



## DSM 2018 AGM Minutes

<b>Date:</b>	28 March 2018
<b>Time:</b>	6.30pm
<b>Place:</b>	Deutsche Schule Melbourne

<b>Attendees:</b>	25 in attendance
<b>Apologies:</b>	Board members: Bernd Kalinna, Paul Southwick
<b>Proxies:</b>	None

### 1. Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks – Florian Dehne

It is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the AGM and 10<sup>th</sup> year of the School. At the opening of the school in 2008, the school had 14 students, which were taught in one composite class Prep 1/2. The school grows every year through the addition of one grade as all classes mature.

With this growth come questions around whether the school can stay on this site. I can confirm there is a very clear intention that the school, starting with Froebel, primary and secondary school is all on this site which scoping has shown to be possible as well as initial positive discussions with the landlord. All parents will be informed of this progress as it isn't a straightforward process with a lot of stakeholders involved.

The second point I want to make, which is close to my heart, is around one aspect of the character of the school, which has not changed. DSM has always been a fragile organisation and still is. The school still heavily relies on all of us, on many volunteers that heavily contribute to its success. Over the years there have been situations where great people that have made very important contributions to the school retreated as they felt they were not respected in the right way. That is both unfortunate and disappointing. We all do this work, because we have a shared goal: to successfully operate a very unique school that is awesome for the children. I want to alert everyone that it is our own behaviour that can shape these situations and we need to be thoughtful and careful. The reason why I raise this today, is that I have recently been alerted to some of these challenges. Clearly not everything can run as smoothly as we all want or aim towards all the time. Our school, in particular as it is growing, is not an exception. We are keen to work through and resolve issues and come to satisfactory solutions. But we need to be mindful that we don't achieve this in an unproductive or unhelpful way.

We need to be thinking about how we show up, we need to think about how we interact. I ask you all to be thoughtful about that.

Having said all of this we have a lot to be proud of and to celebrate and I am delighted we are in Year 10 and I am looking forward to our celebration and delighted with the community that brings us to this point.

## **2. Chairman's Report – Florian Dehne**

### **2.1. Review of 2017**

In 2017, DSM had around 100 students in six classes.

Key milestones in 2017 were:

- Support and investment in continued growth, infrastructure and staffing.
- Revision of the educational strategic plan (see Principal's Report).
- Progress towards implementation of secondary school.
  - German government plan and funding approval.
  - Secondary school accommodation planning and implementation.
  - Stakeholder engagement with IBO and VRQA.
- Commencement of rolling-out vision and mission; review plans and policies to reflect.
- Development of a risk management framework and related actions (core board role).

### **2.2. Status and Goals for 2018**

Since the beginning of 2018 DSM teaches around 115 children in six classes (Prep to grade 6).

Key goals for 2018 are:

- Progress work on vision implementation and school culture (as per my opening remarks - tolerance, not just in children but in all of us).
- Progress implementation of the educational strategic plan.
- Review curriculum at the highest level in consideration of secondary school direction. For example, what do we do offer in the middle years IB or a blend of Thuringen and Australian options.
- Continue infrastructure improvement and agreement for long term tenancy.
- Double down on risk management – implementing recommendations and broadening review of the initial assessment

Proposed resolution: The Chairman's Report be accepted by members.

Moved: Chairman      Seconded: By majority of members

### 3. 2017 AGM Minutes

Proposed resolution: That the 2017 AGM minutes be accepted by members.

Moved: Chairman      Seconded: By majority of members

### 4. Update on the Education Strategic Plan – Presented by Principal Bernice Ressel

A sub-committee on the board was formed in 2017 to drive the academic performance and growth of the school. We held several stakeholder workshops, including teachers, and identified six key areas that will be critical to the school's performance in the short-to medium term. The areas are also made in accordance of the vision of the school to "helps students to realise their individual potential and become creative and confident participants in the global community."

The six key areas, which are linked to specific areas of the vision and mission, are:

- I. Shaping the school profile of the bilingual program that includes expanding our language concept especially the areas of German as a second language, English as a second language and CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) i.e. lessons held in the German language.

Addresses the following DSM Mission point/s:

- We challenge our students to embrace diverse perspectives through bilingualism and by exposing them to an immersion program run by native speakers.
- We nurture the whole child in our vibrant German, Australian and multicultural community.

- II. Strengthening the students' key competencies.

