



## 59th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF THE MICHAEL OAK SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> Aug 2021 - 6:00 – 8:00pm  
(via Zoom)

### AGENDA

- |     |   |                             |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| 1.  | Welcome, Introduction & Explanation of Proceedings  | Jon Duncan, chair           |
|     | a) Approval of Minutes from 58 <sup>th</sup> AGM    |                             |
|     | b) Trustee Chair's Report                           |                             |
| 2.  | College of Teachers - Report                        | Roy Davids                  |
| 3.  | School Administration - Report                      | George Gabriel              |
| 4.  | Transformation Steering Committee - Report          | Faatimah Mohamed-Luke       |
| 5.  | Financial & Audit Committee - Treasurer's Report    | Wayne De Wet                |
|     | a) Approval of the 2020 Annual Financial Statements |                             |
| 6.  | Remuneration Committee - Report                     | Jon Duncan / George Gabriel |
| 7.  | Risk Committee - Report                             | Claudia McCaig              |
| 8.  | Building Committee - Report                         | Nick Desmond-Smith          |
| 9.  | Parent Forums - Reports                             |                             |
|     | a) Links  | Melisa Smuts                |
|     | b) High School Forum                                | Claudia McCaig              |
| 10. | Q&A   | Jon Duncan                  |
| 11. | Board of Trustee Nominations                        | Jon Duncan                  |
|     | a) Explanation of the Nomination Process            |                             |
|     | b) Election of the Nominees                         |                             |
| 12. | Closing   | Jon Duncan                  |



## Board of Trustees – Chairperson’s Report

*“Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education.” – Rudolf Steiner*

### Dear Members of the Michael Oak Community

I hope this find you and your families well and managing through what can only be described as extra-ordinary times. When we met last year in August 2020, we were six months into the COVID-19 pandemic and wrestling with the many changes that were needed to keep the school functional. Here we are a year later and the extent and duration of the COVID crisis has stretched and challenged our resilience and capacity as a school and broader community. As with any major crisis, COVID has exposed cracks and fault lines, which while challenging, has also provided a healthy moment for us to reflect and refocus our attention. What is comforting to know is that our experience in dealing with COVID is not unique, as the South West Regional Director for Independent School in South Africa, of which Michael Oak is a member, indicated the following in his annual address last month: *“All independent schools have faced internal challenges of trying to run as smoothly as possible on remote learning, a drop in pupil numbers, an increasingly tight budget, higher than ever numbers of staff on sick leave, to name but a few.”*

Michael Oak has had to deal with all of these challenges and more. Nonetheless, through the commitment and tenacity of Teachers, Administrative staff and Parents, we have remained functional and afloat. To all of you a huge heartfelt thank you.

While the day-to-day running of our school is the duty of the College of Teachers, with the support of the Administrative team, it is the duty of the Board of Trustees to care for the longevity of the school. In this regard Michael Oak is deeply indebted to all those parents who serve so selflessly on the Board & Board Sub-committees. Each of these individuals gives freely of their time and expertise and are so often the unsung heroes and heroines, out of the public eye, contributing to the success of our school. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to them for their voluntary service to our community, especially under the very trying conditions of the last year and a half.

What follows is a short summary of the Board activities for the last 12 months. Details concerning the work of the various sub-committees is provided in the separate reports that follow. You will see reports from the College of Teachers, Admin Group, Transformation Steering Committee, Financial and Audit Committee (FinCom), Remuneration and Personnel Committee (RemCom), Risk Committee (RickCom), Building Committee (BuildCom), Parent Forums (Links and HS Forum) and the Nomination Committee (NomCom).

We will be running through these reports during the AGM and taking questions during the Q&A session via Zoom chat, although you are welcome to submit any comments or queries ahead of time to [info@michaeloak.org.za](mailto:info@michaeloak.org.za).

Our agenda for the AGM is fairly standard, and includes the following key items:



- Approve the minutes of the Last AGM;
- Hear from the various Board sub-committee chairs;
- Sign-off the 2020 Finances;
- Nominate the next Board of Trustees; and
- Engage with community related questions

It is not possible to start this year's AGM without first acknowledging Richard Cox who has been a long-standing member of the Board and teacher at Michael Oak. Richard will be retiring this year after many decades of involvement with the school. As a Board we would like to sincerely thank Richard for his dedication, thoughtfulness, and huge amount of heart that he has brought to the work of Board. The Board has asked Tine Bohm to prepare a few words of thanks and acknowledgement for Richard. The College will be organising further "events" to honour Richard at school before the year comes to an end.

## **Board functioning over the past 12 months**

The MO Board currently comprise the following members:

Teacher Trustees (selected by College):

1. Anne-Marie Winkelman – Kindergarten Teacher
2. Richard Cox – High School Teacher (stepped down from the Board in June 2021)
3. Roy Davids – High School Teacher & College Chair
4. Tine Bohm – PPedagogical Support Teacher

Parent Trustees (selected at AGM or by Trustees):

1. Claudia McCaig
2. Faatimah Mohamed-Luke
3. Fiona Grant (joined Board in March 2021)
4. Jon Duncan (chair)
5. Nick Desmond-Smith
6. Wayne De Wet

Board meetings have also included Pam Schneider as the School Business Manager (until April 2021) and more recently George Gabriel, the new School Business Manager (from May 2021).

During the last year the following three Parent Trustees resigned from the Board: Tauhir Jardine, Josie Eastwood and Emma McKinney. We would like to thank each of them for their service to the Board. Similarly, we would like to acknowledge and thank Fiona Grant who graciously accepted the invitation by existing Trustees to join the Board. Fiona joined the Board in March and is serving as the Board secretary.

For those with an interest in the broader Governance structures at the school, the role and function of the Board Sub-committees, the College of Teachers and our Administration, please visit the



school website <https://www.michaeloak.org.za/about/governance>. Please note that some of the documents on the website, are currently under review.

During the period from August 2020 to August 2021, the Board formally met 7 times including one joint visioning exercise with the College of Teachers in February 2021. At each meeting of the Board, a Steiner verse is read, and we light a candle to remind us of the sacred nature our work and the students and community whom we serve. As a Board we have continued our tradition of opening our meetings with a round of appreciation. I am personally thankful to College Board members who continue to deepen the Board's collective learning of Waldorf principles – reminding us to work in both a practical and heartfelt manner - thank you!

