

NBHS P & C Association

3rd Meeting - Tuesday 12 May 2009

Meeting commenced: 8:10 pm, Chair: Pevlin Price

Apologies: Jonathan Sanders

Part 1 - Opening Session

Principal's Report:

1. BER update. Still a great deal of confusion surrounds the funding. Our preferred option has been published as being for a sports facility containing a change room and staff room. Conflicting advice as to whether this falls within the guidelines. I am seeking urgent clarification. If all goes to plan, the building we have commissioned will be a 12m x 12m demountable type structure to be located in the area alongside the hall and Klarner Cottage. Will provide our boys with change room facilities that can be used at all times, not just when hall is available. Also gives our PE staff a decent work environment that will replace the "broom closet" in which they are currently housed. Approximate cost of the project will be \$145,000. I have decided to locally manage the project which will save us money and leave:

\$30,000 to be spent on upgrading the toilets,
\$20,000 to refurbish the front foyer and school entrance,
\$5,000 improving lighting in B Block

I have also put in a submission for a language centre. Not confident that we will qualify because it seems the bulk of the funds will go to schools that can demonstrate disadvantage. We certainly meet the guidelines for need, however.

2. Very welcome news received last week that the department had agreed to a complete repaint of the school's exterior. Estimated cost \$350,000. Workmen have been working since last Wednesday. Project is totally independent of the BER funds.
3. Library air conditioning finally here. On way to completion by end of term. Means some disruption to library use, particularly on the mezzanine level
4. New members of staff have commenced duty. Peter Davis HT TAS, Reg Barr, Science. Interviews completed for new English teacher. Trace Treleaven successful candidate. Waiting 10 day appeals period to be over. Will commence week 5. Kevin Kaider our new GA will commence work in Week 10. Fortunate to have Joe Komosa with us until then. Mrs Packham on LSL till Term 4. Careers position filled by Mrs Elissa Kesby.
5. ANZAC Day – one of the best. Bowden Brae and wreath laying at Hornsby were also very impressive and well received.
6. Leadership Forum during last week of Term 1. Brought together prefects, SRC, house captains. Areas that were explored included defining the roles of each group, numbers of prefects and SRC, election process, reinvigorating the house system

7. Joint school development day a success. Lots happening in the area of new technologies. Next SDD will be at start of Term 3. We will use this to focus on the implementation of laptops and increasing staff use of the interactive whiteboards.
8. School Strategic Plan. Copies available if you are interested please see me.
9. Annual Report near completion. Will be available on the website in the next fortnight. Hard copy about to be sent to the printers for those families who request a printed version.
10. Lockdown practice was held in last week of term. First time we have done this. Some glitches in the organisation but we will be able to fix these.
11. Testing times just about over. Year 12, 11. 10 have all completed half-yearly exams. Year 7 & 9 do the NAPLA this week. Year 12 reports currently being collated. Will be mailed out in the next fortnight.
12. Cross Country carnival successful. Good turnout and participation rates. Athletics carnival to be held in week 5 at Homebush as in the past 3 years.
13. Exploring the possibility of having a combined HGHS/NBHS Year 10 formal.

Questions raised during the Principal's Report:

- Q: When will the Year 9 students receive their laptops?
 - A: NBHS is scheduled for Round 2. Round 1 schools will receive their laptops this term.
- Q: How will the laptops change the teaching methods at NBHS?
 - The new laptops will have a significant impact on teaching methods. The school has been planning to review and revise its teaching methods to better utilize the new laptops. Curriculum Support materials will be developed as well as training in hardware and software.
- Q: Will the school install a wireless network?
 - A: Yes. As part of the plan, NBHS will receive a new wireless network.
- Q: What information does the school have about the transport problems for the students using West Bus?
 - A: Mr. Bruce informed the P&C that he only found out about the issues on Tuesday, 12th and he will investigate.
- Q: Can the school have a dedicated NBHS school bus?
 - A: Mr. Bruce responded that transport arrangements are made by DET and the bus company and the school has no decision in the process.

Part 2 - Business Session

Attendance: As per sheet

Introducing the special presentation, Mr Bruce said he would like to see HSC English results improve to 20 per cent in Band 6 this year, with an aim of 40 per cent in Band 6 soon. This was achievable as it was similar to results obtained in comparable boys' selective schools.

