



Middleton College

November 2012

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Board of Management Update

New Board of Management

A new Board of Management – the second since new governance structures were introduced at Middleton College – was formally constituted and began its work in August. Since then it has met on three occasions. The Board of Management is constituted as follows:

Patron's Representatives:	The Bishop Mr Alan Crosbie Mr Jerry Lynch Mrs Louise Oppermann Mr Noel Ryall Mrs Daphne Spillane
Elected Parent Representatives:	Dr Ian Hayes Mrs Nora Irwin
Elected Teacher Representatives:	Mr Bud Morrissey Ms Mary Power
The Principal:	Mr Simon Thompson

On the nomination of the Board of Governors as Patron, the Bishop was elected as Chairperson for a further three-year term. A number of new Board of Management members who had not previously undertaken training, did so recently.

Meeting with PTA

At its first meeting the new Board met with the out-going chairperson of the PTA, Mrs Bronwen Lynch who presented a summary of PTA activities. Mrs Lynch was thanked for her leadership of the PTA Committee over the course of the past three years and the Board also expressed its thanks to the other retiring officers and committee members.

College Website

The Board was delighted to see the new College website up and running and extends its congratulations to all involved with that project.

Recent Events

The new Board 'hit the ground running' with support for the Principal and school management team at the start of another busy school year at the end of August. The opening of the Colton Building by the Minister for Education and Skills and his visit to the College; the Open Day; and Prize Day provided plenty of early involvement of Board members in the life of the College.

Professor Trevor West

On a sadder note, the Board extended its sympathy and condolences to Mrs Maura Lee West on the death of Professor Trevor West. Professor's West's association and that of his family with Midleton College goes back to 1928 and he himself chaired the Board of Governors. Students from the College as well as the Principal, staff, and members of the Board attended the funeral at Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, when the Bishop was the preacher. Hospitality was offered afterwards at the College. A Memorial Service for Professor West is to be held at the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin on Friday, 7th December at 5.15 p.m. at which the Board of Governors and Midleton College will be represented by Mr Ken Brookes, Professor West's successor as Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

Enrolment

The Board noted at its October meeting that the College enrolment of 354 is the largest ever in the history of the College

Parent-Teacher Association and Student Council

The Board received an update concerning the election of a new PTA Committee, as well as elections for the Student Council. The Board looks forward to working with the new PTA and the Student Council and to meeting both in due course.

COMPASS

At its most recent meeting the Board resolved to continue the College's affiliation with COMPASS: Co-operation of Minority-Religion and Protestant Parents' Association.

School Self-Evaluation

The Board has had notice from the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills that in the course of the coming eighteen-month period a programme of School Self-Evaluation is to be implemented in all schools, including Midleton College.

Geography Inspection

The final report of the Department's subject inspection in the area of Geography undertaken last April was received by the Board. The Report is full of praise for the very high standards in our Geography Department. Inspection reports are available on the DES website.

Meeting the Challenges of the Times

The Board of Management is very conscious of the on-going task undertaken by the College Board of Directors in putting the funding in place for the work of Midleton College. Since 2009 the Department has withdrawn €900,000 in financial support from the College.

All schools in the country are affected whether they are non-fee-paying or fee-paying. The Bishop, Principal and the Board maintain close contact with our sectoral advocacy groups which have consistently pointed out to the Department that in all sorts of unintended ways the cutbacks have disproportionate effects on our sector: the Protestant voluntary schools such as Midleton College.

Maintaining Standards

Against this background of cutbacks the Board is hugely conscious of the work undertaken by the Principal and his colleagues in minimising the impact on our students and on those who choose an education at Middleton College. One example, arises from the Department decision in Budget 2012 to withdraw the provision of ex-quota guidance counselling hours to secondary schools.

Here, at Middleton College, we have been able to maintain the expert and vital services of a guidance counsellor for our students.

In contrast, a survey recently undertaken shows that quite a number of other schools have had to take drastic steps in order to address this cutback e.g. by combining 5th and 6th year classes in some subject areas; by amalgamating ordinary level and higher level subject streams at senior cycle; by doing away with IT classes for Junior students; by using mainstream teaching hours to compensate for loss of guidance hours.

New Administration Block

At recent meetings the Board has received reports from the Board of Directors about the development of the new Administration block and Reception area at the College. As soon as the new Administration block is open, much needed work on extension of the Staff Room will commence.

Enrolment to First Year in 2013

Much interest has been shown at both the September Open Day (when 142 families attended) and also by formal enquirers about enrolment for First Year in the College. At its forthcoming meeting on 3rd December, the Board, in line with the College Enrolment Policy, will offer up to 72 places in First Year at the College for September 2013.

Christmas Fayre

Led by Grace Hamilton, a team of supporters, has organised a Christmas Fayre in aid of our new Sports Complex. The Christmas Fayre is to be held on Friday, 7th December at the College from 3.15 p.m. until 6.15 p.m.

Forthcoming Events

The Board was notified of forthcoming events at the College:

- the Christmas Carol Service on Wednesday 12th December
- the musical *Back to the Eighties* on 19th and 20th December

Season's Greetings

The Board of Management wishes everyone in the Middleton College family – students, teachers, staff, parents/guardians, friends, past-pupils and supporters – a very blessed and joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.