

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 23 August 2016

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 Election - Education Forum with a panel of major political party candidates and others at 6.45pm on Thursday 1 September 16 at HBCTL Stirling.**
- **P&C Council Policy Conference 7pm Tuesday 25 Oct 16 at HBCTL Stirling.**
- **P&C association Treasurers' audit workshop 7pm Thursday 10 Nov 16 at Hackett**

1. Election 2016 lobbying plan and education priorities

Our first meeting with a federal election candidate is with Senator Katy Gallagher on 31 May. It was agreed that we add the issue of funding equity for schools and the need for a new formula for schools that includes assets testing for all school funding, with the aim of moving funding to schools with the greatest needs.

2. Report on the meeting with the EDu senior executives 19 Aug 16

A written report on the meeting was in draft form and would be circulated later with the minutes. It was a very positive meeting and the following was noted:

- a. We welcomed the new Director General Natalie Howson and noted the letter of introduction that she had sent to all P&C association Presidents.
- b. She has not yet formed her opinion on matters such as school autonomy and BYOD and welcomed our input.
- c. She was aware of the parents' interest in the restrictive practices aspects of the schools for all policy implementation.

3. ACT ELECTION LOBBYING ACTIVITY

The election score card and poster drafts were shown. Meetings have been attended with major political parties' spokespeople. The election forum will be conducted & acknowledgement made of minor party and independent candidates. The score card assessment is the Election Working Group members assess each parties' education policies against our requirements. Their results are submitted to the Executive for confirmation after the election forum on 1 September. Cards will then be printed & distributed to P&Cs, the media & candidates one week before the election.

4. Issues from P&C Associations

4.1 Interpreting "Red Food" days

The decision on what is or isn't a "red food" day is entirely up to the school principal, while guidelines are provided by the ACT Health Directorate. P&Cs with flexible school principals do not wish them to be dictated to on this issue. Discrete enquiries will be made on "red food" definition.

4.2 Lake Ginninderra College

Concerns were raised at the apparent abandonment of the 30 year refurbishment of their college by the Edu. Council to seek an answer from Edu on when such maintenance will be done.

4.3 Stromlo High School

Similar concern to LGC about their major maintenance plans and also about the streaming of students and the problems of assessment and grading of streamed and non-streamed students.

4.5 Chapman Primary School

The impact of the healthy foods policy on senior school canteens was again raised. Also, despite the successful introduction of healthy food options in their canteen, they were only just covering costs. Students bring red food items from home. Appropriate suppliers for alternatives to the red & amber foods have still not been found. Council to raise these issues again to Edu & ACT Health.

5. Reports

5.1 Meeting on Transport Canberra 30 June 16

Transport Canberra briefed us on their formation of and sought our views on bus service matters such as free fares, children using bus terminals and a new free CPD loop service.

5.2 School Transport Liaison Committee & Special Needs Transport meetings 18 Aug 16

Changes to the school bus services seemed to be minor and all schools should have been informed of the changes. The Special Needs meeting was very positive. Transport Canberra value Council's work in bus driver training & they were prepared to extend awareness training to supervisors and help with taxi driver training as well.

5.3 Meeting with Deloitte Access Economics & Edu on 21 July 16

Deloitte is developing a needs based funding model for supporting English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) in schools. What is equitable funding and what is fair was discussed. Our view is school principals should not be left to decide what is equitable and fair.

5.4 Meeting on recent Photo Sharing Website and Canberra students on 23 Aug 16

Students from 3 private schools & 2 public schools were involved. The site has been taken down. ACT/Federal police took quick and effective action on this matter and have been very sensitive to victims of the website. We raised concerns some victims may attempt self-harm.

5.5 Meeting of Schools for All roundtable on 15 Aug 16

The need for cultural change when considering "inclusion" is still needed & guidelines on restraint were being revised by EDu. Upgrade to "sensory" spaces and igloos was discussed. Physical restraint to prevent self-harm or danger to other students appears not to be addressed yet.

6. The undervaluing of languages in schools.

The teaching of languages & other specialist subjects eg music, is made extremely difficult by their classification as "released" classes. Students & many schools undervalue such classes, resulting in poor student behaviour in lessons & poor performance. This demoralizes teachers & students who truly wish to learn in those subjects. A language teacher (& parent) commented on this issue, confirming the apprehensions of many parents present. A change in attitude of students and schools is urgently needed.

7. Over emphasis on NAPLAN

Delegates agreed that over emphasis on NAPLAN was crowding out other subjects which provide a rounded education for students.

8. Differentiated or streaming of students

The question was asked if the streaming or differentiation of students was affected or impeded by the Australian curriculum? This will be referred to Josephine Andersen.

9. Effectiveness of ACT Schools

Good quality teaching is a major factor and grading of student success against the curriculum was mentioned with a "C" grade being accepted as a pass. Students need to be encouraged to achieve B and A grades which are quite achievable. We will discuss with Edu.

10. NEXT MEETING - The next General meeting follows the Policy Conference on 25 October at 7pm at CTL Stirling.