At last year's AGM we indicated the following as focus areas for the Board for the 2020 calendar year. Given the impact of COVID throughout 2020 we were unable to make as much progress as we'd hoped – a short summary is provided below:

1. **Revisiting the school vision and updating the Trust Deed** – Long term visioning/ strategy exercise was put on hold for 2020 however remains a priority and our goal is to do this work in-person as soon as we can safely engage with the school community. The Trust Deed work was paused in 2020 and re-ignited in 2021 – more detail on this below.
2. **Improving teacher support and training** – In part we have been able to support this process through the appointment of Tine Bohm as a teacher training support for 2020 with this position being extended into 2021.
3. **Phase 2 of the High School build** – this was been put on hold until such time as we can stabilise finances.
4. **Stepping up the school diversity and inclusion effort** – during 2020 we launched our revised diversity and inclusion position statement. Additionally, a high school diversity group was established with students and moving into 2021 we intended to progress with our long-term project with an external service provider. However, as you are aware, we have had to pause this work – more feedback will be provided in our Transformation report.

Additionally, at last year's AGM questions were asked about what work was being done to strengthen our High School offering. This question was taken to heart and prompted the following actions:

- Exit interviews for leavers were undertaken as basis to understand emergent patterns;
- School wide survey;
- HS visioning workshop + exploration of curriculum choices (including offering semester courses);
- Ongoing engagement with HS Forum;
- Early enrolment and engagement with Class 7 students;
- Development of HS prospectus document;
- Enrolments drive in 4<sup>th</sup> Term (and throughout the year);
- Establishment of HS student diversity forum;
- Exploration of the NZ certificate program;



Further work is underway to consolidate the High School faculty and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the High School faculty Chair. As a Board we are mindful that the needs of the High School are different from the rest of the school and are working to provide the necessary oversight. Further detail is provided in the College report.

## **Matric 2020**

In the midst of a challenging year, the Matric Class of 2020 did Michael Oak proud. They had much to adjust to in the crucial final year, including online learning, masks in the classroom, physical distancing, inability to travel, teachers and people at home with co-morbidities etc. They were unable to have a normal whole school Vaedictory (although it was a beautiful ceremony with their parents), nor a final matric end of year gathering and they had to deal with delayed examinations, and delayed results. Through all of this they coped admirably and their results reflect this.

- Of our 21 matric students who wrote the National Senior Certificate, each and every student achieved a Bachelor pass – which means that they all qualified for application for a Bachelor degree. This is an excellent achievement!
- 7 students attained an A aggregate (an average of 80% or above). Our special congratulations go to:
  - Oliver Hope who is our Dux student, and who attained an aggregate of 88% and 6 subject A's, 4 of which were above 90% including 99% for Mathematics and 97% for Information Technology!
  - Kaylee Friend and Lucy Boswell-Taylor, who each attained an aggregate of 86% and 6 subject A's, including some marks over 90%.
  - Maxine Boltman, Maren Paschke, Oliver Carnegie and Ayanda Raubenheimer who all attained A aggregates and 4 or more subject A's.
- 7 of our students attained B aggregates, 4 attained C aggregates and 3 attained D aggregates.
- 54 subject A's were achieved (this translates to around 37% of the subject results being distinctions), 16 of these were over 90%.

Congratulations again to the Class of 2020 with a special thanks to the teachers and parents!

## **Progress in 2021**

At the end of 2020 the Board resolved to progress with the development of the Oval – a huge thanks to Nick Desmond-Smith and the Building Committee (BuildCom) team for making this happen over the holiday period. The new space is a great addition to the school's facilities and will serve us well for years to come.

As we did last year the Board undertook an anonymous online self-assessment of our own behaviours, collective practices and depth of understanding of the Board mandate and interaction with College. The exercise highlighted the important need for the Board to focus on the long-term vision and strategy of the school, succession planning and accountability. Some of these themes were also surfaced in the joint College of Teachers and Board Workshop held in February. Key projects identified through this process were:



- Strengthening and clarifying leadership roles and responsibilities within College and Faculties.
- Strengthening the school administration function.

Allied to the above is the Board and College commitment to complete the work on modernising the School Trust Deed. In this regard detailed input was gathered from both College and Trustees and consolidated into a single summary document. A Trust Lawyer (Louis van Niekerk, of Dorrington Jessop Incorporated) was subsequently appointed to support us in the re-drafting of the Trust Deed. The goal of this initiative is to revise the Trust Deed to better reflect the relationship between the various stakeholders in the school community (Trustees, College, Administration and Parents). Additionally, the Trust Deed amendments aim to modernise the language so that it better reflects present-day governance expectations and the structure / size of the current school. While we have a goal of better defining the working relationship between the various school stakeholders it is important to understand that the legal structure vests all ultimate decision-making power and responsibility in the Trustees – this cannot be changed in the revision process. Once we have received the revised draft from our lawyer the Board will make it available for community comment and engagement. Once we have incorporated comments and gotten alignment on the changes, the revised Trust Deed will require majority community support at a Special General Meeting (which will require appropriate notice etc). The exact timing on this is not yet known, but ideally, we would like to close this project this year. We will keep the MO Community properly informed of this project as it progresses.

Following a decision made at the Board/ College workshop we set about advertising and looking for a new school Business Manager to take over from Pam Schneider who moves into the role of School Bursar. The Board would like to thank and acknowledge Pam for the important role she has played in the school administration in the past couple of years. After an extensive search and several rounds of interviews the Board and College was pleased to appoint George Gabriel into the role beginning 1 May 2021. George brings a wealth of experience to Michael Oak having worked in a similar role in a Waldorf School in Norway. Coupled with this, George has worked in the fields of youth development, social enterprise management and entrepreneurship. In the short 3,5 months that George has been with us he has stepped up our collective focus on quality and management systems and we see him having a lasting impact on Michael Oak in the years to come.

The Board remains actively engaged with College on functional aspects of the school's leadership roles and responsibilities. We have had rich debates and discussion on accountability, recognition & reward and long-term succession. This work has been actively supported by RemCom and now sits with College who will be bringing forward a first set of proposals regarding these leadership roles – please see the College report for further details about this.

While we had hoped that 2021 would start with a return to normal, we quickly came to accept that the volatility of the previous year would be staying with us. Immediately noticeable was an increase in the volatility of enrolments and withdrawals across the high school, primary school and kindergarten. From a financial perspective, the school finances have been soundly managed over the past 12 months. As you will hear in the FinCom report, the school has been able to avoid cutting salaries and additionally has been able to offer financial assistance to parents impacted by COVID. As it stands the school ended the year in a stable financial position, however we did anticipate that



2021 would be a more difficult year financially. Our budget for 2021 had planned for a slight budget deficit and, as it stands, it looks like this will materialise. As we move into budget planning for 2022, we are acutely aware of the financial risks of a further decline in enrolment and will be planning our fee budget, capital expenses and staff resourcing in an appropriately prudent manner.

