

2015 School Board Report

As our thoughts move towards 2016, it is a great opportunity to consider the year that was – 2015.

Our school year started with a terrific bang, being the Annual Family welcome – arranged and funded by our wonderful P & F executive and their helpers and attended by approximately 400 parents and students. What better way to begin the school year – a celebration of the strong St Lawrence community.

St Lawrence is very privileged to have such a dedicated School Board who are committed to not only coming to our regular meetings, but who share a common theme and drive, being whatever we do, whatever we discuss, it is with the children and the greater school community and teachers at the top of our mind.

I'd like to acknowledge the Board Members who always bring their best opinions and focus to all meetings. Rob Femia, our past Treasurer, who resigned from the Board early in the year, whose years on the Board provided great vision and solid advice. Michael Mucciarone who seamlessly stepped into the role of Treasurer and always making himself available for those extra finance meetings, to Georgie Dragicevich, Board Secretary, who does a great job in capturing all that is pertinent in our meetings. Narelle Zaknich, P&F President, June Ross, Parish Representative, Nicola Micallef, Michelle Mallard, thank you for your valued insights. Angela Leddin, your commitment to the students and the school are second to none. Our Principal, John Rose, thank you for your energy, continued support and your leadership.

The School Board approved the purchase of the new school bus – a significant expense, but already providing the children with a very safe journey to many enjoyable excursions. It is anticipated that this purchase will benefit the school for many years to come. The Board would like to extend a big 'thank you' to Ken Tonge for all his work in sourcing the bus and then driving the bus whenever needed. We'd be remiss in also thanking John Rose for taking over bus driver duties in the absence of Ken.

Under the provided headings by Catholic Education of Learning (Education), Engagement (Community), Accountability (Stewardship) and Discipleship (Catholic Identity) the Board approved the Strategic Plan to St Lawrence. All significant future decisions will be referenced and aligned to this Plan, ensuring consistency and accountability to what has been approved as the direction for St Lawrence for the next three years.

As a small, single stream Catholic Primary School, I believe that we have a lot to offer and obviously the greater community around our area thinks so to – our school continually has a higher number of applicants to actual places available in kindy and we continue to have waiting lists for many of the lower primary years. I believe that this is due to a number of reasons including our Catholic Ethos, strong educational focus, community spirit, comfortable surroundings for the children to learn and play and ever improving school facilities for our children just to name a few.

The continued learning via Kagan structures and the Making Jesus Real (MJR) way of life within the school continues to have a positive impact and influence not only on the educational improvement with the children, but in understanding and behaving in a way that reflects Jesus' life and our community expectations.

Our school has a great community. This is apparent with the number of parents who help with the better known additional tasks of reading in classrooms, P & F fundraising, sports carnival attendance, library book covering, canteen assistance etc. It was also brought to life with the 30 odd parents who came to school early on a Saturday morning in term one for some serious busy bee work – what a difference this made to the school and Mr Tonge’s heavy workload – many hands do make light work and I hope that any future scheduled busy bees are just as successful. The initiative to bring in Glenn Mitchell in Term 3 to talk about mental illness and the need for males to discuss this with each other acknowledged that Dads and other male role models need to be more considered and highlighted within our community. Thank you to the P & F for partially funding this event and Mr Rose for bringing this important initiative to the school and I hope that we continue to support our Dads in the same manner that we support our Mums.

Thank you to Narelle Zacknich (President), Rebecca Rzemek (Vice President), Sue Del Borrello (Treasurer) and Lucia Ewen (Secretary). The funds you and your dedicated team of helpers co-ordinate and raise are well used by the teachers via wish lists, provision of extra resources for the children (e.g. football goals), general additional items for then school and of course, funding, co-ordinating and working at many of the traditional school community gatherings including the Annual Family welcome in Term 1, Mothers Day Morning Tea, St Lawrence Feast Day and Fathers Day Breakfast. Your continued efforts are truly appreciated.

In August this year, I represented St Lawrence Primary School at the Catholic Education Office School Chair Conference. My takeaway was that we at St Lawrence are truly special in that we have a very strong community – and we work well and united in our endeavours to better the school and educational experience for our children. The easy communication and professional interactions between Board, P&F, teaching and admin staff and Principal should not be underestimated. It seems to me that such harmony and united vision is not always the norm and is truly to be acknowledged and celebrated. We can achieve so much if we all continue in this vein – all for the common benefit of our children and the next generations of children to follow.

On behalf of the School Board, I wish our community of students, families and staff a wonderful and Merry Christmas and a safe New Year and I look forward to seeing and working with you in 2016 to deliver even more great things for the St Lawrence school community.

Caroline Narbey

School Board Chair