

## ACT Council of P&C Associations Inc

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**To: All P&C Delegates, P&C Presidents & Secretaries**

### **Report on P&C Council General Meeting 27 May 2014**

*This report is issued after Council meetings to assist delegates in reporting back to their P&C associations and to inform parents generally about the activities of P&C Council.*

- ACT Yr 12 Certificate Review, consultation with parents, students in May/June 14.
- Parent Participation project consultation groups for parents in August 14.
- Policy Conference 7pm Tuesday 26 August 14 at CTL Stirling.
- Sign up and like us on Facebook and Twitter; subscribe on our website for newsletters and ParentACTion journal.
- ARACY speaker on parental engagement for 24 June 14 Hot Topics meeting.
- Disability Working Group meeting will be held Thursday 5 June at the ACT Sports House Hackett.

#### **1. PRESENTATION BY CLAIRE MILLER OF KIDSMATTER ACT ON THE AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE**

- see the below notes for details of this presentation and Q&A's

#### **2. SUN SAFE POLICY IN SCHOOLS**

ETD has a comprehensive Sun-safety policy, however it is hard to implement, especially in High Schools and Colleges. It was suggested that if delegates thought their school was not implementing the policy, they should raise it with Principals and refer to the ETD policy. **ACTION: ALL**

#### **3. RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Following advice of an opt-in, opt-out system at Majura PS, delegates were interested in the current religious education in schools which is solidified in legislation, The Minister is interested in this issue and it will be brought up at the next meeting with her. Council will also analyse its current policy on religious education. **ACTION: OFFICE**

#### **4. NON-SECULAR SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM**

The Federal Government's allocation of \$240 million towards a non-secular school chaplaincy program was criticized. Good outcomes in some circumstances were noted but the issue should not be defined by individuals. It was agreed that the money could be better spent on other programs. Executive are to assess what action to take and will communicate Council's views to ACSSO. **ACTION: EXECUTIVE**

#### **5. CELEBRATING THE WEEK OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

A small number of schools participated with great success. However, it was agreed that the majority of P&Cs had too much on and additional funding or centralised project management was needed. However, schools could hold sessions for parents on how to engage with teachers and students through technology, noting the various apps now available. Council will reassess the project for next year. **ACTION: OFFICE**

#### **6. SCHOOL CANTEEN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

Project is well underway but P&Cs have been slow to take up the opportunities eg funding for Flexischools, assessment of menus by Nutrition Australia and NSW Buy. All high schools have access to funding for two POS systems. Council may assist P&Cs who are unable to source a computer for their canteen, contact the Council office for help. Contact your school's business manager to get access to the ETD Internet service (free of charge). Council will confirm with ETD regarding the procedure. **ACTION: ALL**

#### **7. BSSS YR 12 CERTIFICATE REVIEW**

An open executive meeting with a BSSS rep will be held on Tuesday 10 June to discuss this issue. Send comments on the topic to Council for our submission by 13 June. It was agreed that any new changes should retain the current flexibility or at least allow for differences in learning and priorities. Also there should

be a system so that students are able to show proficiency in English, even if it is not compulsory. This would help ACT students enrolling in some NSW university courses where English is pre-requisite. **ACTION: ALL**

#### **8. AFTERSCHOOL CARE**

ETD has provided information regarding the queries on before/afterschool care. A referral database is to be set up by Council to help P&Cs get advice from others with established programs (including canteens, afterschool care, activities, arts and music). **ACTION: ALL, OFFICE**

#### **9. TIMING OF P&C ELECTIONS.**

P&Cs could move their election times to October or November, in order to encourage better organisation and a more streamlined transition and hand-over process. This could require a constitutional change in many P&Cs. Delegates are to take the idea back to their P&C for consideration. **ACTION: ALL**

#### **10. P&C WEBPAGE ON SCHOOL WEBSITES**

There are inconsistencies between schools on this issue. Generally, the school business managers have been helpful and P&Cs should approach them. More clarification from ETD in writing will be obtained and Principals informed of the ETD policy through their next newsletter. **ACTION: ALL, OFFICE**

#### **11. AFFILIATION FEES**

There has been no increase in Council affiliation fees for P&Cs for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

#### **12. MEETING WITH THE ETD ON 21 May 14**

Council had a productive meeting with the ETD. The perceived narrowing of the curriculum, incorporating a strict focus on NAPLAN based subjects was discussed. Anecdotal evidence which suggests the creative arts (including music, visual art etc.) is being ignored by schools. ETD will produce an overview of music activities in ACT primary schools. Some schools have no embedded music education programs. This seems to conflict with research which suggests that music education boosts educational outcomes.

#### **13. The next General meeting is to be a Hot Topics meeting on 24 June 14 at CTL.**

### **PRESENTATION BY CLAIRE MILLER OF KIDSMATTER ACT ON THE AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE**

Claire thanked Council for the opportunity to address delegates. She explained that KidsMatter is an initiative of the Federal Government, BeyondBlue, Principals Australia Institute and the Australian Psychological Society. Claire stated that as soon as children access education system, they have access to mental health outreach programs and initiatives.

Claire explained that the initiative emerged from a mental health survey which suggested one in 7 Australian children had experienced a mental health difficulty. Of those, only one in 4 were getting help. She noted that there was a new survey which would include anxiety as a difficulty coming out late 2014.

From the survey, a framework was developed which is grounded in evidence based methods and various approved theories. KidsMatter goes to schools and engages in professional learning with teachers regarding mental wellbeing. The organization takes a whole-school approach with the aim of improving and sustaining the mental health wellbeing of all students – not just those who may be experiencing problems.

Claire provided some real-life examples of the KidsMatter initiative. They centered around working collaboratively on whole-school approaches with parents, teachers and students. The program is composed of 4 components, each of which is introduced into the curriculum at different stages. KidsMatter supports each school as they progress through these components, providing advice and resources. Some examples of the program included: a parents and carers room full of information and reference material, attachments to school newsletters and a positive postcard activity.

The initiative is well funded by the Federal Government and does not cost schools. In the future KidsMatter and MindMatters (the High Schools version) will align more closely. Claire pointed out that the program

works best when school boards and Principals are enthusiastic. The KidsMatter website has a plethora of information and resources available to all. There is a specific section dedicated to parents.

There will be two forums on KidsMatter and MindMatters respectively. All are welcome to attend:

KidsMatter

7<sup>th</sup> August 2014 2:30-4:30 Federal Golf Club

Mind Matters

12 August 2014 9:30-11:30 CTL

All are welcome to contact Claire Miller at [claire.miller@act.gov.au](mailto:claire.miller@act.gov.au).