

Survey results summary – presented at the 25 June 2019 meeting

Membership

40 people replied – 20 members and 20 non-members

Meeting attendance

17 normally attend 1-3 meetings per year. 16 have not attended any.

Why did you join the P&C?

Of the 29 responses, the majority refer to wanting to contribute, collaborate and get involved as well as gain understanding and insight as to what is happening at the school and within the P&C. Other answered referred to not being a current member.

If you are not currently a member, is there a particular reason why you are not interested in joining? What would encourage you to join?

39 responded to this question. Several did mark this as NA as some are current members.

The majority listed other family/work/community commitments and lack of spare time as the main reason for not joining the P&C. Other reasons which were each mentioned 3 times or less were:

- Didn't know enough about the school or P&C to contribute
- Bullying/aggressive behaviour at past meeting
- Meeting date/time clashes/during dinner time
- Length of meetings
- More reminders and invites would have helped
- Offer a cup of tea/make meetings more inviting
- Halloween
- Not an efficient or effective group
- Partner attends
- Do things other than fundraising (e.g. invite someone from Teacher's Fed to discuss educational issues in the system and implications to the school)
- More accountable and conciliatory process from the school leadership

What do you think the role of the P&C should be?

The majority of responses related to the following:

- Be a voice for parents, not just members
- Communication and cooperation with the school
- Raise issues from parents and stay up to date with what's happening at the school
- Support the school, their goals and help solve problems
- Grow and support a strong school community – events that bring families together
- Fundraising to provide resources and other community events

Other areas which were mentioned 3 or less times include:

- Fostering of community interest in educational matters
- Questioning school leadership where appropriate on Decisions/directions hold school exec more accountable and to accurately provide full information
- Directing fund in order of priority
- WestConnex communication and action

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- The role of the P&C should be to raise money. A better role would be to build a community and provide social support for families that are less advantaged. It should also be to stand up for free education. The P&C should oppose both the payment of student fees and charity work, which both lead to user-pays education.

Do you think the P&C is fulfilling its duties?

Around half of participants answered this questions. The majority was supportive and indicated that the P&C was doing a good job.

Some listed recommendations on how the P&C could fulfil their duties better:

- Could be more of a 'bridge' between parents and the school
- Does an excellent job on fundraising and other activities but isn't encouraged or supported to engage as fully as it could by the school leadership
- I think it should look at ways to be more inclusive. A lot of power with 1 or 2 people is not inclusive
- Some key people are doing all the work. I want to be involved but feel the school is restricted by communication issues, long meetings and time pressed teachers and parents in order to get things done

How could the P&C be improved?

This is a much harder area to summarise as we received a wide variety of responses.

Some common themes were around better communication and getting more parents involved. It was also suggested that we work on being more open and welcoming to new parents and ideas/suggestions.

You can view all responses in the full report which was circulated. I have picked out the below to highlight as I think they would lead to discussions and possible actions:

- Greater accessibility/online meetings
- I think it would be useful to be able to discuss things eg in FB group that do not necessarily need meeting time so as to keep the length of meetings down. Also to have threads/ topics to organise discussions. Yes there is a skill fb group but I don't think that is the forum for more detailed P&C discussions.
- School improve its engagement with the P&C for the benefit of students
- Ask students what they would like fundraising money spent on
- Follow through on projects like sensory garden
- Actively spending fundraising money
- Make people aware of FB site
- Shorter meetings
- The fundraising demands feel never ending and then the funds get wasted on things like a 'sensory garden' which wasn't actually a sensory garden and never gets used. Meanwhile the fact that the home readers are falling apart and some date back to the 70s.
- No more plastic!!! I found the Halloween fete very disappointing choices. With rides and plastic toys. It lacked community spirit and the real involvement from the community. Get a parents band together and have concerts on the grass and a picnic

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- Perhaps the P&C and school could introduce a Class Parent role, where a parent representative from each class collates feedback from other parents, attends meetings and reports back. This would ensure a broader representation of views. They could also rally volunteers within their class for events. I know of other schools that follow this model.
- I feel the focus on fundraising is too much and a focus more on how we as parents have a say in how the school is run, the way the budget is spent etc would increase the value of the P&C
- Class based meeting with parents for 15-20 minutes before 9am or after 3pm.
- PLEASE STOP DOING CHARITY WORK AND RAISING MONEY! This sends the wrong message to our children, ie that we should be paying for our education ourselves. Education should be free and we need to teach our children that. It is better that they go without rather than learn the wrong values. Also, many of us in the school community are poor, and asking us for money is quite insulting. If you want more money, then lobby the government. It is the role of government to pay for education, not the role of parents.
- Meetings need to be shorter, to the point. All efforts to run events encouraged (with quick discussion of necessary roles and if the manpower to do this is available - then with smaller groups formed to plan and hold event) Greater communication with teachers to encourage their promotion of P&C activities. Principal to encourage parents more to be involved in the school. Database of parents interests and skills and when/what activities they might be keen to be involved in. Survey parents to see if they would give time on different activities or donate money and opt out of getting involved. Getting involved builds a great community. •
- I see only few regular voices which are loud and they get what they need. I'm not saying it is wrong but we need more voices and also listen to other things
- Maybe have meetings on alternating days (Tuesday is a really bad day for me which is why I don't attend more meetings)
- Inviting (often) ideas from members and parents in regards to fundraising ideas and events. It appears as though only 1 parent is allowed to have ideas in the school.
- Have the school leadership use and actively support the P&C by being more transparent, plan and articulate in partnership, present proper reports and accept and develop from proper scrutiny.

