Burwood Public School P&C Association  
Minutes of the General Meeting  
Tuesday 22 July 2014, School Library

Attendance: Janelle Heron (Chair), Mark Burfield, Elizabeth Choo, Sebastiana Fondacaro, Frances Kory, Mei Liang, Amanda Ng, Hong Sun, Priya Takalikar, Carolyn Wallace-Whelan (Principal), Shilia Wattamaor, Rebekah Wright, Kailash, Shasada Sita & Surya.

Apologies: Garry Fuller

The meeting commenced at 9.10am. The P&C Association President, Janelle Heron, welcomed all to the meeting and morning tea.

The Principal, Carolyn Wallace-Whelan gave a presentation on “21st Century Learning”, explaining about the shift in learning in all schools, based on the Commonwealth Government’s “Melbourne Declaration” that was signed by all States in 2008. This has led to the establishing of new syllabus, firstly in English and new Maths, and now in Science. She showed some insightful video clips that emphasised the need to prepare children for a different world than now. There is a major shift away from “factory classrooms” and “fact learning” (a low level form of learning). Also use of technology in school has become much more prevalent. (She noted that the desk computer has almost gone, and that the phone could be the greatest computer of all). Next year, a “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) program will be introduced in one of the Kindergarten classes. Also a big push is for an Asian perspective in all areas. The way children think and respond is changing. Often students at Burwood Public School are passive learners, so they need to be encouraged to develop their critical thinking and to discuss and collaborate. We need to focus on creating authentic communication. In response to a question on how things might happen, Carolyn gave the example of lessons by Mrs Harris with open ended and rich tasks on the subject of “flight”. Another example was the Science Fair with experiments undertaken by Year 5 and 6 students. Some developments include teachers learning new ways to teach, and for classrooms to become less regimented to allow for collaboration and moving around (and with less furniture). A challenge is how to measure competency, etc. Amanda asked how we as parents can encourage our children in this new learning environment. Carolyn suggested that children should be engaged in conversation and to politely/respectfully question “Why?” including with regard to authority. (eg some things you see in the media may need to be questioned). Building resilience in our children is important. (At this point, Carolyn mentioned about the St Vinnies Winter sleepout).

Minutes of Previous Meeting:
Minutes of the previous meeting of 18 June were distributed.

Business Arising from Previous Minutes:

Treat Day / Athletics Carnival
This year, due to the relocation of the Athletics Carnival, there was no Treat Day in conjunction with the Carnival. Instead, a Treat Day is being held today, and parents are invited to stay back and help with this if available.

For the Athletics Carnival, the canteen could take orders of sandwiches and sushi that were delivered to the venue, which Janelle described as “fabulous”. Though there was not so much shade, there was lots of space. The teachers arranged a “round robin” of activities for the K-2 and 3-6 students that kept everyone busier for longer. Overall the Athletics Carnival was a fabulous success. Janelle concluded that this may be the way to go next year and beyond, ie to keep the Treat Day separate to the Athletics Carnival. This will avert the need to lug equipment and allow for a much more relaxed experience.

School Disco
Carolyn had won a school disco at a recent conference. This is to be held on Thursday 11 September. There will be two sessions, as for previous discs (K-2 and 3-6). This time there
will be no pizza but instead a break in the middle of each disco session for the students to receive an iceblock and have a drink, as they get really hot. The event should be cheaper due to no cost for the DJ and no pizza.

Fundraising Initiatives:
The P&C has been in the process of expending $85,000 in recent months including on:

1. 20 mini-laptops
2. $2,000 to every grade - most was spent on digital cameras. Kindergarten bought some “hands on” maths resources, and Year 1 some construction lego.
3. $20,000 on new furniture in the Library
4. Four additional interactive whiteboards

Money raised from our fundraising efforts is now being spent quickly so the current students can benefit. Therefore we need to keep money rolling in. Also Burwood Public School is considered as “reasonably affluent”, so there is little funding for desirable extras.

Carolyn informed that Years K and 1 need a lot more take-home reading, including to replace those that are not in a good state.

5c Drive
Carolyn has organised a “5c drive” and there will be the first “weigh in” today. The coins collected in each class will be weighed and that figure divided by the number of students in the class. There will be a final check when tins are open to ensure no 50c or other coins.

Spellathon
Mr Wratten is running a Spell-A-Thon which is taking place from 18 August to 5 September. The idea is to give students a list of words to learn to spell, and then the students to arrange sponsors from amongst their family and friends. Then there will be a spell-off. Prizes are being donated. The idea is that this can be a fundraiser whilst students can also gain knowledge.

Burwood Public School Festival / Raffle
Burwood Public School Festival is on Friday 28 November. Amanda has followed up with Holroyd Rotary regarding their generic “Community Chest” raffle. They need to know how many raffle books we require. Tickets are $2 each and we get to keep 75% of proceeds. The raffle is drawn in January and a car is the major prize. We should arrange to sell the bulk of tickets before the Festival (eg from October). This should allow ample time for return of money before the end of the school year. This raffle will require much less “leg work” than those run by ourselves. Amanda is to check about the issue of lost raffle books and tickets, and how these are accounted for.

