Director's Message

A very special welcome and thank you as you begin a new school board year refreshed and inspired to work together with enthusiasm and compassion, supporting your principal and school. Each one of you is appreciated and valued for what you do for Catholic education.

As we live our life in service to the community this year let us be inspired by Mary MacKillop who is to be canonised in October. Sister Therese Carroll, a St Josephite nun has said of Mary MacKillop, “She is a model of human possibility and she worked with what she had available to her and made things happen in a practical, humanly sensitive way.”

The CEOM staff look forward to continuing to support your efforts and I commend the resources and professional development offered to you.

2010 is a significant year for Catholic education with the new Victorian funding agreement in place, Federal funding arrangements under review, and Federal and State elections due. We value your support as we continue to build the future for your children and Catholic schools.

Best wishes for a fulfilling and productive 2010.

Stephen Elder
Director of Catholic Education

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Victorian Catholic School Parent Body


Parent representatives from each diocese and region in Victoria form a Council. The Council seeks your involvement and encourages you to:

- visit the VCSPB website <www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au>
- read the Bulletin, the VCSPB newsletter
- register a VCSPB contact person for your school
- make contact your Council representative.

A vacancy exists for a Council member in the Northern Melbourne region. Nominees must have children attending a Catholic school and be, or have been, on a Catholic school board in the previous three years. Please email <secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au> if you are interested in nominating as a Council member.

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Resources on CEOM website

The following resources are available for your use at <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>:

- School Board documentation, establishment process, guidelines and formation information, and FAQs. See School Boards Page.
- Parent Handbook: booklets, one for primary school parents and one for secondary school parents providing parents with useful summary of what Catholic schools can offer children. See Parents Page.
- Victorian Catholic Schools at a Glance 2009: presents a useful snapshot of statistics related to Catholic schools in Victoria providing a concise and accessible overview of school enrolments, numbers of staff, numbers of schools and details of new and closed schools. See Parents Page.
- Funding principles for Catholic Schools (NCEC December 2009). See Home Page.
2010 seminars and network meetings
The CEOM offers a range of opportunities for members of Catholic school boards to improve their knowledge and skills and enhance their contributions to their children’s school.

Seminar for primary school board members
The CEOM school board seminar program is relevant to new primary school board members as well as boards who have been together for a while. Boards may schedule attendance at one of the seminars in lieu of their usual board meeting. Topics include
- role and function of the school board
- place of the school board in the community
- key attributes of an effective board member
- structure and proceedings of board meetings.

This seminar is held five times a year on 22 March, 21 April, 23 June and 21 July at Simonds Hall, South Yarra; and on 5 May at Ringwood.

Board members interested in attending the seminars should seek their school principal’s assistance to register online on the CEVN website <http://admin.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Meetings of school board chairs
Board chairs may be interested in joining a network. The primary and secondary board chair networks have an ongoing membership of between 12 and 20 members.

Contact your principal or Patricia Palman <ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Seminars for parents
The Parent Seminar Series, which has been operating in the Archdiocese of Melbourne for more than 18 years, is an expression of the partnership that exists between parents, schools and the CEOM to support the education of students in Catholic schools.

The 2010 Series presents the following range of topics at various locations:
- Raising Mighty Boys (Michael Grose)
- Sugar and Spice—Understanding girls (Rhonda Briscoe)
- Emotional Intelligence (Cathy O’Brien, Michelle Miller, Anna Ricciardello)
- Adolescent Issues (Cath Behan)
- Secrets of Raising Well Behaved Kids (Michael Grose)
- Internet Safety—dealing with cyber bullying (Susan McLean)
- Parents and Children sharing the journey (Constance Jenkin, Marika Miles)

See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> Parents page or contact Shirley O’Sullivan on 9464 5225 or email <shirley@stclaresthomastown.catholic.edu.au>.

Building better boards
Networks
In searching for ways to better interact within your community and establish links with other schools in your area, have you considered forming a school board network?

A network can be a forum for sharing ideas and discussing common issues. Each member learns from what other schools are doing, the issues they are facing and the decisions they are making. It is a great way to establish contacts in different schools and obtain varying perspectives on matters concerning the school community. A network may also provide a convenient opportunity for a range of presentations including those by the CEOM.

Reflect and consider
As a school board member what is required of me?
Serving on the board of a Catholic school is a form of Church lay ministry. It is a response to the call to support the local Catholic school community in a particular way. It is also a means for members of the school community to share their skills and talents for the common good.

School board members need to have:
- commitment to Catholic education
- commitment to the ethos of the school
- an understanding of the role of the principal and staff
- willingness to ask questions and seek clarification
- ability to think strategically
- willingness to support the contributions of other board members
- capacity to listen in an active and meaningful way
- willingness to participate and work co-operatively with others
- commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times
- commitment to attend scheduled board meetings and participate on board committees.

Sharing and learning together
What could other boards learn from your board experience? Please forward your contributions to: Patricia Palman <ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.