Special Presentation:

Roland Briefrel Head Teacher – English gave a presentation on the new initiative by NBHS to improve the English results at the HSC. Brief notes from the presentation are as follows:

In the last five years there has been significant change in the demands of the Higher School Certificate and the attitude of students to the study of English. Rightly or wrongly, English is the only compulsory subject at the HSC and the only subject where at least two units will count towards the calculation of the students' UAI (University Admission Index).

This means that the English faculty has a special if not extra responsibility to prepare students in the best possible way for the HSC and changing requirements over time, as they become apparent. It also means that students have a special responsibility to themselves to work hard in this subject in order to maximise their result. It is the expectation of the faculty that each student will devote at least as much time to English as they will to their most favoured subject. Failure to do so, will result in a poorer than necessary final result.

In addition to changes at HSC level, there has been a noticeable change in the attitude of students to reading, some of it due to competition from technology. Less than five years ago it was common place to see students reading openly in the corridors of NBHS before school and during recess and lunchtimes. This no longer occurs in any meaningful numbers.

It is also very surprising that a larger than acceptable number of students in last year's Yr 12, when returning their textbooks, informed him that they had not read the prescribed texts. When asked how they expected to do well in the HSC they replied by saying that they downloaded essays from the Internet, memorised them and regurgitated them for the HSC.

Last year's HSC results demonstrated just how fraught with danger is this attitude.

In order to address these issues and the overwhelming competition of technology, the English faculty is requesting funding from the P&C to do the following:

1. Enhance the quality of texts available for teachers to select from in order to re-engage students in the pleasure of reading in the junior years. It is in the junior years where the change must begin and not left to the final year;
2. Enlisted the help of Paul MacDonald from the Children's Bookshop to advise the faculty on the hottest reads available that will specifically engage boys and be of literary merit. Paul is an ex-teacher and HSC marker and lectures at UTS and UNSW. Paul has also agreed to present seminars on new texts to the boys to assist with this re-engagement. Texts that were popular over the past 10 to 20 years are no longer engaging our students. We need to re-engage our students by presenting them with texts of interest to them. It is important to emphasise here that high quality, high literary value texts will remain and Shakespeare will continue to be compulsory in each of years 7-12;
3. The new texts will enable the faculty to move towards programming conceptual units of work in the junior years. One of the major changes at HSC level has been the move away from text specific study to conceptual study, such as Journeys, Belonging, Texts in Time, Conflicting Perspectives. Conceptual units of work require that a series of texts be studied under the banner of a concept. To commence this type of work in the junior years will have obvious benefits as the students at senior level;
4. Once concepts become part of a student's way of thinking the notion of providing a personal response to the concepts in a sophisticated way becomes easier and moves students away from the notion that all one has to do in English is download essays from the net. It is essential that students understand that their personal response to texts/concepts, as required

in the HSC, cannot be supplied by tutors, teachers or the Internet. Again funding of the project will enable us to enhance student performance in the HSC;

5. Funding of this project will enhance our wide reading program instituted very successfully in 2007 in Year 7-9 using books that have engaged and enthralled the boys. We have expanded it in 2009 to include Year 10.

Other benefits:

All teachers in the faculty support this project and see it as an important way to help resolve issues of reading reluctance in our students.

Soon, students in Year 10 will be asked to select courses to take them to the HSC. In English there are the Extension 1 and Extension 2 courses of study-the elite courses that can only be done through application at NBHS, teacher recommendation and having achieved a school based grade of either and "A" or a "B" in Year 10 for the SC. What both of these courses require, apart from excellent writing skills, is a broad range of reading.

In Extension 1 the course of study selected is called Genre: Crime Writing. Should a student apply for and be selected to do this course they can commence reading as many crime texts as possible whilst still in Year 10. The more they read the more techniques they will pick up which will assist them in their own piece of crime writing which makes up 50% of the course. But initially we must get the boys back to reading as much as possible in Years 7-10.

In Extension 2, studied in Year 12 only, students undertake a major work e.g. short story, critical essay or multi-media presentation in a mentored course, not an explicitly taught course. Breadth and depth of reading over a number of years is essential in attempting this course. Your funding of our project will have benefits here as well.

The second phase of the project to improve HSC results, by targeting Years 7&8, is to institute a Drama program one period a fortnight over ten weeks. This program will be taken by a trained Drama teacher (Ms Ramsay) and is intended to increase the confidence of students in facing oral tasks in English and indeed in any other subject area where this skill is required.

