

Sophia Mundi Steiner School

Annual Report

2020



SOPHIA MUNDI
Steiner Education and IB World School

Sophia Mundi Board of Directors' Report



“This art of education is concerned with the possibilities latent in the whole being of a human being and reckons, at the same time, with the tendencies of modern life.” ~ Rudolf Steiner

What an extraordinary year it has been! I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board to acknowledge and thank the Principal, Management team, teaching and support staff for their amazing commitment, resourcefulness, and willingness to adapt to an extraordinary situation in 2020, and rise to the occasion, in order to continue to provide a high-quality Steiner educational experience for students.

We have all been impacted in a multitude of ways, with disruptions to work life, home life, economic life, social life etc. and I would like to thank the parent community for your ongoing support, adaptability and presence throughout the year. Juggling the stresses and uncertainties of a rapidly changing situation, while at the same time having children learning from home, has provided new challenges (and opportunities) for many families.

Through great challenges and difficult experiences, there comes great gifts, and one of the many gifts over the last year has been the school and the Board coming together as a much more united and collaborative team. We've become more resilient

and resourceful in the process of tackling the challenges at hand, continuously learning, growing and innovating in order to fulfil the core purpose of providing an extraordinary education which develops the whole human being – head, heart and hands.

Sophia Mundi is governed by a Board of Directors who are responsible for overseeing all aspects of the school and ensuring compliance with legal obligations, sound financial Management and ensuring a strategic approach to the school's future that aligns with the school's greater vision and core purpose.

Over the past year, the school and the Board looked at various ways that families and students could best be supported. The allowance for bursaries was increased in order to support more families in need, and some fees were returned. A bursary fund was also established whereby families that were able to, could contribute funds that would support an even further increase in bursaries for more families. As with the previous year, we supported the decision for no increase in tuition fees. Sophia Mundi tuition fees have remained the same across 2018, 2019, 2020

and 2021, a rare achievement in independent schooling, and something which also helps the school achieve one of its aims of greater school affordability.

Expenditure was also reduced, and investments were made in key areas such as IT and outdoor education resources, with staff pay increases also being honoured. The school also received additional government funding support. The net result was improving key areas and supporting staff and families, while at the same time delivering an operating surplus for the year. 2020 was also the third consecutive year for the school being debt-free. Balancing the need for positive financial outcomes with the commitment to supporting staff, families and providing an affordable and high-quality inner-city Steiner schooling remained a key focus.

A key aspect of ensuring ongoing sustainability is the commitment of parents paying school fees in full, and on time. Thank you to all our school parents for your ongoing commitment to the school throughout the year. This has also helped enable greater flexibility in providing support to those families that may have needed fee relief.

Each year, the Board conducts a community survey in order to gain insights and get feedback from the community into how the school is going on a variety of different fronts. This helps inform what areas are going well, and what areas need greater focus and attention. Feedback is such an important and welcomed part of informing efforts for continuous growth and improvement in order to better serve the needs of the community. Thank you to all for taking the time to participate in these surveys, your voice matters!

At the beginning of 2020, the Board, Management, College and other school leaders came together for a second workshop/retreat facilitated by Julia Wolfson. As a continuation of the previous workshop that explored our biography and history, this workshop became a deeper exploration into who we are now as a school, and where we want to go in the future. Shortly thereafter, 2020 took an unexpected turn, but the seeds were planted and explored further throughout the year, and in 2021 we are now actively utilising this work to help inform and develop a new strategic plan and vision that will be a guiding force over the next 5 years.

Sophia Mundi is made up of an amazingly committed group of people who are passionate about Steiner education and committed to the growth and wellbeing of students. The school has had a rich and varied journey going through many different phases in its growth, and we are now looking forward to the future as new possibilities and opportunities open up.

Supporting the community, having incredible teaching and learning, developing a healthy culture, creating the ideal school and learning environment and having strong governance and leadership are all important aspects to our strategic direction. At the heart is the student and ensuring that all our work is constantly supporting the fulfillment of our core purpose and enabling the students to flourish.

This strategic planning work will also enable us to look at and revitalise the branding and identity for the school across all areas, to reflect who we are now and help take us into a new era.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the outgoing Chair of the Board, Kerry Laughton, for her extraordinary dedication, commitment and amazing leadership over the last few years. She has been instrumental in fostering a cohesive Board environment and developing a strong foundation of governance that will be felt into the future. I'd also like to thank outgoing directors Annette Batchelor, Serina Mukerjee and Jennifer West for all their work. Annette brought depth of insight and experience to the role and was instrumental in refining communications and developing more effective policy and reporting practices. Serina stepped up to the position of Finance Committee Chair and helped bring clarity and insights into the critical area of finances whilst building healthy relationships and communication channels between the Board and Management. Jennifer has

served Sophia Mundi in different capacities over many years, and her invaluable wisdom and insight was a great source of inspiration and guidance for the Board and school leadership.

