Director’s Message

The announcement of the bi-partisan commitment in Victoria to link state funding for Catholic schools to 25% of the cost of education in a state school is a historic and joyous result, after years of effort and perseverance for certainty, equity and adequacy of funding to Catholic schools. I take this opportunity to extend to each one of you a heartfelt thank you for your support and efforts in achieving this agreement.

More and more school boards are supporting principals and the school annual action plan by developing and enhancing relationships with parents, parish and community with authentic consultation and collaboration. I thank you for your contribution to Catholic education in Melbourne through our school boards during 2010 and look forward to your continued support in 2011.

With best wishes to you and your loved ones for Christmas and the New Year.

Stephen Elder
Director of Catholic Education

Building better boards

Annual Board Report – a communication tool

The board’s annual report to the Parish Priest/Association of Canonical Administrators, and to the school community is an important communication document prepared by the board executive. It acknowledges the successes, activities and achievements of the board in the current year and indicates the following year’s goals and tasks. It is also an opportunity for the board to reflect on what could have worked better and what may need to be re-worked or let go.

This report may also form part of the requisite School Annual Report published on the school website and the VRQA State Register <http://www.vrqavc.gov.au/StateRegister/Search.aspx/Search?SearchType=0>.

Reflect and consider

When did you last undertake a skills audit?

Boards and committees operate most effectively when their members come with different skills, knowledge, backgrounds and experiences.

A skills audit can be used to identify areas of knowledge or skill that need to be developed within the existing board, through targeted recruitment or co-opting of members onto committees.

Steps:

- list the skills relevant to the role and responsibilities of the board and each committee, including skills that may be required 1-3 years forward with reference to the schools strategy /action plan;
- note the skills and skill levels of current members; analyse the adequacy of each skill level for the board/committee purposes;
- prioritise the skills areas with reference to the schools strategy /action plan;
- determine what action may be appropriate for strengthening the skill profile of the board e.g. professional development for current members, recruitment, co-opting;
- draw up an action list nominating who is responsible for the action and include due dates.
2011 seminars and network meetings

The CEOM will again offer a range of opportunities in 2011 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 30 March, 4 May, and 27 July at Simonds Hall, South Yarra; on 29 June at Belgrave and on 30 August at Keilor East.

See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> School Boards page for details. Board members interested in attending the seminars should seek their school principal’s assistance to register through IPLS on the CEVN website <www.cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>.

Meetings of school board chairs

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

To join, contact Patricia Palman 9267 0228 or <ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Seminars for parents

The Parent Seminar Series is an expression of the partnership that exists between parents, schools and the CEOM to support the education of students in Catholic schools. A range of topics relevant to the parents of students in Catholic primary and secondary schools is presented in various school locations.

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

Useful websites

School boards
Catholic Education Office Melbourne
<www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> School Boards page

Independent Schools Victoria
<www.independentschools.vic.edu.au>

Victorian Council of School Organisations Inc.
<www.edu.org.au>

BoardWorks International
<www.boardworksinternational.com>

Governance & Management
<www.governance.com.au>

Parent engagement

Family School Partnership Bureau
<www.familyschool.org.au>

Council of Catholic School Parents, NSW/ACT
<www.partners4learning.edu.au>

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

May the peace and Joy of Christmas be with you always