



**Randwick Boys' High School**  
**P&C Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday 22 October 2019**

**Chair: Birgit Schickinger**

**1. Attendance:**

Alison Bell	Janine Beck	Ngaire Smith
Birgit Schickinger	Lance Raskall	Nicola French
Dacre England	Laura Tamir	Rachel Daly
Emma Digan	Leanne Bergan	Sarah Brill
Heike Pashley	Louise McNeil	Sean Loughman
Helena Whalebone	Lyn Swinburne	Suzy Forrester
Jane Knowles	Michelle Bradley	

- 2. Welcome** to new financial members, observers and guests: Tammy Lagos, Melanie Notaras.
- 3. Apologies:** Adriana Skleparis, Caroline Windsor
- 4. Determination of quorum:** Quorum reached (quorum is 5 if under 50 members and 11 if over 50 members).
- 5. Guest speakers:** *Emma Payne*, Head Teacher (English) and *Elizabeth Saxena*, Head Teacher (Mathematics) presented on this year's NAPLAN results.

***Emma Payne, Head Teacher (English)***

EP's presentation gave an overview of the School's results for Years 7 and 9 in the three components tested in NAPLAN – language conventions, writing, and reading – with more detail on writing as this has been a focus for development.

For Reading, Year 7's results were well above the state and similar schools' averages, with the proportion in the top band increasing to 14%. The results for Year 9 were close to but below the state average, and below similar schools. One of the key areas for improvement here is moving the cohort from the middle bands to the upper bands (there are not many boys in the lower bands).

In Spelling, Year 7 was again well above average with an increase in the upper bands. Year 9 were above the state average, and we improved relative to similar schools, although we are still below their average.

In Grammar, Year 7 showed a healthy increase from 2018 to above the state and similar schools averages, and an increase in the proportion in the top bands. Year 9's results were below both state and similar school averages.

Although Writing has been a focus for Year 9, and the results were solid in the middle bands, we didn't see growth in the proportion in the top 2 bands. However, the proportion of boys in the top 2 bands for reading and numeracy jumped from around 20% to around 36% combining both years.

Looking at each individual student's growth, NAPLAN predicts where Year 7 students should be in Year 9 based on their Year 7 results. Relative to this, RBHS was above expectations in reading, below in writing and about even on grammar and punctuation. The lack of growth in Year 9 results for writing is a concern. This may be related in part to student attitudes to NAPLAN testing itself (there were reports of at least 4 non-attempts), and a number of students from EALD backgrounds who joined the school at the beginning of the year finding creative writing as a genre particularly challenging.

NAPLAN Writing is marked against ten criteria. Of these, audience was one of our weakest areas, and this had the most marks attached to it, which impacted our overall results. None of our Year 9 students were in the top band for audience, which could only be achieved with full marks (6/6) for this criterion. While our results were strong in the middle, we will be looking to move more boys up to the higher bands. The results suggest our students are strong at paragraphing, but we now need to look at structure as a whole. Our students are generally doing better in this area in persuasive writing and need more work applying this in creative writing. In terms of spelling, the results were not as good in the written responses as they were in the spelling test.

The English Department surveyed students in Years 7-11, parents and teachers about reading and writing last year, and the teachers again this year. They found that the vast majority of students spent less than an hour reading per week. As a response, the School has been trying to promote reading through DEAR in roll call. Almost all students reported they were confident in the adequacy of their levels of reading and writing to complete their assessment tasks, and in using the PEEEL paragraph structure. Most were reasonably confident in their ability to write an extended response, but we want them to be very confident. Over 50% of parents thought students weren't given enough writing tasks for homework, and most felt their boys weren't reading enough. The School also encourages reading by distributing reading lists based on the Premier's Reading List at the beginning of the year. Series are often attractive as boys get hooked on characters. The boys are asked to provide feedback about what they've enjoyed reading to add to the list.

The School has implemented a whole school writing project, embedding writing strategies in all programs. All teachers have now been trained to teach 10 academic writing strategies which are being implemented using a common vocabulary across all subjects to look at structure, cohesion and voice. This year, RBHS had three teachers marking NAPLAN. They will be using this experience to upskill other teachers, looking not to "teach to the test" but to help our boys learn relevant strategies.

