Rose Bay Secondary College School Council Minutes

8 June 2010

Present: Denise Lofts, Louise Hawkins, Chris Hughes, Phil Horrell, Steven Hayes, Gaby Munro, Judy Koerber, David Abulafia, Irene Ulman, Jeromaia Detto

Apologies: Jim Linton

Meeting commenced: 7.55pm

1. Minutes of the last meeting - adopted

2. Languages:

Evelyn Mike and Donna Desiatnik met with DET’s Gavin Patterson regarding the situation with French at RBSC (see last minutes). The meeting confirmed that there are no readily available options to fix the situation. When a teacher has taken sick leave a replacement teacher can’t be offered permanency. Open High School is not available to our students because French is nominally offered at the school (though students that are being accelerated can enroll in an OHS course). The situation remains unresolved. Currently we are using a part time teacher (two days a week) who speaks French but is not a language teacher.

Steven Hayes pointed out that Evelyn’s attempts to help find a temporary French teacher and the meeting with Gavin Patterson was a very useful exercise and demonstrates that RBSC is not at fault and the executive has followed up every avenue to fill the temporary vacancy.

There was discussion about available options such as: Open High School; employing a teacher who can teach French but does not have a qualification recognised by the DET; P&C funding a teacher until the end of the year for approx. $30,000 (P&C could do the same for other subjects when there is need) - the general view was that this would set a precedent we don’t want to set because it remains and should remain the Department’s responsibility, in fact it is failing to offer a language the Department is not fulfilling its duty. Evelyn Mike agreed to approach the Department again. Another possible step is to ask the NSW P&C to address staffing issues.

As discussed earlier in the year, Jim has suggested introducing an Asian language (see last minutes). Evelyn Mike and Donna Desiatnik worked with Jim on an application for a grant to introduce Japanese at RBSC. The grant is for $20,000 that would go towards introducing Japanese in years 7-8 from 2011. We will be notified in September if the application is successful. If it is not, P&C will be requested to contribute to language resources. Denise has already designated one of the newly purchased interactive boards for languages. There are a number of advantages in choosing Japanese over other Asian languages at RBSC, a significant reason being that the change can only be successful if the right person is recruited, and Japanese is easier to staff than other Asian languages.

Steven Hayes proposed the SC put together a position paper on languages recommending a change of languages offered at RBSC. It will be an informative paper demonstrating the research that went into the discussion. Some of this work has already been done in the grant application. Evelyn and Steven agreed to work on a daft.
3. **Values Project**:

A recent report from the school values project (see SC Minutes for 9 March) highlights classroom discipline as a problem. There was discussion on reasons and possible strategies. Phil Horrel pointed out that it’s very difficult to have rules followed at school that are not followed at home. Denise said that some kids can’t “self-regulate” and there’s a “good to be bad” culture with which parents are struggling too. How much of this is due to the culture outside and how much is due to issues at the school level is hard to say.

The issue of respect between teachers and students was raised. It seems that students listen to a teacher if there is already a connection with that teacher from the classroom. This can be a problem when teachers change frequently but it was pointed out that teacher changes are not as frequent now and that today RBSC is a school where teachers want to teach.

Denise expressed her very strong view that at RBSC discipline should be developed by concentrating and building on the positive rather than taking a top down disciplinarian approach. The focus should be on working with teachers to strengthen departments; reviewing the **merit system** which needs to be reinvigorated; reviewing the ** Discipline policy**. Other steps can be taken to develop a better culture. For instance, the RSBC **homework centre** creates a really positive experience for the kids who come.

Evelyn suggested that **Roll call** can be used to connect the students to the school, not just record attendance. In some schools it’s a valued diary and planning time. Currently roll call is alphabetical and may work better if it’s class based. Can this system be trialed? Denise agreed that roll call can be used for student welfare but it’s a question of how long teachers can be there and what their role is.

Denise said that we need to move away from focusing on discipline, focusing instead on student engagement through quality teaching ( “Quality Teaching Framework” or QTF is used by NSW schools to implement pedagogy).

Trialing extended roll next year was suggested and Denise will discuss this with Jim. **Pastoral care and discipline will remain an open item on the SC agenda.**

4. **A Values project idea - World Toilet Day**

Steven suggested we throw the school’s support behind it and stage a big event that would raise money for disadvantaged communities. A market and stalls can be organized and perhaps we can get permission to close down Hardy Street for the day. Steven suggested organising a hill climb water carrying competition. A donation would be made to enter the competition. This is to be discussed further.

5. **Communications and Publicity**

At this moment the school musical, “Footloose”, needs to be promoted. An email will go out to the whole school database and special mention of the musical will be made in the fortnightly Deputies’ Newsletter first thing in Term 3.

Meeting ended at 9.30pm