

# Deanmore School Board Chairperson's Report 13 June 2017

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## School Board

### **Our role**

As per previous reports I have provided, the Board continues to work with the School Principal and administration to influence the strategic direction of the School, endorse School plans, budgets and reports, and monitor School performance.

This year, in light of the reviews conducted by the Department of Education Services (**DES**) in Term 1 and the Expert Review Group (**ERG**) in Term 2, the Board decided to bring forward its open meeting from Term 4 to Term 2 in the interests of open communication and transparency. A supplementary report will be provided to the community at the end of 2017.

### **Members**

- Parent representatives: Samantha Maddern (Chair), Alex Bradley, Dave Drury, Jodee Eaves and Katherine Drakeford
- Staff representatives: George Craig, Jo Marwick, Kim Foster and Dan Rodgers
- Community representative: Gerry Hopfmüller
- Executive officer: Danielle Reimer

### **Continuing education**

I am pleased to report that George Craig, Jo Marwick and Katherine Drakeford participated in a 2 day School Board Development Program and will be sharing the key learning outcomes with fellow Board members. With 3 parent rep Board members scheduled to retire at the end of 2017, including the current Chair, this will be a time of transition for the Board at a time when many changes are in the process of being implemented. It is vital that the Deanmore community continues to provide the highest quality candidates for parent representatives on the Board so that we may continue to both support the School and hold it accountable in the years ahead.

### **Annual Report**

The Annual Report for 2016 was released in Term 1, in accordance with DoE requirements. I commend this Report and urge anyone who is interested in understanding what has been occurring at Deanmore and what our objectives and priorities are to read this Report. Thanks to George Craig and Narelle Morisey for their efforts in finalising the AR.

### **Mission Statement**

As we meet today, we are seeking feedback from the Deanmore community on a School motto. Following staff deliberations in 2016/17, 3 mottos were chosen as reflective of our School and an appropriate foundation for the future directions of our School:

- *Achieve Excellence Together*
- *Excellence Care Equity*
- *Aspire Act Achieve*

A decision will be made by the Board in Term 3 on a School motto. The Board thanks in particular Dan Rogers who has been instrumental in ensuring that this important task has been undertaken in a timely manner.

### **Department of Education Services Review**

The focus of much of Term 1 for the Board and administration was the DES Review held in week 8. Over the summer holidays, Board members met to discuss and plan for this Review. It was conducted over 2 days on 22-23 March 2017. The DES panel members met with a variety of administration staff, teaching staff, parents, Board members and children.

The purpose of the DES Review, which occurs approximately every 3 years, is to provide assurance to the principal and school community, the Board, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education of the extent to which staff and the Board have met the commitments of the Delivery and Performance Agreement (**DPA**). The DES Review verifies the degree to which there are effective processes in place to bring about improved student learning.

The DES review team looked at 6 discrete areas: Business Plan, Teaching and Learning, Student Performance Monitoring, Program Delivery, Resourcing and Support and the School Board. The DES Report identifies areas for improvement and areas of strength. I am pleased to report that the School Board was one area where the DES review team did not identify any areas for improvement. Such an assessment is reflective of the hard work and dedication of each of our Board members and I wish to publicly acknowledge this and to thank them for their efforts.

More importantly, I wish to emphasise that, where the DES review team has made some recommendations for improvement, all issues identified by the DES review team are issues which the School and Board had previously identified and work had already begun in mid-late 2016 to address these issues. For example, the downward trend in NAPLAN results for 2014-16. It is for this reason that the DES review team concluded their report with the following statements:

- *“Deanmore Primary School has the reputation in the local community of a safe and caring school. These factors out-weigh the very poor results displayed in student performance data and the school continues to attract strong community support.*
- *“A change in leadership together with a significant turnover in staff during the life of the current business plan has resulted in a changing school culture. Work undertaken by the staff and board late in 2016 to develop a new vision, values and belief statements about teaching and learning which better reflects the school community is having an influence on all school operations. Of note is the positive impact this focus is having on developing a united staff with a single, clear vision. It is evident that the whole school is moving towards a ‘Deanmore Way’.*
- *“The supportive and collaborative culture being developed in the school; the introduction of literacy and numeracy blocks in the school’s daily timetable; the consistent and common collection and analysis of data; the focus on effective and differentiated teaching supported through peer observation and strong performance management processes; the focus on programs that have been researched and demonstrated to work and used across the whole school, are all major elements that will raise expectations and standards in the school.*
- *“The reviewers share the belief with the school’s leadership team, the board and staff that the significant changes implemented to embed the ‘Deanmore Way’, will result in improved student learning and this will be observable in student performance data that better reflects the capacity of the children.”*

The full DES Report is now available on our website should parents wish to review it.