Our Risk Committee (RiskCom) has been active through the year supporting the school with managing the challenges of COVID and other emergent risks. A special thanks goes to the school's COVID team who have worked tirelessly to ensure our collective health and safety. This team has worked within the bound of the national guidelines and has sought guidance from ISASA, the Waldorf Federation and an external health and safety specialist (Jo Mostert). A looming risk for all Waldorf Schools in South Africa is the on-going struggle the Waldorf Federation is having with Umalusi, the National body which accredits all independent schools who offer National Senior Certificate. In simple terms, Umalusi accredits school using either CAPS or IEB based curriculums. The Waldorf Federation (and its collegial organisations, such as Montessori Federation), have been in a "fight" with Umalusi for many years over the manner in which "alternative" schooling systems offer their curriculum. That fight is coming to a head and may end up in court. In the meantime, all Waldorf schools are working on submitting their accreditation documentation to Umalusi by 31 October. Additionally, Trustees of MO and other Waldorf Schools in SA have engaged directly with the Waldorf Federation via a Zoom Call last week on this matter.

Throughout the year the parent bodies in the School comprising the Links and High School Forum have continued to meet and support the College and faculties in their work. The minutes of these meeting are shared with the School community and Board and these fora provide a rich and productive space in which to provide feedback. Members of the school community are reminded that we have in place a process for parent who wish to bring a concern to the attention of school – please refresh your understanding of this by reading our policy document located here - <https://www.michaeloak.org.za/policies> . Reports from Links and the HS forum are included in this year's AGM pack.

In closing this year's Board report, I would like to, on behalf of the Board, extend condolences to those families that have suffered loss through COVID. Our thoughts are with you.

To all the teachers, administration staff and parents who give so much of their time and energy to make the school the special place that it is, the Board extends huge thank you. Last but not least, a special acknowledgement to the Michael Oak students who continue to amaze us with their tenacity and resilience.

Jon Duncan, Chair of the Trustees



## College of Teachers - Report

Welcome to the 59<sup>th</sup> AGM of MO and what a pleasure to see so many of our community represented here. This is the College Report for the past year.

The College of Teachers is a formally constituted body of teachers and/or therapists employed at the school whose central task is the care of all our children. I speak here of the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual care of the child. We are “ordinary” teachers who have taken on an extraordinary task and responsibility. The time we spend dealing with the everyday running of the school is not for money, but something we are called to do as part of our vocation. We do this job by involving all the stakeholders: the faculties, parents, admin, support staff and trustees. We do not have a head or leader, but work together as equals. This is fundamental to Michael Oak as a Waldorf school. This does mean that sometimes decisions take longer but we firmly believe that they are made after due deliberation, discussion and with the best intention of keeping the child at the centre. Kathy Abbott has taken a break from College and Christine Blankers has also left. We thank both of them for the work that they did and the time and energy invested into the school at this level. We also want to welcome Christine Goodall as a new member of College. The current College of Teachers is made up of Roy Davids, Tine Bohm, Jeanine Twine, Vincent Message, Anne-Marie Winkelman, Leigh Whitesman, Christine Goodall and George Gabriel (Business Manager).

Our Kindergarten Faculty is currently chaired by Kathy Abbott and has been functioning very well. They are a small cohesive group that has worked hard with tremendous input from parents to continue crafting and thus building a strong class community, so needed in these times. They hosted a successful Open Day in July and are currently involved in the school readiness assessments of the children for Class 1 2022. Mary-G Hauptle, from the Federation of Waldorf Schools, is scheduled to carry out the external teacher reviews in the Kindergarten. The annual intake of students from the CCE will soon be coming to do their practical observations and teaching.

In the Primary School, Leigh Moore holds the chair. In May we held a wonderful Big Beach Walk, organised by the parents of Class 5. Unfortunately, due to this pandemic we have once again had to cancel our live Fair and the parents of Class 6 will instead be holding a virtual Fair that we hope will help make up for the disappointment, whilst bringing an element that is new and exciting. The Primary School has also been involved in our two Virtual Open Days that we had this year. As usual, the Federation Academic Surveys are due to take place at the beginning of September and they are a part of the bigger picture of assessment that we all work with constantly. We have asked Anette Bestwick to carry out our external staff appraisals on behalf of the Federation. The Primary Faculty has continued to work creatively with the considerable challenges that the pandemic has posed on our social and spiritual life, which we aim to celebrate via our festivals.

In the High School, Lester Scharnick is currently the chair of the faculty. The Open Days have brought in new applications, but the numbers are still below where we would like them to be. We have learned that we need to target Faculties individually at these Open Days. We had to cancel all our camps last year which forms such an integral part of high school life. We are hoping that this year we will be able to go on our individual class camps towards the end of the year. We want to mention that the Coming-of-Age camp for our Class 10's have had a name change: it is now called



the Roots, Hearts and Wings Adventure. Our thanks must go to the volunteer parents who are currently away doing this unique and valuable work with our children. Once again, our matric results were amazing despite everything that COVID threw at us. 54 subject distinctions, with Oliver Hope scoring 99% for maths and every single matriculant achieving a Bachelor's Pass. Meetings were held with Karen Brice-Geard (Steiner Education Development Trust) as the High School has been exploring The New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (CSE), which is a regulated and fully accredited secondary qualification in New Zealand. This enables schools to continue with the full Steiner curriculum and approach, even in the final years of secondary education and provides an entrance qualification recognised by certain tertiary institutions around the world. Unfortunately, this has been put on hold until Karen can visit Michael Oak in person.

We welcomed back Christine Goodall from her studies, and she has once again taken up the music post in the school. We said a sad farewell to Winifred Bond last year after teaching craft to our children for so many years. Estelle Geldenhuys left at the end of last year and the High School Faculty gained the services of Lindsay Carter-Bolus, Sarah Ferguson-Brown and Takalani Mulidzi. After decades of running our aftercare in such a wonderful way, Gonda Brincat decided to look for new opportunities and in her place we have Paola Mondati, who is also studying Early Child Development at the CCE.

In May we welcomed George Gabriel into the position of the school's business manager. George is a very good systems person and will be helping College to streamline, update and review our policies amongst the many other duties that he will take on. These duties were previously performed by Pam Schneider to whom we would like to give a very big thank you. Pam will now concentrate solely on the job of the school's Bursar.

This year Tine Bohm became our Pedagogical Support Teacher and has taken on this job with gusto and enthusiasm. She has restarted the Parent Enrichment Program (PEP), has plans to re-introduce the Parent Introduction Program (PIP) and taken on the enrichment and development of Waldorf Education to new teachers in the school. She is a mentor to teachers in the Primary School and has been doing the Kindergarten school readiness assessments for Class 1 of 2022. Tine is currently the coordinator for the peer observations, self-reflections and teacher reviews across all faculties.

In this past year, when we have had so much loss of freedom and restrictions on our movements, we also mourn the passing of so many family members and acquaintances. We think especially of Tata Wilmoht's wife, Julia Mantashe's husband and Lynette's mother.

As a school we had more regular General Staff Meetings at which we had input and workshops on topics like the importance of sleep, staff wellness, responsibility and accountability and an introduction to the Diversity workshops. College spent a lot of time going through and updating many of the mandate groups and faculties looking at their Roles and Responsibilities and Terms of Reference. In particular we have spent a long time getting input from the faculties, looking at how they, under the leadership of the faculty chairs can take on more responsibility for the day to day running of those faculties.