EP also thanked the parent volunteers who have been involved in the portfolio program. This benefits the boys by providing positive feedback and allows a greater focus on a variety of forms.

In discussing how to encourage more reading, it was suggested that the School newsletter may be a good avenue. It may be useful to provide regular recommendations, and perhaps student reviews.

**Elizabeth Saxena, Head Teacher (Mathematics)**

ES's presentation focused on this year's results for Year 7, and a comparison of this year with 2017 for the Year 9 students. Overall, this year's Year 7 is a strong cohort, above the state and similar schools' averages, and the Year 9 cohort have moved from below to above similar schools.

The average growth of the current Year 9 students from Year 7 was well above the state and similar schools' averages. This applies to the whole cohort, not just a small group of students. The percentage of students at and above expected growth is also higher than the state and similar schools' averages. This year, only one boy did not meet minimum standard, and there was good growth in upper bands. The number of students in the middle bands is decreasing as students are moving to higher bands. There was also a larger drop in the numbers in the lower bands as compared to the drops in the state and similar schools' averages for these bands.

ES noted that all teachers across the School have helped with improvements in numeracy, focusing on three key areas: recognise numeracy demands, embed numeracy in all teaching programs, and provide opportunities to engage with numeracy across all syllabus areas. The whole school numeracy plan includes multiple programs targeting Years 7, 8, and 9, including numeracy days and sessions. The School has also undertaken cross-faculty numeracy mapping, to map focus areas into other subjects, such as Science and Music, so concepts are introduced in Maths and then seen in application in other subjects. This process also ensures terminology is similar across the faculties.

Analysis of the 2017 results for the current 2019 Year 9 looked at individual questions to identify areas of weakness to target for support. It was noted that weakness in syllabus dot points sometimes related to topics being taught after NAPLAN or weakness in concept teaching in Stage 3 (primary school) with flow-on effects for later material. Some students were let down by their literacy levels, with incorrect answers relating to mistakes in the following: reading the question correctly; considering all aspects of the question (comprehending the question); problem solving; showing working out; and, "backwards" thinking.

In terms of preparing these students for Year 9 NAPLAN, all questions which had been below the state level were given to Year 8 as part of their half-yearly exam (pre-test). Questions from other past papers were also given at the end of Year 8 (post-test). It was found that the areas of weakness had already improved before the pre-test, with the marks overall quite high. This year's Year 7 students only had 3 questions below the state average (compared to 15 in 2017). All three of these were in geometry, which will now be a focus for this cohort.

The Maths Department also considers individual student performances, including any other learning needs. The students' progress is monitored over Years 8 and 9. Most students are responding well with teachers both supporting lower-performing students and capitalising on the abilities of already high-performing students. It was noted that it is difficult to demonstrate improvement in students who are already in the highest bands. The School is now subscribing to Cambridge Hot Maths as a source of teacher resources. There will continue to be a focus on working on the basics with the lowest-performing students from Year 7 onwards to help them build their skills as much as possible.

The Maths Department has been working to provide enrichment opportunities which allow students to take part in engaging activities to build their numeracy skills. For example, on Numeracy Day, every lesson (across all subject areas) is numeracy-based. To build numeracy appreciation, The Maths Show gave an interactive maths-based performance which is designed to entertain and includes information on the history of maths and famous women in maths. Feedback from students suggested that this day was effective in promoting enjoyment of maths and raising awareness about the roles of women, teamwork and multiple approaches to problem solving in maths. There is also Pi Day, held on either March 14 or July 22, which includes a competition for memorising the most digits of pi, with prizes like canteen vouchers, to promote interest in maths – the current record stands at 218 digits.

There is also a Numeracy Peer Tutoring program, which involves Year 10 and 11 students volunteering to help Year 8 students with learning needs identified through NAPLAN. This is a joint program with RGHS and Randwick TAFE. As well as benefitting the students receiving tutoring, there are benefits for the tutors in terms of self-improvement and satisfaction, as well as a certificate from TAFE. ES expressed thanks to Mr Raskall for funding to support this amazing program.