This includes learning competencies, the learning of self-guided approached for example and strengthening the students' self and social competencies.

Addresses the following DSM Mission point/s:

- We inspire life-long learning by empowering students to lead their own learning journey.
- We nurture mutual respect, understanding and caring for the individual.
- We inspire our students to express themselves creatively and think critically about a world without borders.

- III. Teacher professionalism and development

Includes onboarding of new staff; strengthening of cooperative planning of the teachers and professional development; and multiplication and implementation of the results of the professional development.

Addresses the following DSM Mission point/s:

- We inspire our students by offering learning experiences encompassing the heart, head and hands.
- We challenge our students academically by teaching according to the Victorian and the Thuringian Curricula.

- IV. Pursuing systemic and systematic pedagogical quality management i.e., high-quality teaching and learning approaches. Evidence will be the Educational Strategic Plan.

- V. Preparing of the introduction of the mixed language German International Bacallaureate (GIB) includes coming up with a transition plan developed by the education sub-committee.
- VI. Furthering the growth of the school. All points above lead to this as well as marketing and building customer acquisition.

The sub-committee has identified key actions for the next five years which will contribute to the key achievement of these six key areas and we are currently working to identify baseline measures (where are we now), targets (where do we want to get to) and indicator (how will we know we have achieved what we want to achieve).

## 5. Treasurer's Report – by Paul Monkus

### 5.1. Financial Results

- The result of the 2017 financial year is a surplus of \$475,000 and an increase in the “cash flow” of just over \$400,000 this year. Both are in line with an increase in our cost base year on year.
- This takes our cash balance to approx. \$1.8M, which is the equivalent of at least one times annual costs as noted above.
- We've previously had an extremely tight financial situation with negative cash flows and now we have a moderately comforting situation of reserves at ~1x annual costs. We roughly have been at that level for the last 5 years, and that gives us some ability to survive through shocks, but is by no means the level that independent schools would typically operate under. We aim to have cash reserves of at least one times annual costs to ensure financial stability to ensure that the primary school is an ongoing operation. It is important to protect for an unexpected event such as an economic downturn, or a natural disaster such as that seen in Tokyo and the resultant falling enrolment numbers
- The result was largely driven by increased student numbers (from 82 in 2016 to 102 in 2017), associated increases through government support (from the Australian, Victorian and German Governments) offset by increased investment in teachers, student expenses, and building, fit out and maintenance costs.
- Most importantly, this result enabled us to invest into the primary school this year and budget for additional investment in the primary school for 2018.
- Budget planning process: at a high lever the Treasurer and Business Manager build a model based on expected student growth in the next financial year and the associated investment required to help that growth. There is a Board planning day focussed on finance and each accounting line is reviewed and discussed. The underlying principle is that we have stability and enough investment for growth for growth in the primary school in 2018 and beyond.

### 5.2. Investment for Growth in the Primary School

- In 2017, we have invested approx. 42% more than 2016 back into the school. This investment growth is a higher percentage than the student growth. We continue to ensure we have enough cash for the stability noted above. Some key projects in 2017 included:
  - Investment in Infrastructure:
    - Adding classrooms which require furnishing and equipment (such as air conditioning, blinds, electronic whiteboards etc.).
    - Hallway renovations.
    - Office renovations.
    - Shade sail project.

- Investment into the school:
    - All subject budget requests were approved – which includes materials etc.
    - Commencement of a new risk program which I'll go through shortly.
- These cash reserves and our growth trajectory (at 115 students in 2018) have allowed us to budget for a further uplift in investment in 2018, some notable examples of this include:
  - Additional lease space from August 2018 and associated renovations including fit outs / furnishings .
  - Looking into telephone, PA system, and wiring to help support our communications / risk strategy.
  - IT equipment such as laptop / iPad replacements etc.
  - Increased marketing budget largely focused on logo re-launch, new brochure, rebranding and student acquisition.
  - And many more items.-
- As the school continues to grow, we will continue to look at investment at the appropriate levels focusing on teaching staff / school resources and Infrastructure projects.
- A few years into the establishment of DSM, we became a part of the network of German-international schools, which gives us access to teachers, advice, and also quite substantial funding. It would only be possible to a be in this network if we plan to become a secondary school. There have been questions on whether or not growing into a secondary school increases the primary school fees. The answer is no – we wouldn't have access to this funding in the absence of plans to become a secondary school and the funding is more than the costs of the efforts to become a secondary school, which effectively means that the school fees would actually increase if we weren't planning on becoming a secondary school. For avoidance of doubt, part of our financial strategy ensures no cross-subsidisation of primary school fees into secondary school funding.