## **Expert Review Group Review**

In Term 2 the School received 10 days’ notice that it would be subject to an ERG Review. This decision was made quite independently of the DES Review and was triggered by Deanmore’s poor NAPLAN results and the poor progress of students from Year 3 to Year 5. It should be noted that the Director General would not have been aware of the significant changes that had already been put in place over the last 12 months to address these concerns.

Thus, the Board saw the ERG Review as an excellent opportunity to gain invaluable guidance and support from a team of experts about what we are doing, what needs to be done and what we can do better.

The Review was conducted by a 4 person panel over 4 days in May 2017. The Review focussed on 5 areas: Teaching, Resources, Learning Environment, Leadership and Relationships. While there was some crossover with the DES Review, this was a far more in

depth review. The ERG review team met with each staff member 1:1 for an hour and also held various focus groups with members of our community. Importantly, unlike the DES Review, if the ERG review team identifies that particular support is required to enable Deanmore to address its concerns (whether from Central, Regional or State-wide services) Deanmore's needs will be made a priority.

Following the ERG Review, the Board agreed that parent information sessions would be held in Term 2 so that any parents who have questions or concerns about the DES or ERG Reviews, or the future directions of the School, can raise them. George Craig held two such sessions on 13 June and also attended the monthly meeting of class reps to discuss the Reviews and respond to queries. These are all in addition to various written communications that have been sent home.

The Board Chair presented a verbal report on the DES Review and ERG Review to the P&C Meeting on 29 May 2017 and the Board's open meeting on 13 June 2017 is a further opportunity to receive, and respond to, community feedback.

The ERG Report will be available in late Term 2 or early Term 3 and the Executive Summary of the Report will be placed on our website. It must remain on our website until such time as the Department is satisfied that the School has addressed all areas identified in the Report. We will be required to develop a plan outlining how the recommended improvement strategies will be implemented.

Further details of the outcomes of the ERG Review will be provided to our community once they become available.

## **Growth Coaching for Staff**

One of the benefits of the OSH Club providing before and after school care on site is the funding this provides to the School.

In 2017 the Board has supported the initiative to invest most of this funding in the further professional development of teaching staff in the form of growth coaching. This is an important part of moving the School forward.

In Term 1 all School Curriculum Leaders have attended 1-2 professional development days on growth coaching skills which involved role playing and learning how to support staff and how to set goals. In Term 3 all staff will undertake peer coaching.

Resilience is a key attribute, not just for our children, but for our teaching staff as well. Staff must have the necessary emotional strength to improve the classroom environment and to ensure effective relationships with fellow staff as well as students and parents. Further training will be undertaken by staff in this regard.

## **School Finances**

The Finance Committee members now include Melinda Carr (Science), Bec Veal (T & E), Narelle Morisey (English), Dan Rodgers (Phys Ed) and Liz Jerrat (Maths). They have received training from Danielle Reimer about how to be an effective Cost Centre Manager, the One line budget and how schools receive funding. The Board has no concerns regarding the management of School finances.

## **Community events**

Deanmore's community spirit continues to be an inspiration for us all and already there have been a number of wonderful fund-raising and community events in 2017.

The Deanmore Dads have now become an integral part of our community and once again held a 'Colour Run' much to the delight of students.

Year 6 students, with parental assistance, ran a sausage sizzle and cake stall on Election Day and raised over \$1,100 which will go towards their end of year camp and school gift. The Purple Haze Day raised over \$600 for the Starlight Foundation.

In Term 2 the P&C held the first School disco since late 2014 and it was a big success. Deanmore entered a team of approximately 80 in the HBF Run for a Reason and the Quiz Night in June will round out a very busy 1<sup>st</sup> semester.

### **A final word (for now)**

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, may I say again that all Board members are very well aware of the challenges the School faces to improve school performance and outcomes and to raise, and keep raised, performance expectations for our children. However, we remain confident that our objectives will be met in the short-medium term under the leadership of our Principal George Craig and Deputies Jo Marwick, Greg Downes and Narelle Morisey.

I say this because, among other things, the much needed 'whole school approach' to Literacy and Numeracy is being implemented; teaching staff are being given the coaching and assistance they need to drive and embed the changes; student performance is being carefully and accurately evaluated; and the community remains strongly united in its efforts to ensure that Deanmore remains a school of choice for all parents in our catchment area.

As always, should any community member wish to discuss any aspect of the Report, they may e-mail me [sam5m@iinet.net.au] or phone me [0434 563 700].

Samantha Maddern  
Chair  
Deanmore School Board

13 June 2017