

As the 2015 school year comes to a close I would like to acknowledge everyone whose support has contributed to making 2015 another successful year for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School.

We farewell our Year 6 students as they graduate from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School. At the Leavers Assembly last Friday, we celebrated their achievements and acknowledged their efforts in developing multi-disciplinary talents. We wish them the best for their new adventures and trust they will remember their time at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart fondly.

We also farewell a number of families who have their last child graduating this year or are leaving due to relocation. We wish you all the best for the next stages of your child's education and would like to thank you for your contribution to our school.

We farewell several staff members – teachers Stacey Peacock, Kim Taylor, Georgina Thomas and teacher aide, Elizabeth Cameron – who are leaving us to pursue other opportunities. We would like to thank each of them for their contribution and dedication to our school and our children.

We would also like to acknowledge your contribution to our school community – as parents and caregivers, as members of the PTFA, or as volunteers for class activities. Your efforts continue to assist our children to achieve, and ensure our School remains a special community.

We wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and holiday season and look forward to seeing you for an exciting year in 2016.

Best wishes  
Kevin and your Board

**A quote from  
Catherine McAuley**

“Put your whole confidence in God. He never will let you want necessities for yourself or children.”

*Catherine McAuley is the Founder of the Sisters of Mercy*



*“Ignite in our children the passion for limitless learning navigated by Catholic Values”*

### **Student Achievement – National Standards end of year 2015**

At our final meeting for the year Rosemary and her Management team shared with us the students' achievements against National Standards. Across all levels of the school the high level results are:

Subject area	% of students working AT or ABOVE National Standard
Reading	94.3
Maths	95.3
Writing	94.8

As a school we set ourselves high achievement targets and the Board is pleased with these end of year results. Where any student is not at National Standard level, the Board has confirmed an individual learning plan is in place for that child.

As a reference point, the Ministry of Education national target is for 85% of children to meet National Standards in reading, writing and numeracy by 2017.

### **Innovative Learning Environments –Update**

Since our last newsletter we have progressed a number of activities to prepare for the continuation of our adoption of innovative learning environments and the start of our building programme.

We are awaiting Building Consent – as preconditions around drainage continue to be assessed. While this has been progressing we have taken the following actions:

- acquired new furniture for the remaining senior classrooms, so all Year 3 through 6 classes will have new furniture for 2016;
- worked with the Catholic Schools Office to progress the relocation of a portable classroom to provide teaching space for once works start. This is due to arrive for the start of the school year.
- Continued to build our funds for our contribution to the required works – with \$166k in the bank at the end of the year.

The next steps for the project are:

- Release of the tender documents for the new build in the first quarter of 2016; and
- Receipt of building consent.

### **Donations and Activity Fees for 2016**

The Board has resolved that with our priorities next year, increases to some of our charges are necessary. In setting these charges we have considered your feedback provided through our consultation process.

We are not changing the donations we request of you each year. Both the Capital Development Fund Donation and the General Donation will remain unchanged at \$40 and \$90 per term respectively.

We are required to pass on a small increase in the Attendance Dues, which we collect on behalf of the Diocese. These have increased by \$2 per term.

The changes we are implementing are to address the shortfall in specific funding we have in providing the extensive programmes that support your child's learning and growth. These changes are in line with your feedback in consultation and are:

- Activity Fees – an increase of \$15 per term, to \$30 per term; and
- Digital Learner Levy – a new charge of \$10 per term (\$40 per annum – which will be included with your stationery charges) that supports tools, teaching and technology used through all levels of the school.

While we recognise that no increase to outgoings is ever welcome, we have endeavoured to keep this to a minimum recognising the greatly increased access our students have to technology and learning opportunities and activities provided for your children by the school.

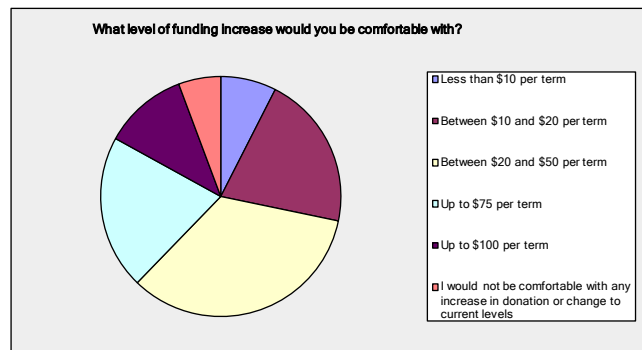
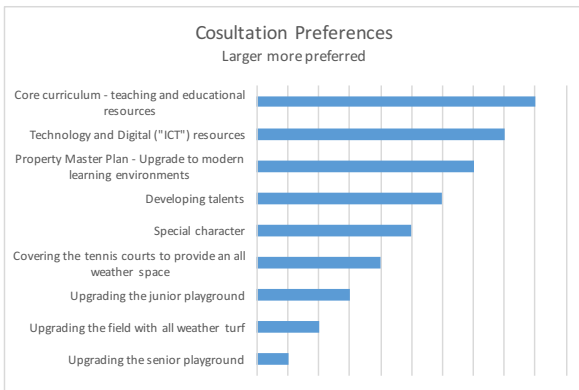
**Strategic Planning – Consultation Feedback**

In August we got together as a community and sought your comments and feedback on our future plans for the school. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the evening and through our consultation survey.

Some highlights from those who returned the electronic survey were:

- **92.8%** said that what makes Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School special is its Catholic character (the two next highest scorers were our Pastoral Care and professional staff)
- **79.7%** of families chose Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School over other schools because of our Catholic character (the next highest reason was location at 55%)
- **76%** said what *their children* like most about school is the way the teachers support them and help them learn
- **77%** of respondents said they knew or ‘mostly’ knew about where our funding comes from – but there is further work to do in this space with 22% of respondents saying ‘sort of’ or ‘not really’

The survey asked respondents to rank from 1-9 their view on the priorities for our funding and investment and to outline their comfort with any increase in our funding requests. The following were the results:



The Board is responding to these priorities through:

<b>Maintaining current donation levels to fund</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Master Plan – contribution to Capital Development Fund</li> <li>• Core Curriculum – Teaching &amp; Educational resources</li> </ul>
<b>Applying our Cash Reserves towards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Curriculum – Teaching &amp; Educational resources</li> <li>• Property Master Plan – new furniture and classroom tools</li> </ul>
<b>Changing Activity fees &amp; Implementing an Digital Learner Levy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology &amp; Digital ("ICT") resources, personnel and tools</li> <li>• Core Curriculum – Teaching &amp; Educational resources</li> <li>• Developing Talents, including a Mandarin Learning Assistant</li> </ul>

**Next Steps**

The strategic plan will be sent to the Ministry of Education early next year, and will be available on our website. We continue with three overarching themes that guide our activities:

- **Empower our Learners to Thrive in the 21st Century**
- **Navigate the 21st Century using our Catholic compass**
- **Govern to Excel**

We will share our priorities under each of these themes in the new year, but these include:

- continued investment in ICT capabilities and learning support;
- continued deployment of new furniture and resources to support varied learning styles; and
- action on our property development plans.