### 5.3. Risk Management

- The school has evolved over time and with continued growth comes a need to re-assess where the school is at in terms of its risk management policies / practices.
- Late last year, we engaged an independent third party to undertake a risk gap analysis to understand how 'compliant' the school is with regards to training, emergency response and evacuation procedures.
- This was particularly important to us and a board priority given the evolution / growth of the school but also the current climate in the world.
- From this risk analysis, the existing measures in place were deemed adequate given the risk score for school (which is based on likelihood and consequence of certain events happening).
- However, whilst existing controls were deemed adequate, the board felt it was only appropriate that we continue to improve on our controls and as such have entered into a three year contract with the independent consultant to oversee our training / procedures.
- Since their engagement last year, training sessions with staff members (on threat response, fire/warden training and lockdown training) have been performed.

Documentation: Financial Report provided on request.

Proposed resolution: That the financial report tabled at the AGM be accepted.

Moved: Treasurer      Seconded: By majority of members

## **6. Results of general election**

Proposed resolution: That the following DSM Board members are re-elected: Florian Dehne, Bernd Kalinna, Penny Fairbank, Eleanor Williams

Moved: Chairman      Seconded: By majority of members

6.1 Two new board members were put forward for nomination by an association member: One of the nominated was Susanne Hildebrand who was in attendance and was previously on the board. There are two ways to be selected: by election or co-option with co-option being the most stringent as it includes comprehensive discussion with the board and ensures the nomination has the right skill set supporting the board and school governance needs. It has been agreed that co-option with each of the nominated candidates will be explored.

6.2 As provided as part of our constitution, there are also two permanent board positions held by the founding German Catholic Church in Camberwell and the German Trinity Lutheran Church in East Melbourne. Grit Dielman has been appointed on behalf of the Trinity Lutheran Church. Grit is a secondary school teacher at Wesley College and deeply connected through her German background. Grit was an apology and arrived at the AGM after this agenda item.

## **7. Appointment of an auditor**

Proposed resolution: That Mrs K H Collard be re-appointed as Association statutory auditor for the next reporting period.

Moved: Chairman      Seconded: Majority of members

## **8. AGM Discussion and QandA**

- 8.1. Q: What is the 40% in growth? A: There is 40% growth in the cost base when compared with 2016 investment cost.
- 8.2. Q: Was the financial report less granular as per last year? A: For the purposes of the AGM the spend report was kept high level. Additional information is available on request. Please ask the Business Manager.
- 8.3. Q: Risk management gap analysis – communication on this topic to all members would be very valuable to understand why certain changes are being made at the school such as gate being shut earlier. A: Agreed.
- 8.4. Q: What gaps are there for operational risks as opposed to strategic? A: There isn't an intention to have two registers: operation and strategic. We started where we were most worried and will now take the strategic learning to the operation of the school. We haven't debated yet what we will address next is a core role of the board and is a continuous process and discussed at every board meeting.

### **Actions:**

- 8.4.1. Specific communication regarding the gap analysis to all members and parents required and what specific actions were adopted throughout the year.