**6. Confirmation of the Minutes for September 2019: (JB, DE)**

*Minutes confirmed.*

**7. Business arising from September 2019 Minutes:**

None noted

**8. Correspondence:**

The following items of correspondence were noted:

- The questions-on-notice to the Budget Estimates Committee regarding the school upgrades mentioned at last were due to be answered on 30 September. On 1 October, BS received an email from SL with a summary of the answers. BS circulated a printed copy with the relevant sections highlighted. There is a definite timeline for a feasibility study and scope for works expected to be completed in 2019. It is not yet clear what involvement the School and parents will have in the process. There was talk of a complete rebuild when SINSW first visited, but this option was quickly taken off the table. We hope to know what they have in mind by the end of the year.
- There was an email from SINSW which didn't include the information from Estimates. It notes early planning for an upgrade is underway but must also take into consideration factors including other schools and transport in the area. There will be a project reference group which will include a parent representative.
- There have been emails relating to the book packs, but this will be addressed by MB later.
- There have also been emails relating to our application for charity status, but LB will speak to this in the Treasurer's report.
- Dr Marjorie O'Neill has shared a letter she has written to the Minister regarding a disability access lift for the stage in the hall. This was prompted by MO's attendance at the recent Leadership Investiture, during which she noticed that an RBHS student who uses a wheelchair was unable to access the stage to participate in the ceremony. The Minister's Secretary has replied to say that they are pleased to announce that funding for the lift will be provided. LR noted that the meeting to scope the project has already happened.

## 9. Reports

### ***President's Report (BS)***

BS reported that the English portfolio presentations were great and encouraged everyone to be involved next year. They involve a small panel of 1-2 teachers and a parent with the students presenting for 2-3 minutes. The experience is very valuable for the students.

The Community Building Partnership grants closed before the holidays. While we had discussed submitting an application for outdoor seating and shading, this proved too complicated to prepare in the time available as it required input from a Department engineer. Instead, we are grateful to AB for working in consultation with LR to prepare an application for upgrading the Library. Mr Sellies also assisted with enthusiasm, providing useful information and good ideas. The outcome will be announced around March.

The Film By... Kidz at the Ritz festival was held yesterday at the Ritz Cinema at The Spot. RBHS was represented by two films, one by Year 9 students, and one by the current Year 10. This was a great and well-attended event.

BS will be away for the next meeting and the first meeting of next year. She reflected that it had been a somewhat frustrating year, given that we had spent so much of it waiting on outcomes. She expressed her thanks for everyone's help with what has nonetheless been a busy and fruitful year. As an example, the Election BBQs were well-received by the community and a great chance to show the engagement of parents at the school. JB expressed thanks to BS on behalf of the members for her efforts as President. As volunteers, we should all take the time to give ourselves a pat on the back for contributing what we can. Knowing that we're here for our boys and our boys' education will help us continue to achieve things for them.

### ***Principal's Report (LM for LR)***

LR presented the Principal's Report. Among the items noted were:

- On Tuesday 15 October, one of Year 9 students, Elijah Ng, passed away after having been ill for some time. This was very difficult for the whole school. Staff were informed by Elijah's family on Tuesday afternoon. The counsellor from RGHS came over to assist, and the Department provided support for staff. There was a cohort meeting for Year 9 the next day which left many boys shocked and sombre. Some did need to access the two counsellors available. A lot of Elijah's closest friends were in special need of assistance; they were able to speak with the counsellors in a small group. LR spoke to Elijah's mum, who gave her permission for the text sent to parents and the notice in the newsletter on Friday. Elijah's memorial service was yesterday, and a lot of boys from our school and other schools, including Elijah's primary school, attended. Teachers who stayed at RBHS while other staff and students attended the service covered things brilliantly. Some boys attended the service without their parents present to provide support, which was somewhat of a concern in terms of the possible emotional impact of the event. Unfortunately, the RBHS counsellor was on leave until today, which was a challenge. The School will have some form of remembrance later; LR is currently getting input from Year 9 and staff. LR noted that the staff have been brilliant in supporting students and each other.

