Brindabella's future 'looking positive'

Sarah Lansdown

THE administrators for Brindabella Christian College could take a further four months to investigate the school's finances and come up with a plan to save it as the search for a new owner continues.

Deloitte partners Sam Marsden and Sal Algeri successfully applied to the Federal Court to extend the period of voluntary administration to August 3.

Minutes from the first meeting of creditors show a vast range of individuals and companies claim the school owes them money, including school camp providers, current and former employees and parents.

Mr Marsden told the meeting the administrators could find a new operator for the school at any time.

Administrators from Deloitte are looking for a buyer for Brindabella Christian College. Picture by Karleen Minney

Principal Peter Reuben appeared upbeat about the school's future when he told parents and carers each of the potential new proprietors would be assessed in the coming weeks.

"The administrators have advised me that they're greatly encouraged by the response of interested parties who have expressed interest in governing the school," he said. "The future of the school is looking positive."

The administrators have aimed to continue operating the school as usual to maximise its value.

The sale of the business and assets could happen before the second creditors' meeting, or it could form part of a deed of company arrangement that creditors would vote on in the second meeting.

While interested parties may put in offers for parts of the business, the administrators have been marketing the school as a whole to attract the highest offer possible.

When asked whether the Charnwood campus, which only has about 30 students this year, would be closed or sold separately, Mr Marsden said the school was being advertised for sale as a whole, but "ongoing operations of the school were being reviewed to ensure financial viability".

The school's main lender, the National Australia Bank, provided a loan of about $600,000 to pay staff wages and has given financial backing for the administrators to carry out their investigations.

The school will continue to receive recurrent funding from the federal and territory governments to keep it operating.

Parents who haven't paid their Term 1 fees received a letter from the administrators asking them to pay immediately to be able to pay teachers and cover operating costs. Some staff have claimed they have been underpaid according to their years of service and position. The administrators said it would take time to work through these issues.

Creditors were asked to vote on members of a committee of inspection, which is a group of creditors who advise the administrators. However, the administrators are not bound to follow this advice.

Former chair of Brindabella Christian Education Limited, Greg Zwajgenberg, nominated himself to be on the committee, as did former business manager Brendan Major as the nominee for his company Guardian Business Consulting.