Our current Board constellation is made up of myself, Michael Arcella, Damien Hicks, Cheryl Nekvapil and Carol Liknaitzky, with more members joining soon. We are blessed to have an incredible variety of skills, wisdom and experience on the Board, and the contributions, energy and work commitments of each director is greatly appreciated.

The future holds many possibilities and opportunities for the school. In a rapidly changing world, an education that fosters the whole human being and develops creativity, initiative and resourcefulness is more relevant than ever.

It's been an honour and a privilege to have been a part of the journey.

Matthew Hardie

CHAIR, ON BEHALF OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Graduating Class of 2020



The students of our graduating class 2020 are to be congratulated on their success in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The class of 2020 is the eighth cohort to graduate from Sophia Mundi under the Diploma Programme pathway. We were thrilled to be able to continue to offer a wide range of subjects. The class of 2020 consisted of six students, five of whom attempted to complete the IB Diploma in November 2020. A seventh individual, a member of the class of 2019, also registered for re-take examinations in three subjects (Math Studies SL, History HL and ESS SL), but did not attend Sophia Mundi in 2020. Their results are not included in the statistics for the subjects they re-sat in 2020.

Of the six enrolled students, 50% of them (3 students) entered the school in Year 10 or 11, and 50% had attended Sophia Mundi since primary school. 22% of the class were retained from the Year 9 2017 cohort, these students made up 33% of the graduating class.

The two-year IB Diploma Programme curriculum encompasses the study of six subjects together with the core

components of CAS (Creativity, Action and Service), TOK (a Theory of Knowledge course) and EE (a 4000-word academic research based Extended Essay). The aim of the challenging and rigorous Diploma Programme is to develop internationally minded people who strive to display the IB Learner Profile outcomes of being inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective individuals.

Of the 5 students who attempted, 3 earned their Diplomas, making the pass rate 60%. Those who were not able to achieve the full Diploma did earn certificates in the subjects they achieved a mark of 3 or more in. The highest score earned in the 2020 session was 34 (ATAR 91.5) and the lowest 31 (ATAR 86.4). The average total score of those who completed the Diploma was 33.

The ATAR mean was 89.8 for all students that received the Diploma.

The average subject grade achieved by these 3 students was 5.06 (out of 7.00). Five of the six members of the cohort have been accepted into a tertiary institution with one candidate choosing not to apply for tertiary admission in Australia. The three students who

earned their Diploma were each accepted into their top choice University. They will commence degrees in Engineering (RMIT), Medicine (University of Notre Dame) and Science (Melbourne University). Other offers include Monash University (Biomedical Science) and Deakin University (Health Sciences). One candidate has chosen to re-take Biology and attempt to earn their Diploma. One student will have a Gap year and another will be working.

This year, 80% of the cohort earned additional points from the Core subjects Theory of Knowledge (TovK) and Extended Essay (EE).

We are excited to see how each student decides to use their unique talents and achievements to benefit the local and global communities in the years to come.

Marcela Nieves

IB TEACHER & ASSISTANT TO THE HEAD OF SENIOR SCHOOL



Principal's Report



Learning during lockdown and beyond

What an opportunity 2020 was for Sophia Mundi to reimagine our values and educational philosophy in a new way. The task before us was indeed enormous – how do we deliver our Steiner Curriculum through an online platform? An education that fosters the whole human being and develops creativity, initiative and resourcefulness was more important than ever before.

We needed to find ways to communicate through technology that enabled us to interact in authentic and meaningful ways. To this end, we challenged ourselves to use the Office 365 Teams platform from Prep to Year 12 in ways that were developmentally appropriate for each year level. Who would have thought?

Whilst continuing to deliver the curriculum via remote learning was important, so too was the social and emotional wellbeing of our students. We were mindful of the intrinsic coldness of a medium that can potentially intensify the feelings of isolation that some students might already be having. For some, the sudden change was quite a shock. Physical distancing

The beautiful land on which our School lives has a history stretching back to the beginning of the Dreaming. We are privileged to have the use and care for it now. I would like to acknowledge that our School is on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and pay my respects to elders both past and present. We are grateful for the legacies imbedded in the land. I acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the education of all people on this land and in this part of country.

was already literally and figuratively setting us apart. There was also the growing fear and anxiety about the pandemic that the students were beginning to express. From the start, a goal in our online classes was to ensure that every student in the group would feel a sense of connectedness. This was achieved through appropriate collaborative activities and as always in our curriculum, an emphasis on learning through creative experiences.

