



WEST LEEDERVILLE
PRIMARY

Board minutes

February 12, 2019





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Subject:	West Leederville Primary School Board Meeting
Time:	6.pm to 8.20pm
Date:	February 12, 2019
Location:	Staff room
Chair:	Andrew Porter
Apologies:	
Attendees:	Fiona Kelly (FK), Ryan Hathrill(RH), Barry Harvie (BH), Michael McInerheney (MM), Tahnee Davies (TD), Aine Sommerfield (AS), Lisa Wade (LW), Mark Etherington (ME), Judith Curtis (JC), Rochelle Reeves (RR)
Observers	Shannon Slieker, Pia Engstrom, David Cresp, Ann Dhepnorarat(arrived 6.05pm)

Time	Item and summary of discussion	Actions
6.01pm	Welcome Meeting was opened at 6.01pm. AP welcomed all to meeting . No apologies. Welcome to Rochelle and Judith, new staff members.	
6.08pm	Confirmation of agenda All agreed Disclosure of interest Several members indicated they had children in collaborative or team teaching classes. AS has a daughter is in the Year 5 class; ME has a son in the Year 1/2 class; TD has daughters in the Year 4/5 & 6 classes, and RH has a daughter in Year 6.	
	Election of School Board Chair for 2019 Nominations for Chair sought – AP Unanimous vote – AP elected. AP reflected on his time as Chair in 2018 and acknowledged the support of Board. Nominations for Deputy Chair sought. BH elected.	AP elected unopposed as Board Chair for 2019. BH elected unopposed as Board Deputy Chair 2019.
6.08pm	Minutes of previous meeting Motion that the minutes from the meeting held on November 20, 2018 are a true and accurate record. TD moved motion. BH seconded FK Suggested that the minutes be circulated around the Board members between meetings to shorten the turnaround time for publication on the website.	Minutes accepted by all present. Minutes will be circulated to the Board by the Chair and approved for release to the WLPS website, 3 weeks following meeting.

6.10pm

Priority Item

A suggestion was made that first board meeting of the year could be held Week 3 as some reports are not available until after student census has been conducted in Week 2.

Principal's report and Financial reports not presented at this meeting.

Financial reports will be circulated to Board via circular once the information becomes available after Census.

Split Classes and Team Teaching (Discussion points attached)

- Outcome: Statement from the Board

The comment was made that there were two areas of concern amongst the parents ie. collaborative teaching & communication

- 1) Stated that the school Board was not involved in decision for teachers to collaborative teach. The decision was operational and the Board has no role in endorsing teaching approaches. Clarification was made that the term class structure indicates class composition ie. number of students per group arranged into class groupings. This is done within framework of general agreement (School Education Act Employee's General Agreement 2017) and may include composite year level classes.

The challenge of composing classes was communicated to the Board by the Admin team at the meeting on November 20th, 2018.

- 2) General discussion around the practice of open classrooms, collaborative teaching and communication with parents
Discussion points included:
 - i) The information circulating that the dividing doors in the open classrooms would remain 'permanently' open is inaccurate. The decision is that of the individual classroom teachers who take into account different factors to determine whether the doors stay open or closed and to what capacity. It was noted that Rooms 9 & 10 have adjusted the layout of the room several times in the first week as the teachers reflected on how best to use the space and allow flow between areas. The teachers acknowledged the first morning, whilst all students arrived with their parents and school supplies, the room was particularly busy and noisy.
 - ii) The tabloidesque type of media attention during the last week surrounding issues at the school is regrettable and has damaged the reputation of the school. The staff Board members commented that the entire teaching staff are disheartened by the media attention.
 - iii) The question was asked, by a non-board member in attendance, whether teachers are trained to teach in open classrooms. Response was given that this teaching strategy has been in use for many years and a teaching degree qualifies teachers to teach using team-teaching as a methodology.
 - iv) The question was expanding to explore the qualifications required to teach different learning areas, such as PE. The response given that all primary school teachers are

Agreed – schedule for 2020.

Budget approval for 2019 will be held until 2nd Board meeting 19th March 2019.

TD & AP circulate for Board approval a statement following Board meeting outlining discussion, to then be published in the school newsletter.

qualified to teach all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, including those often taught by 'specialist' teachers. The allocation of teachers to specialist areas is made by the Principal.

