Parent Forum Meeting  
Monday 13th May 2013

Meeting opened  
Claire Price opened meeting at 7.06pm

Apologies  
Kathryn Leslight, Sarah Wilkinson, Kathryn O’Malley, Leanne Bugg, Rebecca Bird, Nikki Clarke, Shiley Sarks, Karen Anderson, Emma Butler

Present  
Claire Price, Gillian Taylor, Maria McCabe, Naomi Smith, Greg Jones, Melissa Toms, Louise Ferguson, Glenda Hannah, Jan Cronly

In attendance  
Brian Laybutt, Brendan Ryan, Justine Powell

Welcome & Prayer  
School Prayer

Minutes of Previous Meeting  
Accepted by Melissa Toms, seconded by Claire Price

Treasurer’s Report  
Tabled by Brendan Ryan in the Treasurer’s absence. Financial paperwork is not available to present at this meeting as they have just been received back from the Accountant so there is nothing to update from the last report.

The Audit Report dated 16 April 2013 included recommendations from Auditor: all large expenses should be discussed and approved by Parent Forum, and minuted in the respective meeting. Bank statements and minutes available at all meetings for review. Statements are currently available online if needed, and Treasurer brings financial books with her.

Brian Laybutt recommended that the ANZ funds be transferred into the Diocesan investment fund. Any Catholic School will access the Diocesan investment fund. Discussion raised issues with access and transparency of transaction.

Action: Brian Laybutt to confirm interest rates are comparable with ANZ. To be raised at the next meeting.

Secretary’s Report  
Outgoing correspondence:

- Tweed Shire Council, dated 11 May 2013 regarding onsite meeting with TSC

Parent Assembly Report  

- Boys in Education Parent Evening
  Presented by Warren Hopley
  7.00pm, Tuesday 28 May
  Mt St Patrick Primary School Library
  More information will be sent out prior to the night
Mission & Values Facilitator’s Report
Mrs Zambelli is the school’s Mission and Values Facilitator (absent tonight) and she attends and participates in the:
- Environment committee
- Bullying program
- Minnie Vinnies

Principal’s Report
- Term 2 - May
  - Staff development
  - Polding sports trials
  - School photos
  - Mother’s Day
  - Zone x-country
  - Parent Forum
  - NALAN
  - Enrichment music program (run at Banora Primary)
  - Enrichment Art program – (pottery -run at Mt St Pats)
  - Boys in Education
  - SDD- Proclaim
- Term 2 - June
  - 1st Eucharist
  - RE test – yr 6
  - Bush Dance – 14th June
  - ICAS writing/spelling
  - School Athletics Carnival (K-6) – this is a whole-of-school event. Feedback from last year was to have all the school together. The school will all walk down however Kinder, 1 and 2 will be bussed back. The activities for infants will be non-competitive and modified. Primary (3-6) will participate in all activities and will be grouped by age.
  - Murwillumbah Performing Arts Festival
- School Garden Beds – it has been hard transferring the soil down to garden beds. This is being looked at on Wednesday during a meeting with the parents tending to the school garden beds.
- School Environment Committee – 12 children have been nominated and 4 will attend M’Bah High School and look at environment issues in the local area such as World Heritage Day and Tree Planting Day.
- Music Program – the have been a few issues experience with running the music program – the teacher retired and the school then employed a music teacher all day Thursday who also did the band. Also 4 people were offered the position of band teacher and all 4 did not turn up, however a person has now been employed to commence this term.
- Upcoming events
  - Bush Dance
  - Monster Raffle Fundraiser
  - Mt St Pats Has Talent
  - Father’s Day Stall
  - Grandparents Day
  - World Teachers Day
  - Murwillumbah Show
  - Disco
  - Term 3 Parent Function
New Spelling Program – presented by Justine Powell

*Words Their Way* is a new program being implemented in the school which is a developmental word study for phonics, vocabulary and spelling instruction. The program is teacher-directed and student-centred therefore catering for differentiated learning. An assessment of children enables the teacher to then cater from where each child is at and plan for where they need to go.

Jolly phonics will continue for kindergarten and spelling lists will still be based around word sources. *Words Their Way* is not based on word memorisation – it allows students to investigate and understand work patterns - it is a cognitive process, and it involves work recognition.

There are four different books through which spelling patterns are discovered by children. Children will then word sort based on similarities and patterns in meanings, and children will compare and contrast. Sorts are comprised of: sound sorts (with pictures and words), meaning sorts, and pattern sorts. Children will learn through: Sounds of words; look of words; meaning of words; and historical knowledge of words. There are 5 stages in the program: emergent, alphabetic, within word patterns, syllables and affixes, and derivation.