Fiona Grant, one of our trustees, did much hard work helping us plan for the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act. This has a huge influence on how we manage the details and information that accumulates in our school. The removal of our school directory as a case in point. A huge thank you to Fiona for coordinating this mammoth task.

There are so many diverse views and opinions around how we should educate and engage with our children in these trying times. Online and remote learning is foreign and a huge challenge to the way we do things here at Michael Oak. As with many other issues we are learning as we go along. We know how resilient our children are and we hope to match that with a commitment to doing the best we can, despite the circumstances. We ask that you give us your trust and work alongside us to hold the children constantly at the centre.

To everyone who is a part of this community and who often play unseen but vital roles to ensure that we give our children the best education that we can - the admin staff; the maintenance & cleaning staff; our therapists; the security that stands at the gate; you, the parents; and all those who often go unmentioned - we can only do this work because of your support. We thank you.

Michael Oak College of Teachers



## Administration Group - Report

The Admin Group (Group) works closely with the College of Teachers and the Board of Trustees, as well as all of our various committees and working groups, in order to manage the daily operations of the school. Here is a brief summary of our work from the past year, current challenges and plans for the coming year:

### Board of Trustees

- The Group provides support to the Trustees and its sub-committees, providing both direct input (Business Manager sits on all Trustee sub-committees, and the Bursar sits on some) as well as administrative & secretarial support. We have introduced a new method for keeping track of agreed-upon action items in order to facilitate quicker turn-around time when resolving issues. By improving efficiency, it is our intention to improve the experience and lessen the time necessary to be a Trustee.

### College of Teachers

- With the Business Manager as a member of College, and the Bursar currently functioning as minute taker, the Group supports College in all of their information gathering and decision-making processes.

### Links

- The Links serve a vital quality assurance role for the school. As such, the Group has looked at how to support the Links Working Group in the most proactive way possible. It is clear that parents want a more clear, consistent and empathic type of communication from the school. We spend quite a lot of time making sure that messages coming from the Group are imbued with these qualities.

### Umalusi Accreditation Process

- All independent schools in SA are supposed to be accredited by [Umalusi](#). All Waldorf schools must still submit their initial evaluation documentation by 31 October. It is a lot of work, but also very worthwhile as it will demand that we have a robust quality system in place.

### Enrolments

- At present we have 402 children in the school which is more than 20 less than we have budgeted for. Our current estimate is that we will end the year with 405.
- The entire enrolment process is currently under review as we are looking at ways to streamline the process while also providing even more positive engagement for families considering enrolling their children at our school.

### PR, Marketing, Events and Fundraising

- A detailed PR & Marketing Plan which sets concrete goals for the various marketing initiatives will be ready by the end of the month and presented to College and Trustees for their feedback and support. The Waldorf Way: There has never been a better time to highlight the



value of a Waldorf education. The key to success is showing the value of our community in ways that have not been done before.

- With the pandemic still raging, our events and fundraising have been severely curtailed. There is a need to reinvigorate the parent body and plans are in place for a parent engagement survey to help us explore new options.
- A detailed site map has been created for a new website. One quote has been received, and two more are in the pipeline. Expected completion date: end 2021.
- Charles continues to do an amazing job providing us with a rich and varied Leaflet every week. A draft plan has been created focused on streamlining the publishing process and increasing readership, of which the new online newsletter format is one component.

## Health and Safety

- Managing daily operations at a school during a pandemic is a major challenge. Besides taking many hours away from our weekly workload, more importantly it creates a level of insecurity as we are being asked to make decisions with issues that the school community has a very broad array of opinions about. We have done our best to learn as quickly as we can during this current wave, and have now drafted a set of detailed protocols that we hope will make most parents feel secure in our decisions.
- I want to thank the former members and current members of our COVID Team: Pam Schneider, Vincent Message, Holly Armstrong, Kathy Abbott, Takalani Mulidzi, and the school's health and safety consultant, Jo Mostert.

## Bursaries & Fee Assistance

- The Fee Assistance group is continuing the good work that was done by Marion Penfold raising funds directly from Germany through the Freunde and IHF associations. 5 children were assisted with school fees from these funds and a further 19 learners had assistance with therapy from the Ohlthaver Trust as well. In addition, the school assisted 18 children during the past year with fee assistance and 4 children from the Nikiwe Fund. During the pandemic the school has assisted 15 parents with fee breaks or fee assistance where possible.
- There is a need to devise new ways to increase our fundraising efforts, and this will be a focus for the Group in the year to come.

## Accounts – school fees

- The outstanding accounts increased since last year due to parents having difficulty paying their fees because of loss of income due to the pandemic. New processes have been put in place for accounts and debt collection. The accounts office would like to thank parents for bearing with us during the challenges faced during the changeover of the debtors' system.

## Facilities & Maintenance

- We have started a new online system for keeping track of requested maintenance issues, which has been a big improvement. It has also shown us that there are too many maintenance projects needing attention and too small of a budget to attend to them in a timely manner. It is for this reason that we intend to develop a medium- to long- term holistic plan for our Buildings, Grounds & infrastructure. The plan will be produced in a consultative process with our entire community.



## IT & Information management

- Ed-Admin school admin platform: Training took place that gave our admin team more insight into what the system provides. A presentation was done for HS Faculty to show them the assessment & reporting functionality and a working group has been formed, which intends to trial it this year, for a full launch in 2022. Ed-Admin also has an app for parents that provides a better platform for communicating and interacting with parents than the current use of SMS and e-mail. This will be explored further, with an intended launch next year if the app proves its value.
- Infrastructure & Tech Support: There is currently no coherent list of needs and requirements, nor a plan in place for development. This is a problem that needs to be addressed and is related to being a school culture that doesn't have a clear relationship with technology. In addition, we need dedicated tech support. This is an area that will require parental support.
- POPIA: Slow and steady implementation underway in order to meet our legal requirements.

## Personnel

- The Group, with support from Trustees, continues to explore new ways to structure the administrative functions to best serve the needs of the school. This includes a very detailed look at administrative responsibilities throughout all the faculties, as well as a review of all of our current job descriptions.
- The Support Team has faced severe stress because of the transport situation this past month. Extra leave days have been provided, as well as flexi-time. A backup plan is being drawn up so that we are prepared for future occurrences.
- A new Employment Equity Plan is under development, and we intend to integrate it with the Transformation Journey so that we have both meaningful dialogue that build bridges, while also providing tangible change in the form of increased training, mobility and inclusivity.