- v) Ratio of students to teachers is within the guidelines but the Admin team indicated that once the student census is completed and finances are determined, it is practice to allocate additional EA time to the larger classes. This practice takes place annually regardless of team teach or not.
- vi) In hindsight, communication to parents of the intention to employ collaborative teaching classrooms would have been helpful, however given that it had been in practice at WLPS for several years it was not recognized as necessary. It was acknowledged that whilst communication could have been better, some parents will be satisfied, whilst there are others who will not be. The Board agrees it is appropriate to take a role in reassuring the parent community that this is a frequently used model of best teaching practice. It is acknowledged that although discussing parent concerns is appropriate for the Board, we have no role in directing instructional practice.
- vii) During individual interviews with concerned parents, a request was made by the admin team to give the teachers the opportunity to settle their classes (particularly given that interm swimming lessons are taking place).
- viii) Suggestion was made that open classrooms were trialled in 2018 and then implemented without consultation. Collaborative classroom teaching has been in place at WLPS for several years and is a professional choice made by many teachers across WA, therefore it's use in the past was never deemed a trial.
- ix) Clarification was sought over the difference between team teaching and collaborative teaching, as the literature interchanges the terms. They are co-dependent practices.
- x) It is suggested that team teaching in split classes can result in some students feeling isolated. Chair stated that the Board can acknowledge this but as it is an operational issue cannot address it. Anecdotally, it was noted that the Year 6 students from the 5/6 class would be included in approximately half the curriculum with their year group.
- xi) Information regarding the individual classes and their teaching programs is given to parents at the classroom meetings. Teachers did not have the opportunity to conduct their classroom meetings prior to the escalation. An adjustment to the timing of class meetings in future years could be to hold them earlier. Logistical issues of this suggestion will require further exploration.
- xii) Impression amongst some parents that they are 'not being heard' by school Admin. The distinction between parents not being listened to being and their suggestions not being adopted was discussed. FK & LW have met with all parents who requested meeting and all emails have been answered. Constraints with student numbers and class composition mean that requested changes to

class placements cannot be made unless there are extenuation circumstances. This is a policy across all schools. Admin are very happy to keep communicating and to explain how class structures are arrived at.

- xiii) Reiteration that the collaborative teaching classrooms were the initiative of the teachers in those rooms and were not determined or directed by the school admin. Teachers require time to settle, assess and evaluate as in all areas of their teaching. School admin will not micromanage teaching staff and dictate that they close the dividing doors.
- xiv) FK asked Board what further communication they might suggest parents require after four communications to the school community this week. An open meeting was suggested to ascertain what information parents require and to address it. There was agreement to reassess the situation following the class meetings as to whether an open meeting and/or further communication is required.
- xv) Before the Board recommends further meetings and communication, there is a need to be cognizant of putting extra burden on Admin who have been sidetracked from performing their role in managing these issues. The question could be posed as to why parents are suddenly reacting to this situation which was not a trial and happens in surrounding schools and statewide? The scale of dissatisfaction in the school should be established before directing more time and resources from Admin team.
- xvi) A question was asked by a non-board attendee as to which class groups had been open and in which years at WLPS in the past. FK and teaching staff itemised classes from 2015 onwards over subsequent years.

2015	Yr 5/6 – 6 in Rooms 9 and 10
2016	Yr 5/6 – 6 in Rooms 9 and 10
2017	Yr 6 – 6 – upstairs first build
2018	Yr 1-1, Yr 5/6 – 6 upstairs 2 x buildings.
2019	Yr 1 – 1/2, Yr 4 – 4/5, Yr 5/6 – 6, Yr 6 - 6

- xvii) A suggestion was put forward that the Board develop a communication strategy. This initiative was supported by the Board which has the ability to second community members to participate in developing a strategy, if required.

The Chair noted that whilst not all the bullet points prepared for discussion were addressed, the conversation had covered the issues sufficiently for a statement from the Board, reassuring and clarifying the situation, be prepared.

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance for the discussion.

8.12pm	<p>Other Business</p> <p><u>P&C Roster</u> AP & RH volunteered to attend P&C meeting.</p> <p>ME – Board tenure at a close. Board Chair thanked ME for his contribution and time to the WLPS Board.</p> <p>DC thanked Board for allowing the observing parents to attend and commented that the meeting was constructive.</p>	
8.20pm	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the board will be on 19th March, 2019.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.20pm</p>	

Signed:

Principal: _____
Fiona Kelly

Chair: _____
Andrew Porter

Date: _____

Date: _____