Whilst the day-to-day logistics of remote learning were a daily challenge for all, the crisis also brought into sharp relief the bigger question of learning for the 'real world'. Throughout my time as a Teacher and Principal in a Steiner school, a recurring question parents ask is "does the emphasis on creative play, development of imagination and creative arts prepare children for the real-world?". These questions are now more important than ever and the answer for me is clear – yes!

With these challenges, the world is asking for new qualities: a blend of professional rigour with creativity, imagination, critical thinking that embraces complexity, emotional intelligence and a compassionate

sense of what it is to be human in this increasingly digital age. The future is asking for young people with the capacity and confidence and creative vision to meet the challenges that arise. For children heading towards this future, to possess these skills enables flexibility in options and the ability to contribute in a meaningful way to society.

I can confidently say to parents that Steiner education is very conscious in its approach to developing young people to be world ready. Our focus is on the development of the child towards freedom, supporting moral growth and social consciousness. The seeds for this are planted in the primary years to bear fruit later. The Steiner educational approach is becoming increasingly distinct from an education system which presupposes that an end can always be predetermined, and where improved test results become both the means and the ends of schooling.

I am so proud to be a member of Sophia Mundi. My sincere gratitude to the Sophia Mundi community who make our Steiner Education a reality.

Fiona Cock,
PRINCIPAL

Teaching and Learning - FLARE Program 2021

The Focused Learning and Rotational Exercises (FLARE) programme has been through a number of modifications over the past 12 months, since the last report. This includes:

- Working with classes 2 – 8 in the Rotational Exercises (previously included year 9)
- Separating the Rotational Exercise groups into 2 cohorts: the first classes 2 – 5, the second students from classes 6 – 8, maintaining vertical groupings within the smaller groups.
- Changing programme time from 10:15am to 8:45am
- Reducing the time from 30mins to 25mins
- Ringing the bell at the end of 20 minutes to ensure groups finish

in a timely manner and allowing students to be present for Main Lesson punctually

Feedback has been that:

- The earlier time allows for smoother running of the day
- Smaller groups, drawing from fewer classes, is more manageable
- Assistance with timing is having a positive effect on Main Lesson punctuality

Despite the repeated interruptions to on-site schooling due to lockdowns, the FLARE programme has continued to run in a modified format.

Whilst it has not been feasible to operate the Rotational Exercise programme, the Focused Learning groups and individual support

sessions have continued. Reports from teachers facilitating the Focused Learning groups indicate that their success has continued in the online format. The successful transference of the Focused Learning groups to the online platform can be attributed both to the extraordinary commitment, skill and flexibility of our teachers and the degree to which the FLARE programme has become a deeply embedded rhythm of the week at Sophia Mundi.

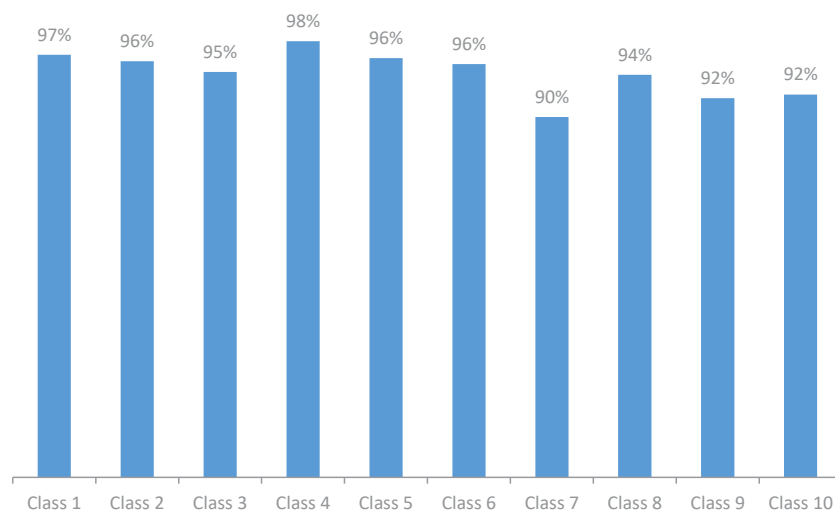
We look forward to continuing to develop the FLARE programme in response to the changing needs of our students.

Madonna Holmes,
EDUCATION ENRICHMENT TEACHER &
WELFARE SUPPORT

Teaching Staff Qualifications

Qualification	Total
PHD	2
Master of Education	6
Masters (Other)	8
Eurythmy Qualifications	1
Steiner Education Qualification	16
IB Certificates	29
Graduate Diploma of Education Teaching & Learning	16
Diploma of Education	11
Bachelor of Applied Science	1
Bachelor of Arts	17
Bachelor of Education	4
Bachelor of History	1
Bachelor of Law	1
Bachelor of Letters	1
Bachelor of Music	4
Bachelor of Outdoor Education	2
Bachelor of Science	3
Bachelor of Teaching	3
Bachelor of Visual Art/Fine Arts	2
Bothmer Gymnastics	1
Advanced Diploma (Applied Physics)	1
Certificates (Other)	8

Term 1-3 2020 Student Attendance



Attendance figures for 2020 are higher than reported in previous years. This is due to the extended COVID-19 lockdown, with students attending classes from home via online learning and attendance being counted differently.