More information is to be provided through the newsletter and through class information.

Discussion:

Q: *I understand that children will initially be assessed in each class, but how are they then assessed/monitored?*

A: Assessments and tests will still happen and use of the inventory assessment to plot where each child is at. Will also assess their writing.

Q: *Will kindy still be using sight words?*

A: Yes. This will be used at home and the look of homework will change with spelling over two weeks. We envisage all stages will send home information on what needs to happen at home.

Proposed Changes to Student Portfolios and Student Assessment – presented by Brian Laybutt

Currently portfolios go home at the end of term 2 and the end of term 4 and there is so much information sent home that parents don’t get to see what is happening. Now assessments will be sent home as they are done. This will commence in Term 3. This provides parents with a current snapshot of where their children are at and enables parents to identify where they can assist/guide at home. Older children will be sent home with assessments which need to be signed by parents and then sent back. Younger children will be sent home with a note for parents to sign and send back.

Bullying Program – presented by Brendan Ryan

The Bullying Program is comprised of a 3-step approach from the third person where the person who sees what is happening and not doing anything. The Bullying Program is to assist children to understand what their responsibilities as citizen are and taking the appropriate action.

Step 1: *Bullying Pamphlet* regarding the primary school policy sent home with parents and this policy is reinforced by the teacher

Step 2: *Mrs Zambelli* works with each room and may perform role play, group work etc

Step 3: *Heart and Pride time:* takes place once every three weeks on Fridays – senior students are mentoring and guiding younger children through appropriate behaviour modelling and open discussions.
**Uniform – presented by Brian Laybutt**

Girls’ sports uniform: sports culottes to be replaced by shorts.
Boys’ school shoes: still black shoes however be more soft leather sports shoes than leather type shoes as these are more practical.
Sample photos to be placed in the newsletter showing what is acceptable. Boys will still wear white sneakers on sports day.

*Action: Brian Laybutt to look into material for shorts and shirts.*

**Representative Sports Subsidy – presented by Brian Laybutt**

At the last meeting of the Parent Forum, it was recommended that a subsidy or donation be offered to families who incur expenses when representing the school at sporting events.

Brian Laybutt recommended an option that raffle tickets can be compiled for a given child and the child’s family can sell tickets to raise money to cover the cost. Families have to return all sold tickets to the school.

**Discussion:**

Q: *Is it possible to just cover registration fee? Would expenses covered by music representation also be covered?*

Q: *Is it possible that children may be flooding the market and this has a negative effect?*

Q: *Some sporting groups do not want children to sell tickets within their sporting club as it undermines what they are able to earn – can we consider this?*

*Action: Brian Laybutt to put a notice in the newsletter to obtain feedback from families. To be discussed at next meeting.*

**Term 3 Parent Social Function – presented by Brian Laybutt**

Brian Laybutt to contact members of the committee to see what they had as ideas and options (i.e trivia night).

*Action: To be reviewed at the next meeting.*

**Parking and Traffic Update – presented by Jan Cronly**

The parent survey highlighted the main concerns of parents as:

- Lack of pedestrian crossing(s)
- Lack of parking spaces
- Lack of footpath around perimeter of school
- Lack of footpath connecting school with parking on Queensland Road
- Lack of footpath outside school gates
- Council profiting from insufficient parking instead of addressing issues
- Council not targeting speeding drivers on Mooball Street
- Not enough spaces in “kiss and drop” zones
- Safer distance needed between, and location of, bus zones and “kiss and drop” zone
- Lack of visibility due to bus queues in Mooball Street
- Congestion at pick up due to bus queues to Mooball Street from Queensland Road
- Lack of disabled parking on level ground close to school gates

Research over the past 8 years has identified that major risk factors around schools as:

- The drop off and pick-up of children at school sites
- Mixed use for pedestrian, vehicular (buses and cars) and cyclists
- Traffic density
• Restricted visibility due to bus and vehicle congestion
• Multi-campus schools and the management of student movement between campus precincts
• Speeding vehicles in school zones
• Parent behaviour relating to the parking of cars around schools
• Community members ignoring signage around school sites
• Community members exhibiting unsafe behaviour in car parks and streets surrounding school sites

Young children (under the age of 12) are at greatest risk because they:
• Do not understand the dangers of the traffic environment
• Cannot accurately determine the source of a sound or what that sound implies: typically children under 10 do not understand concepts such as speed, distance and safety
• Their bodies are small and drivers often are unable to see them
• Their bodies are fragile and any injuries caused by a moving vehicle are often severe
• Find it hard to stop a movement once they start. They are fast and unpredictable. They can move out of safety and into danger in an instant
• Often focus on one thing at a time and can be easily distracted
• Cannot respond to sudden changes in the traffic environment
• Are dependent. They need an adult but they don’t always want to hold an adult’s hand when near traffic.