- Following up on last month's meeting, LR has been in contact with RGHS to suggest several collaborative activities, some of which have been taken up. RGHS has outsourced their Duke of Edinburgh program so were not interested in joint activities. A successful excursion was organised by the International Students Coordinators to the Powerhouse Museum (the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences) and the Australian National Maritime Museum. There have been further discussions regarding sharing subjects, especially in Year 11. RGHS is still working out their subject lines, but are open to discussions regarding individual students. There is a Year 9 student at RBHS who is unable to take Visual Arts as an elective next year due to a line clash who would be interested in joining the RGHS class, but this seems unlikely at this stage. LR has invited RGHS to join the 6 boys in Year 12 Extension History, but this has not been taken up. The prefects and SRC representatives will be attending Mental Health Day activities at RGHS tomorrow.
- LR congratulated AB on her work on the Community grant application. The School has also applied for \$20,000 with Matt Thistlethwaite towards a COLA and seating outside the canteen, although the total estimate for the entire project is around \$250,000.
- RBHS was represented by two films in last night's Film By... Kidz at the Ritz festival last night, one each from Years 9 and 10. There is a push to use film more in the curriculum as a tool to promote collaboration, team work and writing development, amongst other things. The RBHS String Ensemble also performed. LR expressed thanks to Emma Payne and the team for helping. In addition to benefits for the boys participating, this is a great event for the School to be involved with as it includes all the local primary schools.
- The G&T interviews have been done.
- With regard to the upgrades, Marjorie O'Neill will visit with the Education Minister on 30 October for about one-and-a-half hours. The Department have not yet told us what we can show. It is a sports day, so students won't be in class. The School's intention is to ensure we include our oldest science labs and the classrooms most in need of work. However, we have a large area in terms of grounds, so we still don't know. LR met with contacts from UNSW and RGHS regarding the pool proposal from UNSW. This has now been retracted as SINSW is taking too long. UNSW is building an indoor and an outdoor pool on their own site instead.
- The selection panel for the Head Teacher (Admin) position has been put together. The ad will be finalised this week when the panel can meet. This process has been delayed due to the need to prioritise issues relating to supporting our students and staff through the death of a member of our school community.
- The Presiding Officer has reported to LR being extremely happy with the behaviour at our HSC exams. It was noted that few students were leaving early, which is pleasing.
- The students and staff on the practice walk for the Duke of Edinburgh successfully completed a challenging course which saw them cross the Shoalhaven River 7 times.
- 123 students have enrolled for Year 7 so far. We have 28 acceptances for G&T out of 40 places offered; it is difficult to say whether there will be one or two classes at this stage, as students may still be waiting on later-round offers for selective schools.
- The Breakfast Club is well-attended. LR mentioned it in an assembly, and the number of regular attendees is growing.
- LR commended Geoff Grasso for his work in organising the Graduation Evening.
- The Leadership Investiture has been held. One of our students who uses a wheelchair had to be lifted onto the stage by the PE teachers in order to participate in the ceremony. This was

noticed by Marjorie O'Neill, which prompted her to successful request to the Minister for funding for an access lift for the stage mentioned earlier.

- LR expressed thanks to the P&C for the Trivia Night, which was very entertaining.
- Year 11 have now started on Year 12 work.
- Last year ~25 staff completed the UNSW Mini Certificate of Gifted Education. 9 staff went this year. The School will have staff development day to share this knowledge with other teachers.
- The School has hosted 13 teaching students from Beijing Normal University who are spending a term at UNSW. The students observed classes across curriculum areas, and gave very positive feedback on the boys' discipline. They are Masters of Education students training to be English teachers in China. Their visit provided an interesting insight into some of the expectations and practices in teaching in China. Current interns at RBHS who are also Chinese nationals joined in to help. LR gave credit to LM for her work coordinating these activities.
- The order for the bus is with the Department awaiting approval to be sent through.

