

Summary Report of the Discovery College School Council
Thursday 26 September 2013

Present: Elspeth Shaw, Catriona Tuimaka, Alfred Wong, Ernest Lin, Marcello De Guisa, Vivian Cheung, Kimberly Whiley, Frederic Guiral, Pat Romano, Robert Chaytor, Mark Beach

Apologies: Charles Wong

1. ESF Board Report of 18 June 2013

Accepted as read.

2. Finance & Property

The School Council noted that the predicted deficit for the 2012-13 academic year is expected to be less than budgeted, which is a pleasing result. Some savings were made in the areas of salaries and cost of utilities. Insurance costs, however, were up 33% against a forecast of 10%, as insurance premiums increased dramatically across the board. The waiver of 7 months of lost income from the NBL was covered by using scholarship funds, however, we cannot expect to be able to do that in the future.

The School Council will invite a consultant to the next Council meeting to discuss the current 50-year property maintenance programme.

As per the EDB requirements, the School Council will present an annual NBL income and expenditure report to the DC PTA at their AGM.

The ESF consultants are currently drafting plans for the conversion of three shared areas and one science lab to create five additional classroom spaces, to cover the classrooms that need to be allocated to primary for roll growth. These plans need to be approved by HK Building Department prior to the re-modelling, which is planned for the Christmas holidays.

3. Staff Recruitment, Appointment, Growth and Wellbeing

The Exit Interview results from teachers who left in June 2013 raised no concerns over school practices.

The sub-committee discussed teacher performance tools and practices, and were satisfied at the comprehensive range of strategies used under the ESF Performance Management system.

A further discussion was held over the risks associated with having 9 of the 11 members of the College Leadership Team all with contracts ending on the same date. ESF is aware of this and willing to discuss options should the College find itself with several key staff leaving at the same time.

Catriona Tuimaka was thanked for her time and contribution to the sub-committee and to the School Council in general.

4. Student Learning & Welfare

Frederic Guiral is the new Chair of this sub-committee.

The sub-committee had invited Donna Ellery (VP/PYP Coordinator) to explain the PYP Evaluation Report. The Primary School earned many commendations and was highly commended on the philosophy of the IB and for the support it received from the College Council, as well as student achievement and data collection, resources and planning, and restorative practices implementation. Furthermore, the Primary staff received commendations for achieving well above the standard expected from the *Standards and Practises* as published by the IBO. There were some recommendations, which have been placed into an action plan for the next evaluation visit.

The sub-committee is working to include the pastoral care of students into DC teacher job descriptions and will bring a draft back to the full School Council.

5. Principal's Report

The College is tracking above the expected (and budgeted) student enrolment figures for 2013-14.

Maggie Hinch was announced as the new Parent Representative on the School Council. Jason Edwards was elected unopposed as the new Teacher Rep, and Pat Romano re-elected unopposed as the Support Staff Rep.

Some time was spent discussing the upcoming CIS/WASC visit from 28 October – 1 November, in particular the Part A and Section C reports. School Council members were reminded of their commitment to the visit, namely Charles and Vivian on Monday 28 October at 9am, and the whole School Council on Tuesday 29 October from 1-2pm.

Peter Lasscock explained again the two major reports and went over possible questions that may arise from discussions with the CIS/WASC visiting team.

A draft Terms & Dates for the 2014-15 academic year was presented to the School Council. Some discussion was held over the start and finish dates and what would work best for DC families. The meeting decided to move the calendar dates back by two days i.e. school will start on Wednesday 13 August 2014 and finish on Friday 26 June 2015.

6. DC Finances

A long discussion was held over the financial situation, and in particular the impact of EDB's decision to delay any approval of the proposed school fees for 2013-14. The Council talked at length about how to manage any late decision and what strategies could be employed to cover this. It was felt that the Council should support a waiver of the increase over the months prior to any approval.

Vivian gave a detailed briefing of the planned meeting with the LegCo on 3 October regarding:

- College's current financial position
- The proposed 7.6% increase in school fees for 2013-14
- Extension of DOA/re-financing the DOA
- Scholarship Fund
- Nomination Rights
- Non-refundable Building Levy

The LegCo meeting to be attended by ESF (Belinda Greer CEO, Vivian Cheung CFO, Ann Chan Sr Ex Financial Control), CLT and most School Council members.

7. AOB

The Parent Reps suggested improving the communication with the parents, including posting the School Council meeting summaries on Gateway, rather than the Explorer. A number of other suggestions were tabled and these will be discussed and implemented where appropriate.