Staff Attendance

There was an attendance rate of 96% for both General and Teaching Staff during 2020.

Staff Retention

All Teachers 87.5%
Primary 87.5%
Secondary 87.5%

Financial Report 2020

2020 was an unprecedented year. COVID-19 caused the closure of the school for the majority of the teaching year. Staff were required to work from home and teach students remotely.

The school was able to qualify for revenue of \$1,242K from JobKeeper and the Cash Flow Boost which enabled the continued employment of staff and the successful education of students.

Revenue also rose due to an increase of \$374K in government recurrent grant funding and subsidies. Increases were mainly due to the Federal Government's changed methodology of calculating the grants.

The increases in government grants are significant. If we leave out the effect of JobKeeper, the 2020 income split would be 38% grants, 58% student fees and 4% trading. This compares to 31%, 64% and 5% respectively for 2019.

Trading activities and fundraising revenues were greatly reduced due to COVID-19.

Bursaries totalling more than \$400K were provided to families to help them to afford to stay at the school. Fee credits were given to families to assist where educational services were unable to be provided.

The school incurred additional costs resulting from COVID. These were IT and communication costs required for remote learning, as well as increased hygiene and building cleaning costs. Overall costs increased by \$148K in 2020.

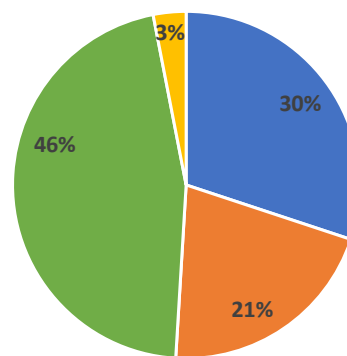
The payment of JobKeeper top ups also added to increased costs.

A total surplus of \$1,320K, or 22% of income, was achieved in 2020 compared to the surplus of \$115K, or 2% of income, in 2019.

Another significant financial change is the adoption of AASB 16. Leases were reported as rent expenses in prior years. In 2020 the leases are reported as Right of Use Assets and amortised accordingly. The leases are now regarded as Fixed Assets along with Leasehold Improvements. The value of Fixed Assets increased by \$1,006K in 2020 as a result of the change.

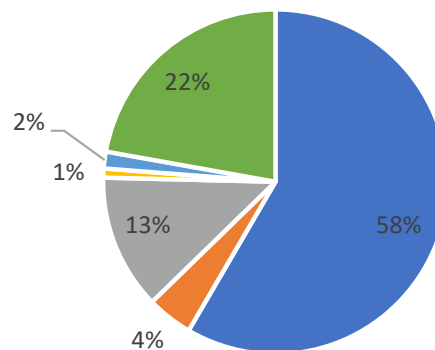
John Mulhall
ACTING BUSINESS MANAGER

INCOME SOURCES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES



INCOME SOURCES	2020	2019
Government Grants	30.1%	30.8%
JobKeeper	20.9%	0.0%
Student Fees	46.0%	63.7%
Trading & Other Income	3.1%	5.5%

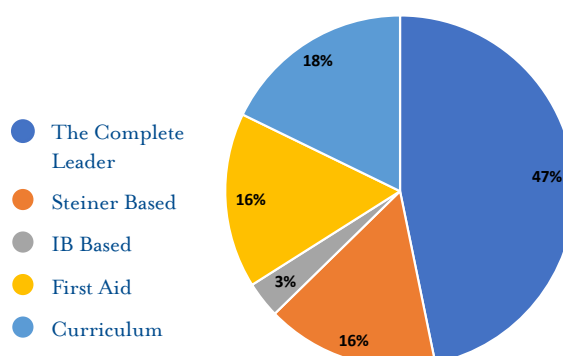
EXPENSE CATEGORIES - AS PERCENTAGES



EXPENSE CATEGORIES	2020	2019
Employment	58.4%	72.3%
Occupancy (incl. Depreciation)	4.3%	13.0%
Educational Expenditures	12.7%	10.3%
Bad & Doubtful Debts	0.9%	-0.5%
Trading Activity Expenses	1.6%	2.4%
Surplus	22.2%	2.5%

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRIBUTION

Staff Professional Development in 2020 amounted to \$15,396 and had the following percentage distribution:



Our Vision:

Education towards freedom

Our Values:

Truth, courage and moral
and ethical responsibility

Our Mission:

To be a living and contemporary
embodiment of the spiritual,
cultural, and educational impulse of
anthroposophy that contributes
towards social renewal in the world



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