Factors contributing to school road safety ‘best practice’ include:
• Speed zone limited to 40km
• Flashing lights upon entry to school zone
• ‘Kiss and drop’ zone in close proximity to school gate
• Separation of pedestrian and bus-interchange zones
• ‘Safe’ parking
• Parental awareness of dangers of ‘unsafe’ parking and fines incurred
• Staff parking zone
• Adequate footpaths
• Road safety programs within the school
• Calming device on road on approach to school*
• Pedestrian crossing (high-volume traffic)*
• Vehicular roundabout at cross-roads*

*The RTA has an eligibility criteria regarding calming devices, crossings, overpasses, roundabouts etc.

The proposed solution would occur in two phases. Phase 1 would aim to be completed in 2013/2014, and Phase 2 would be completed in 2014/2015.

**Phase 1: Funded by Mt St Patrick’s parish/school**
• **Separation of pedestrian and bus zones**
  o Dedicated morning drop off zones for students of primary school /college
  o Dedicated morning bus-interchange zone
  o Dedicated afternoon bus-interchange zone
• **Improved parking**
  o Deterred use of unsafe parking spaces
  o Increased number and access to safe parking spaces
• **Path access from primary school to ‘safe’ parking zone**
  o Extension of path from side of college hall to proposed
  o Information provided to parents on school access routes and times
• **Increased visibility of school zone**
  o Installation of flashing lights at entry of school zone (completed)
• **Parent information**
  o Safety around school (safe and unsafe parking, speeding, unsafe access etc.)
  o Respectful access to premises (access zones, times to access, respect for lessons)

**Phase 2: Funded by Tweed Shire Council**
• **Provision of path access along Mooball Street in 2014/2015**
  o Path access from corner of Mooball Street and Queensland Road to primary school back gate (yet to be installed)
  o Path access from primary school back gate up to existing path outside primary school gate.

**Morning procedure**
• **Bus Drop Off Zone**
  o All bus drop offs on Main Street outside the Church with no car parking between 8.00am and 9.00am Monday to Friday
  o Queensland Road bus bay (if needed)
  o **Kiss and Drop Zones**
  o Mooball Street ‘kiss and drop’ zone from primary school playground gate to gate at back of primary school playground
• **Parking Spaces for Staff**
  o Mooball Street (showground side, parallel parking only – fines apply)
  o Queensland Road (18 spaces)
• **Parking Spaces for Parents**
  o Queensland Road (53 spaces)
• **Pedestrian Access**
  o Path from corner of Mooball Street and Queensland Road to back gate of primary school and side gate of primary school
  o Path from Queensland Road to primary school via college hall
Afternoon Procedure

- **Bus Pick Up Zone**
  - All bus pick ups on Mooball Street outside bus bay

- **Parking Spaces for Parents**
  - Queensland Road (ex bus bay – approx 15 spaces) – 15 minute parking from 3pm
  - Queensland Road (53 spaces)
  - Main Street (approx 15 spaces)

- **Pedestrian Access**
  - Path from corner of Mooball Street and Queensland Road to back gate of primary school and side gate of primary school
  - Path from primary school to Queensland Road via college hall (after 3pm)

Concerns were raised by the college that parents are walking across the play fields, and basketball courts during lessons, and offered use of the vehicular access lane on the high side of the hall. Parents who are walking across the field is also a concern for the primary school also and we believe that the provision of an proper access path would reduce the occurrence of this. The school will write to the college and offer to take responsibility for educating current parents and new parents with the proper access routes and times, and will request that the college support the initiative as it will benefit the entire school community.

**Discussion:**

Q. I have concerns that infants are to be dropped on the low side of the bus interchange in the morning as some children are too young to negotiate their way to the primary school.

A. The bus companies will be contacted regarding drop off no further down Main Street than the pedestrian crossing.

**Action:** Jan Cronly to compose a letter to the college regarding addressing their concerns. Brian Laybutt to contact the bus companies to identify where buses are best to drop off.

**General Business**

**Canteen Food**

Concern was raised about the sugar, salt, fat content of food served in the canteen. It was argued that families should have the right to choose food that is also treat food as a reward for their child, and that the consumption of food from the canteen should not be prescriptive.
It was recommended that perhaps the adoption of a system that colour-codes food in to three categories such as ‘pink’ being treat food, ‘blue’ being sometimes food, and ‘green’ being frequent food to help both parents and children making informed choices.

*Action:* Brian Laybutt to speak with canteen to ensure that all food is within the healthy food range.

**Meeting closed**
Claire Price closed the meeting at 9.10pm