## A note of Thanks!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank:

- Our Admin Team: Pam, Kirstie, Faiza, Lynn, Claire & Charles
- Our Facilities & Maintenance Team: Rob, Chris, Ivan, Chatama, Wilmoht, Julia, Sarah, Edorine, Cecilene, Zanele and Nelly... as well as Justice who works for Princeton at our main gate.
- Our Teachers and other staff who support the administrative side of our school... from taking temperatures at the gate, to organising substitute teachers... to making sure our windows and doors are closed when the day is done.
- And to all the Parents who give so much of your time on our various committees or via all the other small and large ways that you make our community the special place that it is.

We are living proof that it "takes a village to raise a child". Thank you one and all!

George Gabriel, Business Manager



## **Transformation Steering Committee - Report**

### **Introduction**

This report captures some of the detail of the MO Transformation Journey for the past 12 months and builds on the work done to update the Diversity and Inclusion statement published in 2020. The Board established a Transformation Steering committee to guide this work recognising that the school needed to go through a deep collective learning journey on this topic. We had envisaged that the output of this journey would inform the appropriate set up, naming and functioning of a formally constituted Board SET (Social, Ethics & Transformation) / Diversity subcommittee. As it stands the Transformation Steering committee has been leading the work and reporting on its progress to the Board on a regular basis as well as engaging directly with College and communicating with the School community via the Leaflet. Over the course of the last year, the Committee secured a budget from the Board to work with an outside consultancy that specializes in this work. The Committee undertook a process of meeting with and selecting a service provider and over several weeks and rounds of engagement was able to develop the detail of our Transformation Journey. Allied to this, members of the Committee has engaged with High School students through the course of the year to support on-going dialogue on diversity and inclusion issues.

As a team we are saddened by the delays brought about by COVID, however we remain committed to this journey.

### **Transformation Steering Committee**

- The Transformation Steering Committee is comprised of :
  - 2 Trustees - Jon Duncan and Faatimah Mohamed-Luke
  - 1 College Member - Roy Davids
  - 1 High School Faculty member - Rob McLeod
  - School Social Worker & Counsellor - Tasneem Jacobs
  - School Business Manager - George Gabriel
- This committee is responsible for facilitating the rollout of this project guided by our chosen service provider, Shikaya (more information below), and the needs of MO, made up of 12 workshops over a period of 6 months.
- A member of this committee continues to meet with the HS Student Transformation Group every second week.
- The Committee continues to update the broader school community in the Leaflet, and will continue to share relevant content on a regular basis.

### **Transformation Journey Facilitators**

- We have chosen to work with Shikaya, who are experienced facilitators and have helped develop inclusive and engaging classrooms and schools. Since 2016, Dylan Wray and Roy Hellenberg, have worked with thousands of educators across South Africa and created workshops based on the needs of individual schools and the learnings from every workshop. Our journey will therefore evolve, as we learn more about ourselves and what we require. To learn more about our facilitators, go to [www.shikaya.org](http://www.shikaya.org) and [www.aschoolwhereibelong.com](http://www.aschoolwhereibelong.com)



## The purpose of the MO Transformation Journey

- To listen to the experiences of students, teachers and staff within the MO community.
- To revive the school's commitment to diversity, equity and antiracism.
- To align our lived experiences within the school grounds to our MO Equity Statement.
- To inform inclusivity practices through our curriculum, school policies and community life.

## Transformation Journey Description

- Initial 'Reflect Action' Workshop which includes all adults that have a formal working relationship with the school, i.e., teachers, school staff, trustees, links, parents involved in sub-committees, and any other volunteers. This 6-hour workshop is interactive and will focus on identity, discrimination and belonging.
- 2 weeks following this workshop, the same group will participate in a 2-hour follow up workshop where we will feedback and reflect of our learning, and include work on unconscious bias.
- Our journey then splits into 3 streams of focus. These streams are aimed at individual segments within the school which influence the holistic MO community. All 3 streams of learning will run simultaneously.
  - Stream 1: Going Deeper in the Classroom
  - These workshops will be undertaken by all teachers, over 3 workshops and additional reflection sessions. The focus of the workshops will include Race History, Impacts of Race today with Case Studies and individual Reflections.
  - Stream 2: Frank Conversations
  - These workshops will be for College of Teachers and Board of Trustees, over 3 workshops. The focus of these workshops will include leadership within transformation, school policies, progress and implementation.
  - Stream 3: Listening, Learning and Leading
  - For this stream a group of parents, students and volunteers will be trained by our facilitators, to create our MO Listening, Learning and Leading Team. This team will undertake a 6-hour training workshop which will include Identity, Discrimination, Belonging, Listening through Dialogue and Appreciative Inquiry. This team will then go into the school community to create listening circles. The information gathered through these conversations will help the school understand where we are now and where attention is required.

## Transformation Journey Postponement

- Scheduling of workshops have been hampered by unpredictable COVID waves and constantly changing lockdown regulations and school restrictions.
- 25 May - College of Teachers, Trustees and Shikaya confirmed 13 July 2021 as the date to initiate the MO Transformation Journey and participate in our 'Reflect Action' workshop.
- 7 June - A request to participate in this workshop was sent to parents who have a formal working relationship with MO i.e. Trustees, Links and Sub-Committee Members.
- A full page explanation of the upcoming Transformation Journey was included in the Leaflet in the first week of June to inform the broader MO community and invite any parent volunteers.



- 15 June - The President announced adjusted level 3 restrictions, which prohibited gatherings of more than 50 people. The Transformation Committee worked with Shikaya to decentralize this initial workshop and split the 80 participants into 2 groups. This would allow us to start our Transformation Journey as intended, and comply with the updated restrictions.
- 27 June - The President announced adjusted level 4 restrictions, which specifically prohibit any gatherings and enforced school closures in addition. The Minister of Education held a briefing the following week extending school closures. Under these regulations, we had no choice but to postpone the workshop planned for 13 July.

### **Further Challenges**

- 26 July - We were notified that Roy Hellenberg, co-facilitator with Shikaya, had passed away.

### **Action Plans**

- College of Teachers and Trustees will work with Shikaya to begin workshops in January 2022. We are hopeful that with a larger collective immunity, we will be able to participate in safety.
- While we currently have no functioning SET/Diversity subcommittee, we are optimistic that during the various workshops we will find individuals who are knowledgeable and passionate about the intersectionality of our school's needs. We are encouraging like-minded parents to join the Listening, Learning and Leading Team so that they are able to participate in the workshops and gain insight and the skills required. From this process, we hope to then create a subcommittee that is diverse, effective and has longevity.

Faatimah Mohamed-Luke, Transformation Steering Committee member



## Financial & Audit Committee (FinCom) – Treasurer’s Report

### MEMBERS

Wayne De Wet	Chairperson
Nikki Pallini	Parent member
Fiona Grant	Parent Trustee
George Gabriel – School Business Manager	Invitee
Pam Schneider – Bursar	Invitee
Kirstie Barrett – Bookkeeper – Debtors	Invitee

I would like to thank the Admin and Teaching staff for all the work and additional effort put in over the past year, for battling through a very challenging period for all, brought about not only by the COVID-19 pandemic but the related regulations and lockdown levels in place. There have been quite a few changes and challenges which affects the way in which we operate and go about our business and through sheer dedication and perseverance by all we are able to manage the situation as best we can.

