

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 25 February 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.

- Effective P&C workshops Thurs 6.30pm 20 Mar at CTL & Sat 2pm 22 March at Sports House, Hackett
- P&C Treasurers' briefing 7pm Thursday 27 Mar 14 at CTL.
- P&C Association insurance renewal briefing Thurs 3 April at CTL

1. PRESENTATION BY LEANNE WRIGHT OF ETD ON GIFTED & TALENTED POLICY CHANGES, REMOVAL OF SUGARY DRINKS FROM SCHOOLS AND INSTALLATION OF WATER FOUNTAINS.

- see the below notes for details of this presentation and Q&As

2. REPORT - SCHOOL CANTEEN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Charles Condor up and running. Alfred Deakin, Harrison and Neville Bonner primary schools in process of set up. P&C canteens with third party supplier can also be involved. For schools with Nutrition Australia (NA) menu reviews, the red/green/amber ratings of each item can be specified. Date to be announced for meeting/demo of how to use it/sign up to the NSWBuy scheme. It was noted that the grant ends middle of year, so phone the Council office now to get on board with Flexischools paid for by the Council. Council is paying P&Cs joining fee for Healthy kids association (replaces now closed ACT School Canteen Association). Council will also fund any schools who haven't yet had an NA menu assessment.

3. CELEBRATING THE WEEK OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Following the idea coming from last year's hot topics, Council has found a suitable date: 17-24 May 14 for this activity. This is also Public Education week which fits in well. ETD and AEU are happy for us to incorporate this into the week. Please everyone get their school interested and involved and advise us of their activities.

ACTION: ALL

4. REFINEMENT OF THE FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORK

The Chair asked for volunteers to participate in focus groups during March.

ACTION: ALL

5. MY SCHOOL REPORTING

Help is needed to raise awareness about limitations of published school results/league tables. Difficulties with league tables were outlined. Delegates were asked to seek inclusion of this information in school newsletters. Parents are also asked to write a letter to the Canberra Times editor and ask them not to publish league tables. Council will also issue a press release.

ACTION: ALL

6. ITEMS FOR MINISTER AND ETD MEETING REPORTS

Points for ETD meeting

- Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Officer programs.
- Decline in the teaching of the arts and creative skills as we focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Transport NSW recognition of ACT Colleges.
- Independent schools.
- Data collection by ETD on Gifted & Talented Students

Points for Minister meeting.

- Lack of Male Teachers in Schools.
- Resourcing of Student Welfare in the ACT.
- Lack of Specialist Teachers.
- The Review of National Curriculum.
- Legislative Issues around Teaching Religion in Public Schools.

7. ISSUES FROM P&C ASSOCIATIONS

- Sun Smart policies in schools – are schools encouraging the use of sun screens or just hats, issues with allergies, no school wide policy, no follow on action in high schools.
- Parental engagement.
- Resourcing of student welfare programs, school counsellors.
- Inequities between public schools.
- Chaplains and Religious Education classes

8. FEDERAL CURRICULUM REVIEW

ACT curriculum is progressing well, with only minor issues at this point, due to the federal review, that is to occur over the next few months. The review is apparently to ensure the process of making the national curriculum is appropriate. ACARA developed the national curriculum and has a website to view all subjects at varying stages of its existence. By the end of this year ACARA was to have from F to 10 fully finished, endorsed by the ministers and ready for the last subject to be implemented. At this point, the last subjects have not been endorsed. However, ACARA have updated their website to include those subjects so that those subjects can be accessed by teachers. Delegates did not have a problem with content or cross curriculum perspectives.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next General meeting is to be a Hot Topics meeting on 25 March 14 at CTL.

NOTES on PRESENTATION BY LEANNE WRIGHT OF ETD. Leanne told the meeting about the fresh tastes initiative and how sugary drinks will be phased out in schools this year. This only applies to sales of sugary drinks directly to students during school hours. In response to a question about excursions (eg swimming carnivals) where a canteen is available, Leanne advised that there is no ETD directive and encouraged schools and parents to decide what is acceptable for these instances. Water refill stations will be installed in all act public schools in next 18 months.

Fresh Tastes has 6 action areas that schools can sign up to including growing food, cooking food, healthy choices curriculum/teaching. Brochures with details are available from the Council office. In response to a question about whether there is funding to provide programs, gardens etc. Leanne advised there is no funding, but there are partner organisations and businesses who can help. She agreed with a comment from JK about the need to match exercise with healthy eating and noted this is part of the ETD action plan.

Leanne also provided information on preschool matters, which tries to increase parent engagement with preschool programs and promote the role of preschools. A website has been launched which lists preschools and day care services with preschool programs and outlines how to decide on a preschool and how to be involved as a parent. Grants program is available (\$500 max each) for P&Cs to run events to involve parents in preschools.

ETD has developed a new gifted and talented education policy. Council was represented on the working group which drafted the policy prior to public consultation process. A series of parent fact sheets about G&T education are now being drafted with input from parents. VP called for suggested FAQs for a fact sheet to be recorded on a list circulated at the meeting.

Some discussion occurred about support for talents in areas like sport and music and Leanne noted that there will be support and expertise for teachers to draw on in catering for gifted students. In response to a question about horizontal extension being currently the only option, she advised that the new policy allows for grade acceleration, subject etc. detailed in parent fact sheets. It was also advised that it is now a requirement for parents to be informed who is the school G&T liaison officer (Council lobbied for this).

In response to a question about the metrics to determine whether a child is gifted, Leanne pointed to the flow chart and the use of a range of metrics. In response to a further question about the loss of the ETD G&T coordinator position and policy being made but not implemented, Leanne said she takes responsibility for making sure this policy is implemented.

After discussion about whether we should push for reinstatement of the position now, or wait and see if new policy is effectively implemented, it was agreed to monitor and to raise in meeting with Minister. Also to ask the Minister how do you know you have been successful?