Father’s Day Stall
Father’s Day this year is on Sunday 7 September, and the Father’s Day stall will be on Tuesday 2 and Thursday 4 September. Amanda has already ordered products for the stall. The Mother’s Day stall made over $1,000

P&C Association Meetings / Community Talks
The P&C Associations from today will now be held on the third Tuesday of each month during term from 9am, usually in the school’s staff room. These will usually include a “community talk”.

The next P&C Association meeting will be on Tuesday 19 August and Danielle Coonan, teacher for the new Autism class, will speak on a range of disabilities under the theme, “accommodating differences in every classroom”. For the following P&C Association meeting on Tuesday 16 September, the guest speaker will be Veronica Kapsimali, Strathfield School Education Director, who will speak on “Local Schools / Local Decisions”.

Book Fair
The annual book fair will be in the week from Monday 11 August. The after-school selling days (requiring P&C Association assistance) are on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 August.
**Book Week**

Book Week is from Monday 18 August (the week after the Book Fair). This will include an event where students will dress as a character from a book.

**Gardening to tidy up the front of the school**

Fatma, Indra and David did a big session of weeding recently at the front of the school, and the result is greatly appreciated. There is plenty more to clean up in due course. Last year, Mrs Janes mentioned that there was some money for a vegetable garden.

**Vice President #2**

The P&C Association still requires a second Vice President to fill a casual vacancy. This is a requirement of the Association as an incorporated entity. The position can be as simple as being the “name on a form”. Janelle asked for anyone to let her know if able to do this.

**School E-Newsletter**

The school is now sending out e-newsletters and can also send notes. Eventually all notes can be sent out electronically. This will reduce costs significantly with regard to paper and time, and the money can be better spent on teaching and learning. Notices are also being put outside the Uniform Shop as some messages are lost when not on paper. The school is also using “Google Translate” to convert the newsletter content into Chinese and Korean.

Carolyn informed that new photocopy machines are being purchased to replace existing older machines.

**Road Safety: “Walking to School Bus”**

As previously reported, Carolyn has been following up on the idea of introducing an NRMA “Walking to School Bus” in which students will be “picked up” by the volunteers on a set walking route past “bus stops” leading to and from the school. This could help to alleviate traffic congestion before and after school especially around Stanley Street. This will require at least two parent volunteers (qualified including by completing a Working With Children Check) for each time period.

Information can be given out during Education Week (next week), to sense the community feel and see if the idea can snowball. This would reduce the number of cars and also be a healthier option for students.

**Ethics Classes**

As discussed at recent P&C Association meetings, hopefully the school can start up an ethics class as an option to the “non-scripture” class.

**Education Week**

The school is conducting activities in Education Week (next week) including a CAPA concert (30 July) and a “Focus on Science” morning (31 July).

**Parking**

As discussed at previous P&C Association meetings, there is an ongoing issue regarding parking for those volunteering at the school for extended periods.

Janelle is to draft a letter to the Burwood Council explaining our situation and seeking a solution.

**Treasurer:**

The composite P&C Association balance as at 30/6/14 was $62,584.94.

**General Business:**

**Insurance**

The P&C Association has arranged insurance cover for this year, but in future we could consider other options that are now becoming available due to the restructuring of the NSW Federation of P&C Associations. More competitive options are becoming available.

**Public Meeting re Gonski Funding**

There is a public meeting next Tuesday 29 July from 4.30-5.30pm at Homebush Public School regarding Education Reform funding as proposed by Gonski but likely to be reduced
under the current Federal Government. Mr Craig Laundy MP, Member for Reid, is the guest speaker. P&C Association representation is encouraged.

ICAS Tests
A parent had raised a query regarding the ICAS tests – these are available at the school for English and Maths, but why not for Science and Computing.

Carolyn expressed that she is philosophically not in favour of these ICAS tests. She explained that the tests are run by a private company with the endorsement of the University of NSW who can use the data, and is essentially a money-making operation for the company involved. Also the testing is not based on the curriculum. Some parents think that sitting these tests might help their child in the process of being chose for a Selective school or OC class, but this is not the case. Many schools refuse to offer the tests for these reasons.

Amanda shared that she saw the tests as an opportunity for students to get more experience of a test environment.

Based on a desire from parents for these test opportunities, Carolyn has allowed for a compromise in that the tests are being conducted at 8am with teacher volunteers, though personally she would prefer they were held away from the school. She did acknowledge that ICAS does provide a comprehensive report to each student for the tests they do.

Relocation of Support Classes
Carolyn informed that in 2015 (beginning of the year or by the end of Term 1), the three support classes at Burwood Public School (the IM class, the autism class, and the hearing support class) are to be relocated to a new school (yet to be named, but possibly “Edith Walker”) in the Concord West area around Powells Creek with purpose-built classrooms. This will also be a mainstream public school. It was noted that in any case the students in these classes are transported from “out of area”, so there should be no issue in this regard for the relocation.

Burwood Public School should continue to experience significant growth. So the relocation will allow for a couple of extra classrooms. There is also a master plan for the future development of the school including replacing some of the demountables with permanent buildings.

Carolyn commented that the support classes (and the parents with students in these classes) brought a certain richness to the school that will be missed.

School Uniform
Carolyn expressed concern at the standard of school uniform compliance by some, and also by the volume of school uniform “lost property”.

Next Meeting:
Tuesday 19 August, 9.00am in the staff room

The meeting closed at 10.10am.