All within the school community continue to be impacted by the pandemic, in one way or another, which in turn has placed the sustainability of operations at risk due to the economic and financial consequences brought about through the regulations. The Board of Trustees, College of Teachers, Finance Committee (FinCom), all other Board sub-committees continue to manage the process to ensure that the risk to the school and the community is managed and mitigated as far as possible.

The finance team continue to manage costs to ensure we only spend that which has been budgeted for and is required to deliver the required service to students and to maintain the school. The decision last year that only critical vacancies would be filled remains in place, and High School phase 2 development is still on hold.

The school has navigated another challenging year mainly thanks to the ongoing support received from the school community, which includes the timely payment of school fees. This has ensured that the worst-case scenario was not reached whereby the school used all its reserve cash resources to keep its doors open. For this we all thank you.

### FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2021

This financial year has been one for the ages. A difficult year at the best of times, with the entire period impacted by the pandemic and the related regulations.

The Trust achieved tuition income of R24.7m, R80k below last year. This reflects the lower student numbers due to the pandemic. Tuition costs were at R19.0m, down by R52k, mainly due to no bonuses being paid to staff. The costs include an additional R1.0m provision for bad debts at the end of 2021 given the number of accounts in distress, with all other cost items below that of last year. Various fee assistance approvals were granted during the initial lockdown period, which totaled R 233 767. These were deducted from the school fee income reported.



Admin expenses have reduced due to lower costs incurred during the lockdowns and savings implemented. There is an additional item relating to costs incurred for the return to school after the lockdowns. These costs were classified as COVID-19 expenditure to keep these separate from the normal costs. A total of R123,578 was spent during the year. This was funded through savings on the budget. Other costs were well managed and even reduced on last year.

Our interest paid on the bonds were significantly down on last year, due to reduction in interest rates. That was also the reason for the lower interest received on funds invested. As communicated at last year's AGM, to preserve cash flow the school chose to take up the 3-month payment holiday on the bond repayments with the bank.

The Trust achieved a net surplus of R1,230,443 for the year, but this includes the accounting treatment of the Building Levy collected monthly to repay the mortgage bonds. This is allocated to the Development Fund and is not really regarded as part of the operating surplus. Therefore, the net surplus for the year is actually R4,590. The budgeted surplus for the 12 months was R128,175.

The cash reserves have increased slightly from last year by R184k, due mainly to the reduction in costs and the postponing of large projects.

Debtors have increased by almost R0.5m even after taking a bad debt provision of R1.0m into account at year end.

Spend on assets were related to the Oval and the purchase of furniture required for the return to school to ensure social distancing.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- a) Approve the financial statements for the year-ended 28 February 2021.
- b) Re-appointment of Meridian as our auditors for the 2021/22 financial year.

## **Additional points for sharing at AGM**

### *Forecast to December 2021*

The school has managed the financial situation fairly well during the last 18 months of the pandemic, as can be seen from the financial statements presented here, which essentially covers all 12 months of the financial year.

We must thank the MO community for continuing to support the school through the payment of school fees, which allows the staff to deliver the curriculum to students. We have had a few students that have left the school for various reasons during the last few months, so at the end of June 2021 fees were down 8% on budget and is forecast to remain the case for the full period. This is due to the lower student numbers.

Expenditure has been reviewed and only critical and required costs are incurred with the remainder either deferred or frozen. As it is now a way of life, COVID-19 related costs are included in the



budget. The spend on independent contractors are forecast higher due to additional support required for split classes to ensure social distancing.

It is forecast that the school will incur a loss for the year of around R100k, as was budgeted for the year.

### ***2022 Budget preparation***

At present FinCom, with the assistance of the Remuneration Committee and College, are compiling the budget for the 2022 school year and the below items are currently being considered:

- a) Further impact of the COVID-19 regulations on the economy which has a direct impact on the school and the school community.
- b) The forecast cash flow and financial position of the school for the remainder of 2021.
- c) 2022 expected student enrolments.
- d) Collection rate of fees billed and possible bad debt provisions.
- e) Staff requirements for teaching, admin and general staff.
- f) Requirements for contract staff in 2022 relating to assistants, sport, music. etc.
- g) Additional costs required should distance learning again be required.
- h) Replacement program of equipment and other assets.
- i) Possible resumption of major capital expenditure for projects, including High School Phase 2.

Wayne De Wet, FinCom chair



## Remuneration & Personnel Committee (RemCom) - Report

### Introduction

The Role of RemCom is to provide input on the development of appropriate and relevant policies and procedures to ensure compliance with labour laws as well as fairness and consistency in how it is applied at Michael Oak. The committee operates as an overseer and make recommendations to the Trustees and College. The day-to-day functions of human resource management remain the responsibility of College and the Business Manager.

Over the course of the year, the Committee met 5 times and has comprised the following members:

- Tauhir Jardine (Chair - Parent Trustee member until March 2021)
- Jon Duncan (Parent Trustee)
- Fiona Grant (Parent Trustee and FinCom)
- Richard Cox (College of Teachers until June 2021)
- Pam Schneider (Business Manager until May 2021, then Bursar)
- Anne-Marie Winkelman (College of Teachers)
- George Gabriel (New Business Manager from May 2021)

### Recruitment, succession planning, and roles & responsibilities are our main focus:

- Since the last AGM, Michael Oak has welcomed a number of new staff members to the Michael Oak community – detail on new appointments is provided in the College Report.
- Towards the end of 2020 the Committee undertook an analysis to assess the age profile of staff across full and part-time contracts, as well as by faculty. The work highlighted the importance of the school maintaining institutional knowledge with older, more experienced staff as well as the need and importance of employing younger staff to support renewal and growth. Over the next 2 to 3 years there will be a range of staff reaching retirement age and planning around this will be important, as such this will remain a focus for the Committee for the year ahead.
- The Committee reviewed the annual ISASA salary survey to ensure Michael Oak remains competitive as a place of employment so that we can attract the right staff. The Committee has had ongoing and productive discussions with the College of Teachers related to leadership roles and responsibilities. We see this work as critical in terms of ensuring that the right structures are in place to ensure the school is able to attract appropriate staff as well as to ensure functional excellence. Supporting this is a project that the Committee initiated to look at the time allocation by staff across the school, which will conclude as we move into planning and resourcing for 2022.
- Over the course of the year the Committee has supported the school on a range of HR matters including assessing low cost medical aid options and clarifying our approach to recognition and reward.

The Committee is in the process of reviewing its Terms of Reference and aims to update them to better reflect the scope of the committee's work in respect all Human Resource matters.

