

Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten



LAMPLIGHT

Newsletter of the Governance Review and FSDM*

Vol 1 Term 1 Week 1 - 2
2nd – 15th February 2009.

*(FSDM stands for “Facilitated Shared Decision Making”)

THE MOTTO OF THE SOCIAL ETHIC

**The healthy social life
is found
when in the mirror
of each soul
the whole community
finds it's reflection
and when in the community
the virtue if each is living.**

Rudolf Steiner

Introduction

Welcome to the very first edition of the fortnightly newsletter that we will be producing to support the implementation of a new management structure for our school.

The aim of these newsletters is to provide:

- information that we hope will help you understand what this new structure is all about, and
- regular updates informing you of how the implementation process is progressing.

Background

At the beginning of the 2008 school year the school decided to implement a full review of its governance and management structure and processes. The review was prompted by the fact that, although the school has grown considerably since it started with a kinder and a single composite class 1-2 almost 20 years ago, we are still operating with *exactly the same* governance (Company Limited by guarantee) and management structure (College of Teachers/Admin. Council) as we had then.

Furthermore over this time there have been:

1. Significant changes in company law since the original constitution of the school was drafted.
2. Changes in government and community expectations on governance and management.
3. Concern expressed by the previous auditors on our governance processes and that they had never been reviewed.

In light of this, a commitment was made to change the governance and management structure of the school to ensure that:

1. Current legal requirements are met.
2. Responsibilities are clarified between governance and management roles in the school.
3. A governance and management structure is established which will meet the current and future needs of the school.

The Process to Date

The school engaged a consultant, Ian Stehlik, through the Rudolf Steiner Schools Association (RSSA). Ian was given a

specific brief, based on the above, and in August last year he presented a draft of his recommendations. Our process was to then allow 6 full weeks to consider these. Over this time comment and input was obtained from parents, administration staff, the Administrative Council and the College of Teachers. During this process we were able to refine several of the recommendations. These were communicated back to Ian who then incorporated them into his final report.

Governance and Management

At this point we should take a moment to explain some important terms and ideas.

In modern organisational structures there is a very clear distinction made between the functions of *governance* and *management*.

Essentially “*management*” refers to all the decision making required on a day-to-day, year-to-year basis to fulfil the vision and mission of the institution. The implementation of programs and activities which meet the organisation’s vision and mission (as usually articulated in a strategic plan) rests with the management and staff of the organisation.

Management roles include implementation and review of programs; recruitment, selection and review of staff; provision of facilities; development; marketing; financial management; data and information management; etc etc....

Management responsibilities rest with employees of the school.

On the other hand, “*governance*” responsibility rests with the directors of the company (the Board of Directors) and refers to:

- Establishing and reviewing the vision and mission of the institution.
- Ensuring compliance with all legal obligations through

- monitoring of the management team,
- monitoring of the budget, and
- ensuring that all policies and their procedures are complete, are reviewed and are followed.
- Monitoring risk management systems, both financial and legal.
- Approval of the budget in the light of the values and vision.
- As the employer, delegating the day-to-day matters of employment of staff for implementation by the management team, within approved budgets and policies.

Concerning this picture the point is made over and over again that institutions come to grief when the *clear distinction* between roles is lost.

However, an independent school is more than an educational institution; it is also a *small business* which requires specific financial and staffing management skills—something rarely found in a teacher who has usually only been trained in teaching and not also in business management.

In light of this reality most independent schools separate their management organisation into the “educational management” and “business management” arms or pillars. In a school, the head of the educational management team is usually the principal or headmistress/headmaster.

In Steiner schools, however, this responsibility has been invested not in one person but rather in a collective of the teachers called the College of Teachers. The ideal here is to invest *every practicing teacher* with true authority and responsibility for the life of the whole school rather than having it rest with just one person. However, managing a school is a very complex thing today and experience has tended to suggest that, as marvellous as is the ideal of the College

model, having *every* teacher involved in *every* decision is unwieldy, inefficient, and leads to real confusion about exactly where actual responsibility lies.

Silkwood Steiner School on the Gold Coast are operating with a groundbreaking new management structure that allows for the authentic distribution of leadership across their teaching staff, while at the same ensuring absolute clarity of responsibility and authority. In short, it provides just the kind of structure that we need to resolve our situation.

This model is called Facilitated Shared Decision Making (FSDM) and has been developed by Alan Wagstaff, a Steiner educator of considerable experience, as a result of his post-graduate study into educational management. It has been operating successfully in Silkwood Steiner School for seven years. All participants remark that the system has lifted every aspect of the school's performance and that it achieves the management style outcomes set by the school.

Our school had Alan Wagstaff deliver the SLAM workshop (Shared Leadership and Management) to the College of Teachers, Admin Council members and Administrative staff in late November 2008.

The Governance Review Subcommittee

This whole process is being overseen by a subcommittee comprising key representatives of the school community:

- Board of Directors – Jeff Onans
- Administrative Council parents – Jeff Huzzey and Hugh Finlay
- College of Teachers – John Goble and Heather Osborn
- Administrative staff; Deborah Wardle

Current Tasks

The committee is currently reviewing the first draft of the revised Constitution as presented by Ian Stehlick for consideration.

The SLAM model involves creating mandated educational and administrative management positions. Draft Position Description/Mandates for these positions are currently being considered by the College of Teachers and the Governance Review Sub Committee.

A briefing session for staff members who did not attend the Alan Wagstaff Workshop will be part of the Whole Staff Meeting on **Monday 16th Feb. 09.**

In subsequent issues we will set out more details of FSDM and the SLAM model, with specific reference to how it will affect the practices at our school, as well as keep you up to date with the details of other consequences of Ian Stehlik's final report.

Contact: Deborah Wardle
Business Manager 5470 6235



For fun **LAMPLIGHT** comes from our own naming of this process Leadership and Management Planning LAMP....and hence the illumination mechanism... *lamplight*.....