Oral tasks are required to be completed in all years 7-12 and are particularly important as part of the Preliminary and HSC assessment program in Years 11&12. Drama is an essential means by which student improvement in public speaking should occur.

Finally, should you decide to fund this important project, ALL students in the school will gain the benefit.

Minutes of last Meeting (March 2009)

Sandeep presented the minutes of March 2009 meeting.

Motion proposed: Helen Brophy proposed that the December minutes be accepted.

Seconded: Michael Miller

The motion was carried.

Business arising from the Minutes:

- The draft school plan is available for comment. The P&C will provide feedback and input to the school.

- H2GO fundraising is progressing well. While a few families have taken up on the offer, the volume of orders per family is large.

President's Report:

1. The new funds available to the school are very welcome. Pevlin thanked the school for engaging with the P&C and seeking P&C support in the allocation and utilization of these funds.
2. The draft school annual plan is now available for comments. P&C will provide input to the plan.
3. The ANZAC Day ceremonies were very enjoyable and moving. The Band performance was very good.
4. A joint school, boys and P&C consultative committee will be formed to review the school uniforms. The stock value will need to be managed through any change process. The priority is the PE uniform and a senior jumper. Any P&C volunteers should contact Pevlin Price or Sandeep Dharni. Jane Whitfield –Horesh volunteered.

Vice President's Report:

Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report:

The 2008 P&C and Canteen accounts are presently being audited.

A detailed report was not available.

The P&C contribution for 2009 is about \$25,000 so far. The total funds available are about \$130,000.

Fundraising Report:

H2Go forms have been distributed in the school. This fundraising will be advertised through the school newsletter.

This year the P&C will organize a school raffle. The prizes have been finalized. The mail out will be completed in 1 – 2 weeks. The draw is planned for end of term 2.

Entertainment books are selling well and are still available.

The funds raised this year through the fundraising activities will be targeted to support the school Interactive White Boards program.

Correspondence:

In coming correspondence

- Bank statements from Commonwealth Bank and ING Bank
- Documentation for P&C Injury Insurance
- Information for P&C Annual Conference. Need volunteers to attend the 2009 Annual conference. The 2009 conference will be held in Penrith. The link to the site is:
<http://www.pandc.org.au/annual-conference.seo>
- 2 issues of P&C Monthly Journals
- Communication was received from the department of Education on 'School Global Funding'. The annual Global Funding for NBHS for 2009 is \$292,290. Half this amount, \$146,145 will be available in Semester 1, 2009.

Out going correspondence

- None

Canteen Report and Clothing Pool:

The Canteen air conditioner needs repairs. The canteen has the funds for this repair and no support is required from the P&C.

The canteen fridge also needs repairs. 'Berry' owns the fridge and will organize its repairs. Again, no support is required from the P&C.

New volunteers have joined the canteen. This has helped to fill in critical gaps. However, some parents have cut back their hours due to financial crisis. Therefore, more support is required from other parents.

Jane Whitfield-Horesh has volunteered to participate in the school uniform review.

Grounds Report:

There is a trickle of new families joining the Working Bee program.

The felling of diseased trees was completed during the school holidays.

Next Working Bee session is planned for 31 May.

New Business:

Motion proposed: Ganesh Luharuka proposed that a sum of \$34533 be allocated to fund the School's Priority 1 items as presented by NBHS.

Seconded: Helene Mountford

The motion was carried.

Motion proposed: Minh Tong proposed that a sum of \$20,000 be allocated be allocated to fund the English Text Books project as per presentation.

Seconded: Helen Brophy

The motion was carried.

General Business:

- Mr. Bruce invited some feedback on the school newsletter. A new format will be trialed over the next few weeks and parents are encouraged to provide feedback to the school.
- Short sleeves shirts with school crest were not available as the order for these shirts was not progressed. This will be rolled into the uniform review process.

Other Business:

1. News provided via e-mail by Mrs Johnson to families of band members is working well and should be adopted by other teams in the school.
2. A Joint Music and Drama night with Hornsby Girls will be organized later this year.
3. A question was about Year 8 High Resolve program. This a peer leadership program based on ethics and moral values. It involves boys form years 8-10 (and is currently funded under the 'Welfare' funding by the P&C).

Meeting closed at 10:40 pm. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 9th June.