### ***Treasurer's Report***

LB tabled the Treasurer's Report and bank statement. The current bank balance is \$54,121.39, with the only outgoing this month a \$3.25 bank fee.

LB has submitted the relevant application to follow up on the P&C recommendation that groups register as charities with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. This identifies us as a not-for-profit organisation and makes it easier to apply for grants. There is further information available on the P&C website for anyone interested. LB will report back on the outcome at next meeting.

## **10. Agenda Items:**

### ***Book packs update (MB)***

MB reported that she has successfully ordered the fundraising starter packs with pens, exercise books and covers which meet the requirements for Years 7, 8 and 9. These were ordered through Winc (previously Office Max) as they quoted \$27.35 per pack versus \$36 for OfficeWorks. We have ordered 185 packs, which will be sold by staff at the School throughout the year. We looked at including calculators in the pack, but couldn't get a suitably competitive price, so have opted to include a list of NESA-approved models in the packs to assist parents in choosing their own instead. The packs will be ready for the Year 7 Orientation Day in December, and will be sold for \$40. Thanks were expressed to MB for her efforts in organising this.

### ***End-of-year BBQ***

Following up on the suggestion from last meeting to hold the give-back BBQ in conjunction with the Colour Run, it was noted that date for this event has been tentatively set as 21 November, pending confirmation tomorrow. Although not every student will participate in the run, it would still be a good day to hold the BBQ. LS, SF, LB, MB (to coordinate) volunteered to help on the day. We expect that, as with last year, we won't charge for sausages, but will sell soft drinks. It was noted we will need to communicate with the Canteen. There were a fair number of halal sausages last year, and we can discuss specific requirements further.

## ***Planning 2020***

We will need to organise the welcome morning tea on the first day of the 2020 school year for new Year 7 parents before the end of this year. In terms of possible projects to be funded next year, Emma Payne suggested some equipment to support future film-making activities as part of the English syllabus and Film By. We could also ask Leah Pappin for a proposal related to well-being activities. LR confirmed that the request for the bus order has gone to the Department, but there is still a six-month turn-around once the order is submitted. It was suggested that we contribute funding to a literacy-related program, for example, to support the purchase of more engaging fiction for the Library. It was noted that the Library is also open to receiving donations of books, and that there is a parent volunteer who regularly assists with preparing books to go into circulation by covering them. It was suggested that the P&C could organise a social evening for parent volunteers to assist with book covering. In terms of the School's other technology needs, the possibility of a STEM/STEAM room is still being discussed – LR is hoping for Department funding for this, but we will have to wait and see. It was also suggested that we look into buying some running blocks and hurdles to assist with training for boys representing the School at inter-school athletics events.

### **11. General Business:**

- RBHS has accepted the offer to have a police liaison officer, Danny McManus of Rose Bay, speak to Year 8, 9, and 10 students regarding drug health and safety. The talk will focus on social use legalities with a risk-management focus. At present, there is no specific discussion of "schoolies' week" with Year 12 as there isn't a strong culture of that here. The aim is to instead engage students about issues around partying and safety from a young age. Given the consent laws are about to be changed, the talk may be able to extend to this, or this may be discussed at another time.
- The planned walk-through of RBHS and RGHS by our local member and the Education Minister was mentioned at the RGHS P&C meeting last night. The timing of the walk-through may be due to Parliament sitting next week with the budget estimates meeting the following week.
- The possibility of an official P&C liaison position with RGHS was felt to be unnecessary as it is possible for individual members of RBHS to attend RGHS P&C meetings and/or register to receive minutes as a member of the local community, there is regular contact between the Presidents of both P&Cs, and there are a number of involved families with children at both schools.
- Melanie presented information regarding a petition to NSW Parliament requiring 10,000 signatures to request funding for an oral desensitisation program for children with food allergies. The program currently requires a 7-month relocation to the US for treatment. LR is happy to consider but will need to consult with the Department before communicating to parents through official school channels.

### **12. Next Ordinary Meeting**

Tuesday, 19 November 2019

### **13. Meeting closed: 9:18pm**