Rose Bay Secondary College School Council Meeting Minutes 11 May 2010

Present: Steven Hayes, Louise Hawkins, Chris Hughes, Jim Linton, Denise Lofts, Evelyn Mike, Gaby Munro, Irene Ulman, Cassie Watson

Apologies: David Abulafia, Jeromaia Detto, Phil Horrel, Judy Koerber,

Meeting commenced at 7.00pm

Prior to discussing the agenda items, Steven Hayes referred to the outcome of the vote at the P&C Meeting (4 May) which elected Judy Koerber as the fourth School Council member and David Abulafia and Donna Desiatnik as reserve members. Steve suggested, and others agreed, that reserve members are welcome at all School Council meetings and should receive in all its correspondence.

Members agreed to meet at 7.30pm instead of 7.00pm, starting from the next meeting on 8 June.

Agenda

1. Minutes of previous meeting
2. CCTV policy
3. Annual School Report
4. College promotion and publicity
5. Other business: Provision of LOTE at the school

1. Minutes of the School Council Meeting of 9 March were adopted without amendments.

2. CCTV Policy. Members had nothing to add to the amended Draft CCTV Policy. The Principal will put the draft policy to school staff and the Teachers’ Federation, and consult the school education director. Following final approval, it can be posted on the school website. The President of the School Council will report to the P&C about the new policy (as part of his report on the activities of the School Council).

3. Jim Linton tabled the 2009 Annual School Report. Annual Reports are a requirement and written to a formula to enable easier comparison of schools. Jim went through the Report and interpreted the tables on the school’s performance in NAPLAN, the School Certificate and the HSC.

NAPLAN graphs in the report are based on the Index of Socio-educational advantage also used in the My School website (except here RBSC is compared to schools in NSW rather than with schools across Australia as on the My School website). RBSC NAPLAN results are higher than state averages.

School Certificate tables show the school’s results in the School Certificate English-literacy are weaker than in other subjects. Few students achieved the highest band in English and the school average was lower than the state average, while in other subjects RBSC results exceed the state average. The School Certificate relative performance comparison to year 5 (value adding) chart shows improvement in all test results except computer skills.

There were some excellent achievements in the Higher School Certificate last year. HSC course average marks however are equal to or do not significantly exceed state averages, or are below state averages. The School Executive is examining ways to push up the school averages. The relative performance comparison table shows an improvement in results from the School Certificate to the HSC. This could be due to student disengagement with the School Certificate.
Because the raw data is open to interpretation, Steven suggested that some interpretative comment from the Principal would be helpful. Jim agreed to include this in the Annual Report for 2010.

The Annual Report details the school’s progress on a number of targets this year and plans for 2010.

The Report is available from the school and will be posted on its new website soon.

4. College Promotion and Publicity. The school has $10 000 a year for promotion and publicity. Much of it is spent promoting and publicising the success of the HSC results and on Open Day. The Wentworth Courier and The Southern Courier run special features about schools that the schools pay for themselves. RBSC doesn’t have the resources and needs to find creative ways to promote the school in the community. For example, a group of high schools is pooling resources to have a number of features done. But there is a need for more initiatives. A number of promotional opportunities were discussed:

- The Music Ensemble Program offers many opportunities for publicity and promotion, such as performances at community venues and concerts with feeder primary schools.

- A “magnet program” for gifted and talented primary school students was run at RBSC this year (by Daniel Judd Consultancy)

- Regular events like VFest and productions like this year’s musical “Footloose” are a great way to attract publicity and need to be promoted well. Some ideas:
  - Signs or banners to display at public performances similar to the Music ensembles banner. It’s a good idea to have big banners at Open Day. There’s a cost and Evelyn Mike offered to make inquiries.
  - Need a strategy and regular press releases.
  - The official opening of the new rehearsal space is on Monday 31 May. Think of how to promote it. Malcolm Turnbull will be there, The Wentworth Courier is covering it.
  - June 17 the Midyear Ensembles concert showcasing MEP’s achievements. Need to promote and publicise it. Local primary schools have agreed to list it in their newsletters.
  - A school brochure – need a new one. Look at producing one for next year of for the end of this year. Irene offered to make enquiries.
  - Need to raise the school’s profile in the Eastern Suburbs. The put down of our school is common in the community. On the other hand there are parts of the Eastern suburbs (eg Clovelly) where there is not much awareness of our school at all. People see the uniform but don’t know what school it belongs to.
  - Cassie suggested putting copies of the School Magazine in the Waverley Library
  - Steven expressed a concern that there is a tendency to think of schools’ performance and achievements as just academic. He suggested a letter to the editor in the Sydney Morning Herald on what is good about public schools, to highlight that public
education values are more about social inclusiveness than just marks. Others felt this would not attract more students to the school. Social inclusiveness and high academic achievement are both important. Of course it’s equally important to promote the work done by students with special needs. For example, two years ago Susan Andrews staged a musical with the Support class and there is a CD of it. It’s true that school education is not all about high academic achievers and we need to identify all the achievements that deserve recognition and promote them.

- There was a discussion about whether we should worry about promoting our school to parents who will send their child to a private school. But in fact many parents choose between private and selective schools and our promotional material should be directed at them.

- Presentation of the school. First impressions walking into the school are not good. Even a simple thing like laminating signs is important.

- The new website will serve our school well. The website is progressing, content is being moved from the old website and new content created. Need to confirm a group of volunteer parents to maintain sections of the website.

- Promotions and publicity will remain a running agenda item for the School Council.

5. Provision of LOTE (Languages other than English).

There are ongoing problems with LOTE at RBSC. Since the language consultancy day last September (Annual Report 2009, p.16) Donna Desiatnik has been assisting the LOTE department with the language program but there have been problems with implementation. The latest development is that the French teacher has been on sick leave and the school has tried hiring a casual French teacher but with no success. In effect, French is not being taught but students cannot opt for French at Open High School because the subject remains officially on offer at RBSC. Evelyn Mike agreed to make some calls to assist the school in the search for a casual teacher.

Jim summarised the languages situation at the school. There are two community languages, Hebrew and Russian which are offered despite student numbers being low. The school wants them to continue. In the past, a Hebrew teacher was provided by the Board of Jewish Education (BJE) and paid for by parents. HSC Hebrew results were excellent thanks to the quality of the teacher who has now left. Last year BJE considered withdrawing (Jewish student numbers declined at RBSC and fees were high) but RBSC has now part employed a new teacher from BJE. Numbers of students choosing Russian are also declining at the school and the Russian teacher now also teaches Italian in years 7, 8 and 9. The school is committed to LOTE and there’s a will to jump start languages. Jim suggested that introducing two new languages might be a circuit breaker and put forward the idea of Spanish and an Asian language such as Mandarin or Japanese. There was support for this at the meeting but also a suggestion that Japanese would be more practical for a number of reasons.

The meeting concluded at 9.20pm