Jon Duncan, acting Chair



## Risk Committee (RiskCom) - Report

Riskcom has had a change of members during the last 12 months but continues to be well supported by the school community as it carries out its challenging mandate.

- Josie Eastwood, Parent Trustee (served as Chair for several years until May 2021)
- Emma McKinney, Parent Trustee (served as a member until April 2021)
- Jon Duncan, Parent Trustee (acting Chair since May 2021)
- Claudia McCaig, Parent Trustee (since November 2020)
- Andrew Ball, Parent member
- Pam Schneider, former Business Manager, now Bursar
- George Gabriel, Business Manager (since May 2021)

Riskcom has met 4 times since the last AGM and we continue to convene online like almost all other meetings within the school community.

The mandate of the Committee is to look for risks and how those potential risks are being managed. In other words, to highlight the possibility of things going wrong, and most importantly what can be done about it. It's an awkward mandate. RiskCom is not a decision-making body and rather has an oversight role – keeping the Board of Trustees informed about relevant risks and making recommendations about the appropriate management of that risk – in conjunction with other sub-committees of the Board and the School Administration. RiskCom's focus is ensuring that appropriate processes and procedures are in place and that there are checks and balances to ensure that these are being followed.

Often the matters that come to RiskCom involve legal or reputational risks for the school or members of the school community and as such, they need to be treated confidentially and with sensitivity. Over the past year RiskCom has welcomed the input and outreach from the Board of Trustees, College of Teachers and the School Administration that has enabled us to play a constructive role in supporting the school to manage risk. With the COVID-19 pandemic, this has included providing advice, support and recommendations to the Board, College, and COVID Team on a range of issues and challenges relating to how the school is dealing with running an educational institution during a pandemic. Issues addressed include communications with the school community and managing expectations; insurance and the content of the school SOPs and COVID protocols.

Since the last AGM RiskCom has continued to progress several key projects:

- Provided support to the ongoing process of making amendments to the school's Trust Deed. Advice and recommendations around the proposed changes and the resultant impacts on the school governance structures have been provided to the Trustees as a part of an extensive consultation process that has included the school taking legal advice. This project is now with the Board which will continue the consultation process with the broader school community, including circulating a revised draft for ratification at a special general meeting.
- The Risk Register is a major project that had been delayed by time pressures due to involvement in COVID-19 related issues. RiskCom has continued to build out the Register



and ensure that the diverse range of Risks facing the school are being appropriately identified and that measures are in place to manage that risk. The efforts currently underway by the School to review and update policies and procedures as part of the Umalusi accreditation process is also supporting this development of the Risk Register. In the coming months, RiskCom will undertake a program of consultation with other sub-committees of the Board, College and other relevant stakeholders for review and further input into the Register.

- Riskcom has also raised concerns and made a number of recommendations for action to the Board of Trustees on the risk of losing learners across all faculties - especially in the upper years of High School - and the resultant impact on the school's financial position. These recommendations primarily relate to the need for transparency and effective communications to the entire school community on the actions being undertaken by the Board, College and the Faculty to address these risks.
- Other focus areas for the past year include providing input and recommendations on various legal issues; supporting the school in the implementation of the POPI Act and on a range of other issues such as school security and insurance cover.

RiskCom and other bodies within the school governance structure are only able to function and thrive due to the willingness and hard work of parents, teachers and other members of the school community. We have continued to benefit from such support over the past year. In particular, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Josie Eastwood for her efforts in Chairing RiskCom for a number of years when the school has faced serious challenges. Chairing Riskcom was only one of Josie's many responsibilities as a member of the Board of Trustees as she was co-opted into undertaking a variety of different roles and supporting the school wherever and whenever her skills and experience would be of benefit. We commend her for efforts and the significant impact she has had on the good governance of the school.

Andrew Ball, RiskCom member



## Building & Grounds Committee (BuildCom) - Report

Thank you Jon, and good evening. I'm Nick Desmond-Smith, present Chair of the Building & Grounds Committee (BuildCom).

### I'm currently joined on the Committee by:

- Jacobus Malan, Parent member
- Vincent Message, College member
- Robin Howe, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor
- George Gabriel, Business Manager

### Changes to the committee in the past year:

- George took over from Pam Schneider
- Parent Simon Tippet resigned
- Fellow parent Trustee Claudia McCaig joined for 2 of the 4 formal meetings

Thank you Jacobus, Vincent, Rob and George for your work this past year, to Simon for your valuable input over the years, to Claudia and to parent Trustee Josie Eastwood for your initiative of a facilitated workshop for the Support Staff. Thank you Pam for all the work you have done and continue to do for BuildCom, it is much appreciated.

### Accomplishments in the past year:

- **Oval surface** - The surface is seeing daily use with the positives outweighing some of the aesthetic reservations.
- **Support Staff workshop** – 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Led by parent Trustee Josie Eastwood with Keriesa Botha assisted by Masixole Njumbuxa, an isiXhosa interpreter. Valuable insights were gained using the “WISER” communication strategy which will impact positively on the work experience of the Support Team.
- **12 Sheerness Road** - Consent use application approved with conditions imposed by Council.
- **Other work highlights:**
  - 12 Sheerness road carriageway and extensive roof repair
  - Class 6 & 7 floors
  - Woodwork room roof, waterproofing and painting
  - Big Hall fascia's, painting and waterproofing
  - Storeroom roof replacement
  - Upstairs meeting room “open-planned”
  - Security system upgrades, and fencing erected between high school garden and railway line
  - Turf planted along west side of Oval
  - Evaluation of our ground water resources and irrigation systems has been undertaken by parent Joubert Thorold (with appreciation)
  - Refurbishment of entrance to Kindergarten from Gibson Road



## Challenges presently faced:

- A great amount of effort and dedication has been shown by the Facilities and Maintenance team in meeting COVID-19 safety protocols this past year.
- The R 5 Million High School Phase II project has been placed on hold indefinitely due to the financial prudence shown by our Finance Committee.
- The consent use application for 12 Sheerness Road was drawn out, but we recently received approval with conditions from Council.
- Paving work surrounding the bottom north east side of the Oval has been on hold due to objections to more hard surfaces. We shall gather input from different parts of our school community for workable alternatives.

## Actions planned for the year ahead

- **Assist the Business Manager's** initiative relating to the upkeep of the school buildings and the longer term planning for meeting the accommodation requirements of the faculties.
- **12 Sheerness Road** plans submission and the implementation of services as per the City's conditions for subdivision and use as a place of instruction.
- **Take the input provided by the faculties and launch priority project/s.**

## Word of gratitude

Thank you, George, for the new management systems you are implementing. My sincere gratitude to the Maintenance Team Rob, Chris, Ivan and Chatama and Wilmoht; to the Support Team Julia, Sarah, Edorine, Cecilene, Zanele and Nelly – the dedication and commitment you have shown this past year is highly valued – thank you!