In terms of meetings, please tick all boxes that apply.

Replies indicated that while meetings are information and welcoming they are too long.

Not frequent enough - 2

Too frequent - 3

Too long - 19

Informative - 16

Welcoming - 13

Engaging - 8

Inclusive - 9

Boring - 6

Do you have any further comments in relation to the meetings?

Shorter meetings or keeping meetings to a strict time schedule was mentioned in several responses. Some requested that reports be shorter.

Other comments included:

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- Twice per term is good
- With 2 meetings per term split the agenda
- WestConnex while important dominates the end of a meeting. Keep to 5 mins or hold special meetings
- Lag of action between meetings is a problem
- Suggestions made but expecting a few to action/more people need to put their hands up
- Do more polls/surveys
- Online attendance
- I would like to see more opportunities to involve our parents of different cultural backgrounds

Do you have any comments in relation to the events that the P&C organises? What events would you like to add to the calendar?

There were a lot of positive comments about the events that we have held. The importance of community building events was also noted.

Other fundraising ideas suggested included:

- Colour run
- Cookie dough Outdoor movie night
- Welcome at beginning of the year
- Election BBQ
- Jumble sale/markets/ cake stall fundraiser once a year - not as big as a fete, but still community event
- Regular themed fair like Lego at Croydon
- Day to celebrate teachers? 25/10/2019
- Halloween with alcohol
- Children's Day
- Other parent focused events such as cheese and wine night (beginning of year to welcome new parents)
- Quarterly gardening bee/cleaning bee
- Discos
- Spring fair / fete. \$\$\$ coming into school from outside (not always parents pockets)
- Orienteering course

Other comments and suggestions included:

- Provide events that aren't for profit making – some don't have huge disposable income but want to participate – P&C could just break even
- Halloween – all plastic and expensive
- I think there is too much emphasis on big fundraising events. The P&C should be spending more time trying to sort out other issues of concern to parents such as parking, lack of communication from the school, parent helpers in classrooms, ethics program, other ideas that parents have to improve the school.
- No events aimed at raising money
- Sub interest groups - school grounds, events (music/art/languages), cultural, parents sharing their professions and skills with students, environmental, gardening, active kids.

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- It would be good to find something that engages a broader section of the school community and gets more involvement and volunteers

Other comments and feedback

There were many positive comments about the events and work of the P&C.

- I can't understand why there are not more people volunteering to do more things. Is it that they feel they can't - that the P&C is established enough that they can't break into it, or that they simply can't / don't want to...? Getting more people on board I think is a big challenge but something to work through. I think people feel bombarded with P&C / school updates. Hopefully the website will help with that. I don't really know what the answer is. I think the P&C could work on making people feel a bit more welcome at meetings, and to let people know they are welcome at any point, and that any suggestion / contribution is welcome. The website is a great idea - I didn't know much about the P&C before I joined. Thanks for all the great work you do for the school and community!
- I would like to see more genuine and strategic engagement between parents and the school. I think we're seen as a useful source of additional funding (although the process of agreeing on funding priorities and then acting on them is ridiculously slow) but otherwise not really welcome to be involved at a deep level in the school life. I'd be interested to know if other parents feel the same or even think we should be involved in other ways. I would also like to say thanks to all parents who turn up to meetings, and especially those who hold exec positions, as it's time-consuming and often thankless.
- Communication and consultation with wider school community could be improved
- It does seem that the P&C might be struggling to connect with all parts of the HPS community. Perhaps specific effort needs to be made on engaging people from diverse cultural backgrounds. I'm not entirely sure how to go about this and I'm sure I'm not the first to think of this. Maybe including vegetarian options eg curries, dumplings as well as sausage sizzle type food. Perhaps asking families from other backgrounds how fundraising happens in their countries of origin, what would they be likely to attend and enjoy?
- Most parents have interests and skills. What would they like to share at school. This gives kids such a huge sense of pride in their own place, their school. Also they are proud and want to be more involved in their school extracurricular activities. Even some of the most time poor parents want to be involved. It's very daunting in such a big school with huge population, well known long meetings with a history of tension and conflict. We can turn things around.