- 8.4.2. There was a finance meeting which came from 2017 AGM with the PA and the board will loop back to that group to see what is the best way and frequency to communicate information back.
- 8.4.3. The constitution be will be reviewed as it was established 13 years ago. Questions for consideration include: Can parents be automatically members and how can teachers be members if they are staff? Can parents be a sub-set of all members?.
- 8.4.4. Community to be asked to provide their perceived risk assessment considerations and provide this information to the board– two way communication board to members and members to board
- 8.5. Q: What is happening with children safety and wellbeing? A: We already have a strong and comprehensive policy as required by the regulator.
- 8.6. Q: What is the time frame for Secondary School? A: It is the same perspective 5- 10 years.
- 8.7. Q: What is the pricing strategy – how are you positioning against other independent and private schools, what is your point of differentiation? Is bilingual enough? A: We are trying to keep fees down and not model Wesley Colleges for example with fees for expensive school grounds etc.
- 8.7.1. Action: Parnee C to meet with Paul S regarding governance communication, marketing.
- 8.8. Q: What is the progress of the OSHC offering by DSM? A: We hope to lodge the application shortly with option to commence second half of the year but the process is long and uncertain to when notice of approval will be received. We may start with after school care but now consideration will be given to before school care as two parents said they would be interested.
- 8.8.1. Action: Survey parents what they would like as service options including pricing points for inclusion in extra afternoon curricula activities and handover.
- 8.9. Q: To understand attrition – should there be third-party objective exit interviews, what are the trends? A: Most leave as they move interstate and return overseas.
- 8.9.1. Action: Do a review of why people are leaving and if there are unknown and instigate objective exit interviews.
- 8.10. Q: Will there be a proper branding style guide and implementation plan with the new logo.? A: Yes. All the signage will be done by a design professional and is in progress with templates etc. A distinction is made between outward branding (critical) with consultation with design professionals and internal signage where there is as cost benefit analysis completed with graphic design performed in house.
- 8.10.1. Action: Brand style guide and templates.
- 8.11. Q: Can the Strategic Education Plan or DSM Plan be made available – package online for current and prospective parents. A: There may be two groups – parents/members and future parents and we will address the communication need of this group first.
- 8.12. Q: There was a presentation about the parent communication portal last year, what is now planned for? A: It is a very good idea but hard to justify the effort. Not quite at the size where we can justify the effort. Review when we are a larger scale. It is not the software but the people that you need in the business to support.
- 8.13. Q: How do we manage the communication traffic by parents to board and staff? A: We will make it clearer who is in charge of what and what is a board or school staff matter.

8.13.1. Action: Review option to produce a handbook for new school parents.

8.14. Q: Can PA be members of the DSM Association? A: We need to work through that and consult and come back to you all. As per 8.4.3.

8.15. Q: What areas can we expand to in terms of rental space? A: We have the CCR, space at the back behind Froebel which we will get in August and dance studio. We have an in principle agreement that we will be the main landlord and continue to work on moving in to those spaces.

8.16. Q: Can there be more time spent on children with special needs? A: Ruth to speak to Bernice to discuss further.

8.17. Q: How do we tap in to parent skill set for the benefit of the school? A: If parents are wanting/willing to help they generally come to the school and provide their details.

Meeting Close

Minute taker: DSM Board Secretary, Penny Fairbank

Signed: DSM Board Chairman, Florian Dehne, 21 May 2018

### Summary of AGM Resolutions

Item	Action
6.1 Nomination of two board members	It has been agreed that co-option with each of the nominated candidates will be explored.
8.2 Financial Reporting	More granular reporting on expenditure can be made available on request.
8.4 Risk Management	<p>8.4.1 Specific communication regarding the gap analysis to all members and parents required and what specific actions were adopted throughout the year.</p> <p>8.4.2 There was a finance meeting which came from 2017 AGM with the PA and the board will loop back to that group to see what is the best way and frequency to communicate information back.</p> <p>8.4.3 Can the constitution be reviewed as it was established 13 years ago? Can parents be automatically members and how can teachers be members if they are staff? Can parents be a sub-set of all members.</p> <p>8.4.4 Community to be asked to provide their perceived risk assessment considerations and provide this information to the board– two way communication board to members and members to board</p>
8.6 School pricing strategy	8.6.1 Parnee C to meet with Paul S. to exchange knowledge re governance communication and marketing.
8.7 Progress of the OSHC	8.7.1 Parents to be surveyed to garner interest in before and after care, price points for participation in extracurricular activities.
8.8 Attrition	8.8.1 Do a review of why people are leaving and if there are unknown and instigate objective exit interviews.
8.9 Brand identity	8.9.1 Confirmation on rollout of new logo across marketing channels and style guide and templates.

8.10 Strategic Education Plan or DSM Plan	8.10.1 Review what is appropriate to communicate to all segments: current parents, Association members, future parents.
8.12 Communication	<p>8.12.1 AGM minutes to be distributed to members and board to communicate outcomes of actions throughout the year.</p> <p>8.12.2 How do we manage the communication traffic by parents to board and staff? Make it clear who is in charge of what and what is a board matter or school staff matter.</p> <p>8.12.3 Option to develop a Handbook for the new school parents.</p>
8.15 Special Needs	8.15.1 Ruth and Bernice to discuss what is currently in place