

Stanmore Public School Parents & Citizens Association

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 4 September 2012

Present: Fran Larkin, Neil Atwell, Jana Hunt, Sue Rose, Kylie Williams, Buzz McKenzie, Gina Angelicas, Lea Dawson, Madi Morrison, Sean Flood, Sally Fryer, Deahna Sheerin, Gillian Woodhouse, Gordon Schauer, Mark O'Donnell, Toby Prior, Diannne van Dulken, Jayne da Costa, Emma Walters, Bill Hollister, Jan Van Dyk, Cath Stuart, Anna Timbrell, Lisa Jan, Barbara Cohen, Peter Harris, Michael Riprad, Derek Strydom, Nathan Freeman, Crystal Freeman.

Apologies: Judith Flett, Adam Shapiro, Sally Hutchinson, Denise Watson, Melissa Swanston

Meeting opened at 7:05pm

Previous minutes

Sue Rose verified the minutes from the previous meeting and signed them as correct.

Visit/address

Address by invited guest, Paul Parkes, Director High Schools, Department of Education. Background info (taken from Stanmore Public school website):

'We have been informed that because NHSPA is well above capacity, children living in certain streets in the Stanmore/Newtown/Enmore area that might previously have qualified for NHSPA will now be included in the intake areas for Sydney Secondary College, Leichhardt or Marrickville High School. These changes will come into effect from 2013.

Last year, the School Education Director for Stanmore Public School, Mr Gavin Patterson, met with most of the P&C Executive and Principal Fran Larkin to brief us about proposed changes to the boundaries for the local drawing area for Newtown High School of the Performing Arts.

Because enrolments at Newtown High School are over capacity for its accommodation and there is no space for demountables, the proposal is to reduce the size of the local area for Newtown High School and increase the size of the drawing area for Marrickville High School, which is under capacity.'

Mr Paul Parkes was invited to this P & C meeting to address some of these concerns and provide more information. Mr Parkes noted he has 20 high schools in the area under his directorship. He was happy to field questions straight away. Some of the points covered in the questions and answers (please note these are not in particular order as several points were covered at numerous times, also nothing is listed in relation to its importance)

- Changes resulting from predicted boom in enrolment numbers at Newtown High due to increased local demand and changing demographics in area e.g. more apartments being built, people moving to inner city Change made resulted from increased demand.
- Newtown High School at capacity with 1060 and very difficult to expand due to safety and facilities. One of the neighbouring high schools, Marrickville High is under capacity e.g. has 29 spare classrooms and large grounds and has room to grow. Some of the boundaries of Marrickville are shared with Newtown. Some families at the school are now in area for Leichhardt High School (ie those on the Leichhardt side of Stanmore), rather than Newtown High.
- Current selective stream to local enrolment ratio is 60:40 and school would like this to remain. In past school has been very welcoming of local student enrolment (due to Principal being supportive of this) and hence numbers have grown

- Concern raised that there was little negotiation or consultation with affected families.
- Also concern re timing i.e. only informed in late August re 21 Sept closing date for feedback. This date extended to 12 October for all schools.
- Mr Gavin Patterson was the Department of Education director involved in this change in 2011. Mr Parkes has moved into his current position since this time.
- Mr Parkes said there was no official policy on informing schools regarding the changing of boundaries. Generally schools affected informed via their Principals and P & C Assoc. It seems only 3 of the 20 primary schools affected were contacted directly by a Department Rep (ie Gavin Patterson), Stanmore being one.
- The decision was already made by Department following demographer's predictions hence parents/community not part of decision-making process. Funding done on a 'formula'. Based on a minimum standard of funding across all state schools. This is standard for the Department as part of managing enrolment demand and is a demand management tool. Similar process occurred between Annandale North and Annandale Public schools – decision was made more quickly than this one
- a lack of transparency in decision making process was raised as a concern. Mr Parkes acknowledged that it is unfortunate parent's/school community are not part of decision-making process. This is done by the Department's Asset Management team based on demographic information and talking to relevant high schools.
- Ms Larkin noted that few concerns were received following her emailed note to all Stanmore Parents in early October e.g. 5 letters to her were received. A few more were received by Department raising concerns. Parents were given the opportunity to raise concerns/ask questions in the letter from Ms Larkin. Enquiries were directed to Fran.
- If enrolment at Marrickville grows Mr Parkes said more resources would go there i.e. resources would follow demand. He also noted Marrickville High currently earmarked for \$2 million as part of Federal Govt initiative (National Partnership money) to improve schools and add resources. Marrickville High also had change of staff recently with some new senior people appointed.
- Mr Parkes acknowledged perhaps some elements of the process undertaken by the Department could have been handled differently
- Issue of transport to Marrickville High raised – difficult to get to from Stanmore. NSW Dept of Ed could look at putting school specials (bus service) on.
- Fran noted some minor modifications have been made e.g. Paul stated siblings who are out of area would be able to attend Newtown High for next few years.
- Year 5 students visited Marrickville High and it proved to be an enjoyable experience – dialogue like this between schools useful community building tool
- It was noted it is hard to change perceptions of schools in the community. However by the local community supporting their local school, change can come about e.g. Tempe High now at capacity when approx 5 years ago this had not been the case.

Action points

- Stanmore invite Marrickville High Principal and/or Vice principal to address concerns. This could be done in conjunction with other primary schools e.g. Wilkins. Contact with Marrickville High P & C could also be made.
- Some parents noted the boundary changes meant their zoning now Leichhardt high/Sydney Secondary College and hence contact with this school would be good
- Information sessions by school such as tours could be organised
- Madi Morrison encouraged parents to attend information session given by schools

President's Report

- Buzz thanked Mr Parkes for attending our meeting
- Buzz reminded us of the P & C Code of Conduct
- Noted school community busy with upcoming Election Day fundraising activities
- Thanked parents from Wilkins Public P & C who attended meeting tonight

Treasurer's Report

Bank statement \$37299

Building fund \$10685

\$1300 raised from Father's Day Breakfast

Report to be published on school website with minutes

Action point

Treasurer's report to go school website and notice board

Principal's Report

- School about to employ a kitchen specialist. – advertised in SNIP.
- Aiming for kitchen to be finished in Term 4
- Mushroom mini-farms happening – lots of mushrooms around school
- More information on the kitchen garden and regular updates to appear in SNIP
- There will be 23 classes at the school next year
- Fun Run raised \$30 000 – a record and great day
- 12 students attended the Regional Athletics carnival – another record
- 50 children participated in recent Learn to Swim Program –many have come a long way with their swimming
- Debaters through to Sydney Region semi-final, as is other debating team. Well done to both teams
- School gearing up for Showcase in last week of term
- 7 Recorder players at opera House last week. 1000 recorders altogether, the sound was amazing

Calendar of Events

- Upcoming election BBQ day for local government elections Saturday, 8th September, fundraising efforts currently focused on this.
- Approx \$1300 raised from Father's day morning BBQ. Growing in popularity and well-attended. Thanks to Sally Hutchinson and Melissa Swanston for their great efforts.

Any other business

Meeting closed at 9:20pm.