Nick Desmond-Smith, BuildCom chair



## Parents: Links - Report

Links are volunteer parents who give of their time in different roles to support communication, co-ordination and engagement between parents and school. There are usually at least two but up to five links per class from Playgroup to Class 7. These are: class communication links, food links (for school events and catering), craft links (for the Fair) and meetings links. Thank you to all the links who have volunteered their time over the past year!

Meeting Links Committee Composition:

Class representatives:

- Ayesha Ebrahim (PG), Andrea Bernatzeder (KG1), Lindy Briginshaw (KG2), Laura Fernandez Gavira (KG3 & Class 4), Francois Finlay (Class 1), Faatiema Salie (Class 2), Tereza Whittaker (Class 3), Faatime Ebrahim-Abbas (Class 5), Cecile Blake Benade (Class 6), Ilse Menck (Class 7), Melisa Smuts (Chair).

School representatives:

- Vincent Message (College & Covid team), Kathy Abbott (Kindergarten), George Gabriel (Business Manager), Andre van Blerk (Primary School Faculty)

The Links chair is predominantly responsible for managing the links meetings and ensuring communication between the relevant parties is well represented in the minutes. The Links meeting is a forum for open dialogue of issues/ comments/ queries raised by the parent body, presented by their respective class "meetings link", in discussion with school representatives from College, Kindergarten and Primary Faculties, administration and sport (when necessary). This is not a decision making body but a place for concerns to be raised and discussion to take place. Any items that cannot be resolved at the meeting are taken to their appropriate decision making bodies in the school e.g. College of teachers, Faculties, Boards and Committees etc. A Links working group then co-ordinates this feedback and it is shared with the parent body via the rolling minutes document. Meetings happen once a term and if necessary twice in the third term.

We have been working on streamlining both the meetings and the speed with which responses are given and shared with the School Community.

A key theme at the Links meetings is to ensure that good communication happens between parents and School, with an emphasis on both sides being well represented. It is imperative that at least one parent per household reads the Links minutes in order to be aware of discussions and actions happening in the School as a result of these meetings.

### **Below are some of the issues raised and addressed in the past year:**

- KG temporary entrance on Gibson was considered unsafe so it has been shifted back to the Main entrance on Marlow to see if that will work.
- Parent Enrichment Programme (PEP): Links have asked for a survey to facilitate good engagement between School and the Parent Body, this has been done.
- Links have asked about Academic Assessments, and School has responded by dedicating a PEP to this topic.



- Links have requested more info on the remedial team which has been shared in the Leaflet.
- Links have asked for holiday clubs; so far one was run successfully in Dec 2020 and School is investigating the possibility of having holiday clubs more regularly.
- Links requested for School to continue supporting the Santa Shoebox project. Last year it was quite late but still had participation. This year some of the Links have stepped forward to support the school with this initiative.
- Links have raised concerns and queries regarding the COVID protocols. A revised protocol is being drafted.

Please read the minutes sent out each term after the meeting for more details and to assist in creating a cohesive, informed and engaged school environment.

Melisa Smuts, Links Chair



## Parents: High School Forum - Report

- Chairperson: Claudia McCaig (2018-current)
- Secretary: Annabel Ryder (2018-June 2021)
- High School Representatives: Derina Wille (2017-current) and two rotating Teachers
- High School Secretary: Claire Walters (2019-current)

The High School Forum (HSF) was started in 2014 in response to the expansion of the High School. We are not a decision-making body, yet all our meetings have an Agenda and Minutes get sent to the parent body after each meeting. Please read the minutes to keep informed and engaged in the school environment. The Forum is a good bridge between parents, teachers and our children. We meet / Zoom once a term on a Tuesday evening for a couple of hours to check-in, raise concerns, and discuss current issues and upcoming events.

You can find our **Terms of Reference** for the HSF on the Michael Oak website (<http://www.michaeloak.org.za/policies>). This is an extract from this document:

### Composition.

The High School Forum are volunteer parents preferably from each High School class 8-12 inclusive. The HS Forum is an open forum and every High School parent who wishes to attend the High School Forum is encouraged to attend.

### Role

The role of the HS Forum is to provide a discussion space for HS parents on High School matters that are not learner-, teacher-, or parent-specific; and to assist and support the HS Faculty with the smooth running and development of the High School. The Forum also wishes to facilitate a deeper understanding of the methods and approach of a Waldorf High School

Key Projects and Issues raised and dealt with this past year:

- **HS Prospectus** - With the work and support of Annabel Ryder, this project is complete. We have an informative and beautiful digital brochure on our High School offering.
- **New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZ CSE)** - This certificate provides full recognition of Waldorf after classes 10-11-12 and is internationally recognized in 35 countries for Tertiary admissions. The school has had correspondence and meetings with Karen Brice-Geard, Educational Director of Steiner Education Development Trust. As soon as she can, she will travel to Michael Oak to conduct a mandatory assessment of the school so we can move forward implementing this accreditation process.
- **Representation of HS Teachers on College. *Are there enough HS teachers in College?*** There aren't, but the HS Faculty is talking about it and hoping there will be volunteers in the near future.
- **Loss of learners in upper HS. *What is being done? Questions from AGM 2020?*** - The Faculty has had two visioning workshops and many discussions around this. One of the solutions was to try to engage students, so new semester classes were tried in the first term, but these were not as successful as they had hoped. It was also said that it is important to



remember that MO is a Waldorf school and follows the Waldorf curriculum and is guided by the Waldorf Federation. They are not prepared to drop core subjects such as Eurythmy or shorten, or water down the 12 year Waldorf curriculum. The 13th year is currently a must in order to enable our Matrics to complete their NSC.

- **Main Lessons & Main Lesson Books. *Is there a consensus of what is expected & content?*** - The HS Faculty is in the process of standardizing Main Lessons and Main Lesson Books and tweaking information.
- **High School Management. *Who has oversight/manages the HS? Where does accountability for students or teachers sit? Teacher Performance?*** - This conversation was carried over our last two meetings. There was a strong desire to understand how decisions are made? How some issues have been in the high school since 2014 with no resolution? Concerns around lack of accountability. Children falling through the cracks academically. These concerns and questions have all been taken seriously. There is going to be an open workshop on 22 November 2021 with the HS Faculty and parents to work through and address these issues. For the first time in the High School, the Waldorf Federation has been invited to help with the teacher's performance reviews which are normally only done internally.

These are just some of the issues we have discussed this year. We also acknowledge the huge amount of effort and hard work that goes into teaching and holding our children especially in this turbulent time we find ourselves in. The high school offers a rich and full curriculum, the cup is definitely more than half full!

I warmly invite you to come to these meetings! And I strongly encourage you. It is only through open, honest and respectful discussions that we can continue to support our teachers and children.

Claudia McCaig, HS Forum chair